



**Closing remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the second annual *Safer Skies Forum*
hosted by the Government of Canada**

(Virtual Event, 30 March 2022)

*Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

1. In the early hours of 24 February of this year, Ukraine and the Russian Federation issued multiple Notice to Airmen messages advising of airspace closures and restrictions.
2. Moldova and Belarus soon followed suit, followed by a number of States and aviation authorities issuing warnings or operational restrictions around the expected areas of conflict.
3. The ICAO European and North Atlantic Regional Office issued a State letter shortly afterward, announcing and detailing the airspace closures, and that our Organization continues to actively monitor and coordinate on safety and related developments, as they unfold.
4. These combined actions and responses, including our urging to States to remind airlines and aircraft operators to assess and share information on associated risks, demonstrate that we have come a long way in terms of improving the conflict zone risk framework.
5. But while these actions are indicative of a certain degree of success, we need to also take into account that this was in many respects an atypical military occurrence.
6. Given the current conflict's very long, and indeed publicized build-up, the almost complete lack of secrecy or surprise associated with the commencement of hostilities made this a somewhat unique conflict zone event in recent memory.
7. As we begin this closing session on the way forward for the *Safer Skies* initiative, I think it's therefore important to remember that conflict zone risks can come in many forms, and that most will be less predictable and manageable than what has taken place in Eastern Europe these past weeks.
8. This is why it's critical for us to maintain momentum on the progress which *Safer Skies* is now delivering.

9. Augmenting some of the ICAO initiatives which President Sciacchitano outlined at the outset of this event, core elements of the revised conflict zone work programme are now focusing us more directly on risk management and civil-military cooperation implementation support.
10. With regard to risk management more specifically, the ICAO Air Navigation Commission recently authorized the establishment of a new *Integrated Risk Management Study Group*.
11. This body of experts will review related risk management methodologies from the perspective of each of ICAO's Strategic Objectives.
12. Its key focus will be on determining the feasibility of a unified framework that can be adapted and applied at both the State and service provider levels, in order to manage the collective risk across a broad range of contexts.
13. In addition to this, the ICAO Safety Management Panel has also endorsed new proposals to highlight the importance of an integrated approach to risk management.
14. And with regard to civil military cooperation, I'm pleased to report that the first edition of the new *Manual on Civil-Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management* (Doc 10088) is also being advanced.
15. In addition, the amendment to the ICAO *Manual Concerning Safety Measures Relating to Military Activities Potentially Hazardous to Civil Aircraft Operations* (Doc 9554) is also now undergoing its final stages of approval.
16. ICAO had also planned the launch of some civil-military workshops in 2021, which were unfortunately postponed due to the pandemic. But everything is now ready to get these underway as soon as global public health and travel circumstances permit, and like you, I am now hoping that this will be the case much sooner than later.
17. In conclusion, I wish to reiterate ICAO's deep gratitude to Canada for leading this global *Safer Skies* initiative, and emphasize that our Organization and States are fully supportive as we work together to keep air passengers and crew safe from all conflict zone risks globally.
18. Thank you.