



**Keynote Address
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the Tenth Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean
Directors General of Civil Aviation (NACC/DGCA/10)**

(Martinique, 21 June 2022)

1. It's my great pleasure to join you here this morning, albeit virtually due to an ongoing Council Session here at ICAO, for this latest and important meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation for ICAO's North American, Central American, and Caribbean Regions.
2. I would first like to thank our host State, France, for its generous organization of this event on the stunningly beautiful island of Martinique.
3. Our deepest thanks as well go out to the government and people of Martinique, both for their very warm hospitality and the commendable hotel and facilities which have been provided.
4. I would also like to highlight, from the outset of these remarks, the incredible appreciation which ICAO has for the many States and regional international organizations we work so closely with in the NAM/CAR Regions, and who are such important contributors to our successful results.
5. Our collective ability to mobilize resources for the benefit of needful States remains critical to our overall objectives at this time.
6. I would like to underscore that your in-person presence at this NACC DGCA meeting represents yet another important step toward putting this pandemic behind us and reconnecting the world.
7. From a global standpoint, ICAO's latest analyses reveal clear signs of a strong recovery in air traffic, characterized by high demand, increasing airline confidence, and a range of regional improvements.
8. The number of passengers carried from January to April of this year increased by 65% compared to the same period in 2021, while aircraft departures increased by 30%.

9. Airline seat capacity grew by 32% during the same period, and with continuing supportive conditions for travel demand we are now projecting a stronger overall recovery this year compared to last.
10. These recovery indicators are highly encouraging, especially when we consider what re-opened travel, trade and tourism markets and other positive economic and sustainability benefits mean for so many societies and businesses in this region.
11. There is still much to be done, however, and one of our biggest challenges is now the runaway inflation which is affecting the access to so many products and services in many countries and regions.
12. This underscores why your countries' political will to prioritize air transport in your national planning, and assure it has sufficient support and investment at these times is **the first key priority** for this Region which I raise with you today.
13. The leadership and solidarity of the States in the NAM/CAR Regions has been clearly demonstrated throughout the pandemic, just as it is on display again now in the recovery of aviation.
14. We need to build on this foundation, and see more of what we saw recently in Miami when all six Ministers of the OECS Member States signed a new Declaration of Intent to strengthen their Civil Aviation Authority, the ECCAA.
15. And I would also commend in this regard the outstanding work and assistance of our NACC Regional Office in fostering your collaborative successes through its Systemic Assistance Programme.
16. Once the political will is in place, States can then establish meaningful commitments to propel aviation into full recovery, and begin leading us into the next era of aviation that will be decided on at our upcoming 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly.
17. **This is second key priority I raise with you today**, and we've established 'Innovation' and 'Resilience' as the co-themes for this September's Assembly, with sustainability being a very high-priority consideration underlying each.

18. We expect some important decisions from States this Fall on how to prioritize current efforts to digitize the contactless travel experience, update ICAO's Global Plans for Aviation Safety, Air Navigation capacity & efficiency, and Aviation Security, and promote more efficient assessments and standardization of the latest innovations in aircraft design and propulsion now taking place.
19. As it's now critical for economies and supply chains everywhere that governments and industry work better together to realize the future of civil aviation, ICAO is also once again organizing a series of panels on cutting-edge air transport developments which will take place as part of the Innovation Fair we'll be conducting on the eve of the Assembly.
20. The fulfilling of commitments has also been essential to realizing the benefits we've achieved through the hands-on approach being taken by the NACC Systemic Assistance Programme, including its very positive impacts on Regional Safety Oversight systems.
21. We now need similar commitments and engagement by States to address NACC Security and Facilitation implementation and compliance priorities, and cybersecurity is very high on that list as our sector becomes more digital and connected.
22. Environmental Protection will also be an important topic at A41, notably with respect to States' discussions on the new Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal for sector-wide CO2 emissions reductions, how we implement that goal, and the associated strengthening of your State Action Plans.
23. The robust implementation of CORSIA will be another priority for Assembly consideration, and I would take this opportunity to thank those States which are actively supporting 'ACT CORSIA' in this region.
24. We hope to have a new and similar 'ACT SAF' programme up and running soon, to promote more rapid and concerted action in support of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) progress.
25. Once political will and meaningful national commitments are established, we then must rely on **the third priority I wish to address with you today**, namely the leadership of this Region's Directors General of Civil Aviation in achieving concrete progress toward our key objectives.

26. We are seeing that leadership today as you work to realize GASP-compliant, national Safety Management Systems (SMS) among your industry operators and service providers, as well as strong State Safety Programmes within the government authority.
27. It is also further evident in the ongoing improvements you're realizing in terms of air transport recovery planning and response in the aftermath of the natural disasters this region is prone to, and I wish to appreciate here the efforts and progress of the United States in collaboration with various NACC Member States.
28. A focus on DGCA leadership priorities also brings to mind the overall institutional strength of this Region's civil aviation authorities, and how important it is for you to continuously advocate on behalf of your authorities and your teams for strong commitments and investments toward CAA infrastructure, budgets, and human resources.
29. In concluding today, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to recall how the NAM/CAR Regions continue to face challenges with respect to its overall air connectivity, despite its status as one of the most inviting and sold-out tourism destinations in the world.
30. ICAO recognizes that your countries share distinct sustainable development challenges, and I wish to assure you that our Headquarters and Regional Office remain fully committed to working as One ICAO to help you address them, and especially those among you which qualify as Small Island Developing States.
31. We are also seeking and realizing new partnerships with lenders and donor institutions, and assisting the region through this support in meeting some of its more pressing budgetary and personnel resource challenges.
32. We look to CARICOM to help increase this momentum, and drive new and positive results working hand in hand with ICAO.
33. These efforts should include the revitalization of the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS), and at the same time we look forward to reviewing the progress being made by COCESNA and others to strengthen the NACC Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) platform, as well as separate initiatives in support of Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs) in the CAR Region.

34. The level of participation at this 10th Meeting of NACC DGCA is a clear indication of the strong and active commitment which your States have established to work together, through ICAO, and I congratulate you on the tremendous results which you have already achieved.
35. I'm confident that in light of the incredible amount of experience and expertise represented in the meeting today, we can make some much needed progress, and on that note I will wish you all a very productive and engaging 10th DGCA meeting.
36. Thank you.