



**Keynote remarks
by the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the 34th McGill University
Modem United Nations (McMUN)**

(Sheraton Hotel, Montréal – 27 January 2023)

1. Good evening everyone, and a very warm welcome to this 34th McGill Model United Nations. I am Juan Carlos Salazar, from Colombia, law graduate from McGill, and Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, a specialised agency of the United Nations.
2. As the only UN agency headquartered in Canada, and indeed right here in the very cosmopolitan and international city of Montréal, considered to be the global city for aviation, ICAO is very proud to be closely supporting this and several other Model UN events which take place here every year.
3. ICAO does its part in the United Nations by helping countries work together to establish international safety, security, efficiency, environment, economic and legal policies, plans and standards for civil aviation. This includes for airports, airlines, aircraft and air traffic control, to mention the few which you will be most familiar with.
4. Our organization supports States' diplomatic engagements on the adoption of latest technological innovations, streamlined procedures, and the development of major policies and targets such as the new NetZero 2050 agreement for carbon neutral international flight operations adopted at our triennial Assembly held last October.
5. ICAO manages expert groups to help countries make smart, sustainable decisions in these areas, and our role also includes a great deal of implementation and capacity building all over the world so that nations can optimize the contributions of aviation connectivity to their local prosperity.
6. These and other aviation connectivity benefits provide important support to countries' attainment of 15 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and I highly encourage you to visit our website and learn more about how critical our world's air transport network is today to helping States establish the local capacity to invest in sustainable development.

7. A key point I would like to underscore here tonight is that the United Nations, and agencies like ICAO, continue to work towards being an effective framework to solve the most critical global issues.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, taught us time and again that no country could confront such a crisis on its own, underscoring the critical role of multilateral coordination and monitoring to an effective and truly global response to what is a most challenging global crisis.
9. Model United Nations events, including this latest McMUN, and the Model ICAO format which ICAO has supported for many years, help to re-emphasize the spirit of diplomacy that originally defined the UN.
10. Our work in the UN is undertaken with and among 193 different member nation States, all of which are characterized by unique values, conditions, priorities, and capacities.
11. This highlights why virtually all global targets and initiatives will first require ample amounts of analysis, understanding, and complex negotiation on behalf of international diplomats and delegations, and why the path to diplomatic consensus is rarely a fast and simple one.
12. These are the very same factors and values which must inform your work as you embark on this year's McMUN, and looking around the room tonight, I am greatly encouraged that the spirit of multilateralism is alive and well in our younger generations.
13. The most recent *International Youth Day* in the UN system focused around the themes of intergenerational solidarity, and creating a world for all ages.
14. This brings to mind that we need people of all ages, young and old alike, to join forces to build a better world for all.
15. But as UN Secretary General Guterres highlighted on this occasion last year, ageism, bias, and discrimination can too often prevent this essential collaboration between our younger generations, who depend on there being a world for them to learn and grow and flourish in, and those who are currently making the decisions that will determine what sort of world that will be.
16. I would very much support the point that when young people are shut out of the decisions being made about their lives, we all lose.

17. Younger generations represent the world's conscience, more than any other age group, and unlike those in power who are so busy managing and avoiding risks, you come to these issues unburdened by preconception and with the courage to do and be more.
18. One of the most important points I wish to leave you with this evening, is that the world of aviation which ICAO supports, is incredibly important to our world on a vast number of levels, and as it continues to expand and connect us more, the 2% per year which it contributes to global CO2 emissions will not be permitted to expand along with it.
19. I mentioned already the carbon neutral target which countries have established for international flight, but in addition they will also be offsetting near-term CO2 through the robust CORSIA framework, which is the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, established through ICAO.
20. And most excitingly of all, air transport is today on the cusp of some incredible innovations that will eventually see some amazing new types of aircraft, propulsion, and operations coming to our skies this decade.
21. Surveying the scope and magnitude of these new technologies, I have every confidence that the aviation sector can meet and exceed its emissions targets long before we reach 2050, and that 100% sustainable aircraft will be flying in our skies even within ten years' time.
22. In closing, please let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to your Secretary General, Ms. Jane Weber, and to all of the event organizers who have helped her realize the incredible achievement with this 34th McMUN.
23. I also wish to thank each and every one of you for your energy and enthusiasm in international relations, and extend my invitation and hope that I will see some of you working in the aviation sector, including ICAO, in the not too distant future on the very exciting and interesting challenges which lie ahead of us in global aviation. In ICAO we have the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Programme, internships, junior professional officer, and other exciting opportunities for young aviation professionals.
24. Thank you.