



**Remarks by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,  
Second Edition of the Civil Aviation Legal Advisers Forum**

*(Muscat, Oman, 21 February 2023)*

1. As Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman for the very warm welcome extended to everyone gathered here today, and for the excellent facilities it has provided for this Second Edition of the Civil Aviation Legal Advisers Forum, or CALAF.
2. This has provided a wonderful backdrop for me to present my own enthusiastic welcome to all the legal advisers attending this session of the CALAF, who have travelled from 57 States to join us today.
3. Before we begin, I would kindly ask us to acknowledge that ICAO has designated 20 February, which was yesterday, as the International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families. I would like to take a moment of reflection for those affected by such tragedies and to express solidarity with the victims, their families and close ones. The inclusion of the item in the CALAF reflects the importance that the organization attaches to this important subject.
4. The First edition of this Forum was held in Singapore in May 2019, meaning that this is the first time that the Forum has been convened since the outbreak of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and I am delighted that we can all meet in-person for this Session of CALAF, which I believe reflects our shared optimism for the future of our sector..
5. While global aviation has not yet fully recovered from the impacts of the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, I wish to stress that we have every reason to have confidence in a full, resilient, and sustainable recovery. Our latest forecasts in fact predict a full return to 2019 passenger levels by the end of this year.

6. Immediately following the declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO, the ICAO Council established its Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART). The CART developed and provided practical guidance to governments and industry operators in order to maintain essential services, safely restart the international air transport sector, and now accelerate the recovery through coordination at the global level.
7. The first priority for aviation, and therefore this Forum, is now the building of resilience, so that air transport will be prepared to face similar crisis in the future.
8. ICAO's partnership with industry and other UN specialized agencies, particularly the WHO, with whom we recently signed a cooperative MOU, will foster the development of legal frameworks taking advantage of the lessons learnt from the impact of COVID-19, so that States will be better equipped to deal with the impact of future public health emergencies, on air travel.
9. I was appointed as Secretary General of ICAO in 2021, in the midst of the global aviation crisis. Throughout my mandate, my priority has been to help our Member States accelerate their aviation sectors' recovery from the impact of the pandemic, while abiding by their commitments to ICAO's long-term strategies for the safe, secure and sustainable development of global air connectivity.
10. My priority comprises a focus on instilling good governance and ethics in ICAO's work, and embracing a widespread transformation of our culture and working practices.
11. In all of these matters, the role of lawyers and the importance of the rule of law are fundamental. This is illustrated by the topics on the agenda for this event.
12. CALAF provides a platform for discussion and exchange in an informal setting. It is my hope that you will benefit from the exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences among civil aviation legal advisers from various Member States while building closer relationships with colleagues.
13. This speaks to what I see as the second key priority for this Forum: to help you in building capacity to overcome the potential difficulties encountered in the implementation by your respective States of air law treaties, as well as Standards and Recommended Practices.

14. I understand these difficulties. I am aware that some of you may have joined your respective organizations without any specialized training in international air law. This is not necessarily a negative point, as perspectives from outside the aviation sector can be a major benefit. But whilst you may have quickly learnt on the job, you may still continue to encounter enormous challenges in finding appropriate legal resources relevant to the conduct of your daily work, in this highly specialized field of law.
15. In that context, given the pivotal role and contribution of civil aviation legal advisers to their respective administrations, the 41st Assembly supported a competency framework designed to assist civil aviation administrations in the recruitment, training and professional development of civil aviation legal advisers.
16. As illustrated by the regular Assembly Resolutions on the teaching of air law, ICAO recognizes the undoubted importance of the specialized teaching of air law, as well as the desirability of fostering knowledge of this important subject. This event is an example of the efforts by the Organization to implement the directives of the Assembly, as are the ICAO International Air Law Course and our legal seminars held throughout the world.
17. Similarly, States like Oman who have stepped up to support this initiative and all your States and organizations that have sent participants to attend, should be commended for your commitment.
18. Internships and the secondee programmes also contribute to developing air law practitioners. I'm pleased to highlight that some of the facilitators at this Forum, namely Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma and Mr. Al-Ruqaishi, from Japan and Oman, respectively, were previously seconded by their States to the Legal Affairs and External Relations Bureau. This experience has been highly beneficial for ICAO, and I believe for the States as well.
19. Thus, I wish to take this opportunity to encourage interested States to consider supporting their staff for secondment to ICAO. Please, speak to my colleagues in the Legal Bureau over the next days to find out more about these opportunities.
20. I would now like to turn to the third key priority I would like to underscore today: the critical role Civil Aviation Legal Advisers can play to promote the ratification and implementation of international air law treaties, by supporting their States in the process. Since I became Secretary General, this subject has been a key priority for the Organization, as I personally believe strongly

that a unified global legal framework contributes to the orderly and safe development of international civil aviation.

21. On that note, it is well worth noting that a large number of ICAO treaties have been ratified by almost all ICAO Member States.
22. However, although the more recent treaties may be in force, they have not yet reached universal acceptance, as a large number of States still have to ratify them.
23. I am thinking particularly of the Montreal Convention 1999 on air carrier liability, the Beijing Convention and Protocol of 2010 on aviation safety and security, and the Montréal Protocol 2014 on unruly and disruptive passengers.
24. Oman, our host State today, recently deposited its instruments of accession to the Beijing Convention 2010 and the Montréal Protocol 2014, and I would like to congratulate the State in its commitment to the principle of a unified global framework.
25. On the other hand, some other ICAO treaties, whilst being widely accepted in principle, have not yet entered into force.
26. You may recall that, in 2016, the ICAO Assembly adopted Protocols expanding the size of the Council from 36 to 40 Members and the Air Navigation Commission from 19 to 21.
27. Eighty States have now ratified these Protocols, but we still require over 45 ratifications for these Protocols to enter into force. With these Protocols in force, more States would be represented on the Council and the ANC, thereby allowing for an enhanced representation of States in these essential ICAO bodies.
28. The Organization will continue to explore how to promote the ratification of international air law instruments.
29. It is my hope that you will take advantage of CALAF to discuss with your colleagues, the benefits and importance for States to become party to air law treaties.

30. This year, several States will reach significant anniversaries since their adherence to the Chicago Convention. But in particular, I wish to note that 2023 will mark 50 years since Oman became party to the Chicago Convention, on 24 January 1973.
31. Later today, I will have the honour to meet with His Excellency, Minister Fahd bin Mohammed Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs, who signed Oman's instrument of accession some 50 years ago. These important milestones certainly demonstrate the commitment of ICAO Member States to the success of the Organization and of international civil aviation.
32. On the topic of milestones, I also wish to highlight that we are honored by the presence at this Forum of Ms. Siew Huay Tan from Singapore, who is the Chairperson of the Legal Committee - the first woman ever elected to that position.
33. As many of you may be aware, during the pandemic, Ms. Tan pursued the work of CALAF by convening several online sessions of a Civil Aviation Legal Advisers Exchanges.
34. I wish to acknowledge the presence here today of the other officers of the ICAO Legal Committee:
  - Susanna Metsälampi from Finland,
  - Ellen Manga from Gambia,
  - Mohammed Al-Ruqaishi from Oman,
  - and Alice Braga from Brazil, who are the Vice-Chairpersons of the Legal Committee.
35. The 41st Assembly was also presented many milestones of tremendous significance to the future of civil aviation.
36. The Assembly, in seeking to promote the rule of law, condemned three States for certain infractions of the Chicago Convention.
37. It also adopted a long term global aspirational goal of zero carbon emissions in the aviation sector by 2050, and important resolutions concerning assistance to victims of aircraft accident and their families, and the recovery of the aviation sector further to the COVID-19 pandemic.
38. CALAF is a platform where we will explore the important role of policy and lawmaking processes in advancing sustainable and inclusive development nationally and globally.

39. Also, I am proud of and inspired by the Assembly's affirmation of the importance of diversity in our sector, which led to the adoption of Resolution A41-26, and which will drive the work on gender equality over the next three years.
40. Supporting that Resolution, ICAO and the Civil Aviation Authority of Spain will be organizing the Global Aviation Gender Summit, from 5 to 7 July 2023 in Madrid.
41. I would also like to mention that some time has been set aside during this Forum for me to speak to the next generation of aviation professionals.
42. The attraction and retention of skilled workers is critical for the long-term growth and sustainability of this exciting industry that we all love. I am therefore delighted to have been invited to participate in that session.
43. Given the participation of speakers and panellists from a comprehensive diversity of backgrounds, I am confident that the briefings you receive on these issues will be rich, insightful, and inspiring and will help you identify responses to the new and emerging challenges and opportunities before the aviation community today.
44. In closing, I would like to wish all participants a productive and interesting Forum. I look forward to considering the outcomes from the discussions and exchanges at this Forum, and of course I am proud to pledge the Organization's support for your efforts.
45. Thank you.