



**Remarks by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar  
to the Official Opening of RAAC/17**

*(11 April 2023, Santiago, Chile)*

1. It is my great honour to welcome you to the 17th Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of South America. And thank you to the Government of Chile for hosting the meeting in the beautiful city of Santiago.

2. This meeting is a vital platform for us to come together and discuss the incredible potential of civil aviation in South America.

3. I therefore feel particularly inspired by the theme of this meeting:

*“Transforming (civil aviation in) South America”*

and it will be my pleasure today to bring some ICAO perspectives to the main themes that you will be strategizing.

4. As Secretary General of ICAO, and originating from this very region, I am keenly aware of the importance of civil aviation in driving economic and social development at the national as well as regional levels.

5. The aviation industry plays a crucial role in connecting people, cultures, and economies, and is a major catalyst for trade and tourism.

6. The SAM region has demonstrated significant resilience in both international and domestic air traffic recovery over the past two years, and as we emerge from the pandemic, the aviation industry has an unprecedented opportunity to rebuild itself to be stronger, safer, and more sustainable than ever before. An important lesson from the COVID 19 pandemic, is the crucial role that the civil aviation

authorities play as our knowledge provides a complete perspective on how to resolve issues in our sector, and therefore CAAs should be primarily involved in identifying and implementing the solutions.

7. From this standpoint, this year's RAAC/17 theme could not be more timely and relevant, and **Innovation** will be a key and critical priority to pursue, in order that States and operators can work better together to maximize your air transport potential, and transform this Region to the social and economic benefit of its societies and businesses.
8. Digital modernization is a key aspect of this innovation dynamic, and all over the world today it is changing the way our industry does business.
9. Whether for airlines, airports, or the wide variety of travelers and shippers they serve, increasing digitalization is improving the variety, quality, and efficiency of our services, but also fostering some new challenges.
10. Cyber-space, after all, brings with it the threats of cyber-attacks, and digital convergence can also make more and more systems susceptible to each other's' risks.
11. All of these factors need to be carefully assessed and effectively mitigated if the digital transformation of South American air transport is to achieve its full potential.
12. Increasing amounts of new and very useful data are another very important off-shoot of digital evolution, and in many ways this has become the new gold in the 21st century.
13. The 'data rush' we are now experiencing brings with it some immense possibilities and opportunities for aviation, including via the unprecedented developments in our capability to process and leverage big data to deliver new insights into our processes and operations.
14. Innovative technologies in this area are now pushing the boundaries in every direction in terms of how we collect, analyze, and consume data to sectoral benefit.
15. ICAO for example is already using big data to provide more reliable and timely analyses to States and stakeholders to help them plan and undertake their pandemic recovery implementation decisions.

16. These analytics cover the operational and economic impacts encompassing all aviation stakeholders, including airlines, airports and Air Navigation Services Providers.
17. We have also developed free-access aviation data and analysis dashboards for States, and indeed South America was the very first global region where these were rolled out last year.
18. We need to remain highly cognizant of this data-based reality and seek all possible venues to leverage it to the advantage of States and industry alike.
19. **Resilience is another key priority** in terms of our ongoing efforts to strengthen the regulatory framework and fortify air transport against future public health outbreaks, and in support of it the ICAO Council adopted Amendment 29 to Annex 9 on *Facilitation* early last month.
20. Amendment 29 introduces a number of new and revised health-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as an entire new Chapter 10 to Annex 9 which is focused on public health-related provisions.
21. In the meantime, the already-established Annex 9 SARPs relating to Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data are contributing to faster processing times for bona fide travelers, and enhanced risk assessment and analysis, all while greatly improving the speed and convenience of the border security experience for travelers.
22. These are some incredibly positive transformations to highlight, but I must also add that ICAO's implementation data presently indicates that while 10 of 13 SAM States have addressed the API SARPs, just five have now done so for PNR.
23. Another key to assuring successful recovery and resilience in the aviation sector concerns the need for effective coordination and collaboration among Civil Aviation Authorities, public health agencies and other relevant stakeholders.
24. States should address this through the development of National Air Transport Facilitation Programmes and Committees, notably at the national and airport levels.

25. Lastly in terms of our resilience objectives, the addressing and harmonization of future public health emergencies will greatly benefit from the development of a common multi-scenario framework, taking into account the varying epidemiological scenarios which may be faced.
26. Moving ahead, our combined near-term actions in terms of **governance, planning effectiveness, and competitiveness represent a further key priority** we must consider together, especially if we're to encourage and optimize future SAM Region traffic growth on a sustainable basis.
27. This requires long-range investment timelines for the modernization and expansion of quality aviation infrastructure.
28. User charges often play a major role in funding infrastructure projects, but these **must be applied appropriately** in order to not undermine the very growth we are trying to prepare for.
29. I therefore strongly encourage that your governments more diligently adhere to ICAO's detailed policies on taxes and fees so that the benefits of South American aviation growth can be fully realized.
30. In terms of this region's **competitiveness** more specifically, I would greatly appreciate here the very forward-looking efforts of the South American region during the pandemic, to maintain its regional air connectivity and support vital air cargo supply routes.
31. The multilateral agreement you established supporting seventh freedom traffic rights between LACAC Member States had immediate impacts in terms of pandemic response and recovery, by using a pragmatic approach to innovate in the deployment of international instruments, but in addition it has also significantly contributed to the advancement of ICAO's [\*Long-Term Vision for International Air Transport Liberalization\*](#).
32. Some of you may have noticed that I did not include the important objectives of **environmental protection** among these three priorities today, but that is mainly because our current sustainability objectives. are common and intertwined to each of them.
33. We spent the entire day yesterday focused around presentations and discussions on NetZero 2050 and sustainable aviation fuels. This speaks very clearly to how aviation CO2 emissions reduction is

both a major and urgent priority for our sector, and one requiring the full commitment of all stakeholders in our global community.

34. The only(one) point I wish to add to what I mentioned at the onset of yesterday's discussions, is that ICAO is now preparing for its third Conference on Aviation Alternative Fuels, to be held in Dubai this November, and that we will be conducting a series of preparatory events to assist your States in the lead-up to it.
35. In conclusion, over the next few days, we will discuss a range of topics, including competitiveness, air navigation, safety, security, environmental protection, innovation, human resources, and good governance.
36. We will explore how we can work together to effectively implement strategic plans that will **transform** civil aviation in South America, and create a new vision for the upcoming years.
37. I am pleased to note that this meeting has been organized with both asynchronous and face-to-face components, allowing for maximum participation and engagement.
38. This underscores the importance of collaboration and partnership in driving change, and in achieving our shared goals.
39. I encourage all of you to actively participate in these discussions, share your perspectives, and contribute to the outcomes of this meeting.
40. Let us work together to **transform** civil aviation in South America, and harness its full potential for the benefit of the region and beyond.
41. Let's continue working together towards "*Transforming civil aviation in South America*". Thank you for your attention.