



**Opening remarks by  
the Council President of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,  
to the 2024 Global Implementation Support Symposium**

*(Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 30 April 2024)*

*Her Excellency Raquel Peña, Vice President of the Dominican Republic,  
Acting Director General of the Dominican Institute of Civil Aviation, Héctor Porcella,  
Honourable Ministers, distinguished Directors General of Civil Aviation, industry representatives,  
colleagues, and friends,*

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to ICAO's third annual Global Implementation Support Symposium.

**Spanish translation:**

*Su Excelencia Vicepresidente de la República Dominicana, Raquel Peña,  
Señor Director General de Aviación Civil de la República Dominicana, Héctor Porcella,  
Honorable Ministros, distinguidos Directores Generales de Aviación Civil, representantes de la  
industria, colegas y amigos,*

Es para mí un gran placer darles la bienvenida al tercer Simposio mundial anual de apoyo a la implementación de la OACI.

ICAO greatly appreciates your enthusiastic support.

The presence of a record number of Ministers here today is a testament to the importance of this gathering. I offer my sincerest gratitude for your participation.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the Government of the Dominican Republic and the Instituto Dominicano De Aviación Civil whose tireless and unwavering support has been essential to this week's event.

And of course, we could not have asked for a more beautiful or appropriate venue for our discussions. I emphasize **appropriate** because the Dominican Republic provides an excellent example of how the adoption of good policies in support of air transport can bring huge benefits to a country.

Such an achievement demands top-down engagement, and to highlight this, it is my great honour to thank Her Excellency Raquel Peña, Vice President of the Dominican Republic, for joining us today.

Your presence underscores the value you place on your country's leadership within the global aviation community. It also underscores the importance of our work and the relationships needed to face future challenges.

All of us here acknowledge that air transport plays a crucial role in the social and economic development of our countries and regions by connecting people and cultures. We will have the opportunity to discuss this further over the next few days.

At the same time, air transport has overcome obstacles that seemed insurmountable throughout our history. Amongst these obstacles, the most recent has been the COVID 19 pandemic.

Notwithstanding these last challenges, air transport continues to make progress, has reached pre-COVID traffic levels and is promising to see that it will continue to grow at roughly the same pre-COVID pace.

As you know, one of our most important priorities is the journey towards decarbonization by 2050.

In this regard, a massive leap forward has been achieved at the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November last year in Dubai, with the adoption of a Global Framework for development and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), lower carbon aviation fuels (LCAF) and cleaner energies. In particular, I wish to recall the global target to achieve of 5% carbon emissions reduction by 2030.

Now, our task is to deliver, to operationalize the Global Framework.

I wish to ensure you all that ICAO is committed to this aim, forging ahead through partnerships at the highest levels with investors and fuel producers while ensuring that *No Country is Left Behind*.

The Finvest Hub initiative, which was so well received during CAAF/3 in Dubai and that has been just recently acknowledged and appreciated as well by the G7 Transport Ministers, and that will form part of the discussions during this GISS, will be an important project establishing a platform to facilitate investment partnerships particularly in the interest of countries and regions that do not have SAF production.

Additionally, I am happy to share that 150 States and organizations are now part of ICAO's Assistance, Capacity Building, and Training programme for SAF, known as ACT-SAF.

ACT-SAF provides training, feasibility studies, support for SAF certification and policy development and implementation of specific SAF projects for States. I am grateful to the partnering States that have contributed resources to ICAO in these efforts, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration with you.

The sustainable development of civil aviation is obviously predicated on continued enhancement to safety, security, and capacity. We need to remain focused and not allow ourselves to become complacent. In this regard, together with the two pillars, standard setting and oversight, the third ICAO pillar, assistance and implementation support, which is at the center of this event this week, plays a crucial role.

Capacity building and implementation support are not recent solutions to emerging issues.

Assistance to States and standard-setting are core ICAO missions dating back nearly 80 years.

Let us now flashback.

As a UN-specialized agency, ICAO joined the UN Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance in the early years of its existence. In 1952, ICAO established its Technical Assistance Bureau, the forerunner of today's Capacity Development and Implementation Bureau or CDI.

In those early years, assistance was focused on infrastructure and large-scale projects. Reflecting the world's post-war needs, emphasis was given to training and recruiting technical experts to guide national civil aviation plans and equipment procurement.

Funding came almost exclusively from the UN Development Programme, so ICAO's technical assistance activities and priorities were largely UNDP-driven.

Beginning in the 1970s, as States' capabilities improved, ICAO's technical assistance activities shifted towards cultivating in-state expertise. In the UNDP's early days, needs were both immediate and significant. Utilizing outside experts was the most expedient solution, with less emphasis on developing capabilities at a local level. However, in the following decades, that changed as ICAO turned its attention to greater regional engagement, and harmonization with ICAO standards and recommended practices.

After 30 years of depending on UN funding for its support activities, ICAO increasingly turned to cost recovery projects and resource mobilization programmes to better assist Member States. This model serves us today, with nearly half of our Member States relying on ICAO in some manner for capacity building and implementation support.

I shared this history with you as we must recognize that just as our standards and recommended practices have evolved to meet States' needs, so too has our implementation support strategy.

To date, ICAO has over 13,000 standards codified in its 19 Annexes. The global effective implementation rate for all standards across all States stands at about 70%. That number has steadily grown over the last two decades despite the ever-increasing complexity and volume of standards. Yet many of the most profound needs are faced by resource-constrained States within emerging economic and travel markets.

We must commit to a global implementation support strategy that ensures the ever-increasing benefits of international civil aviation are enjoyed by all citizens of the world, regardless of nationality. Through diplomacy, technical excellence, and a shared vision of success, we have created a safe and secure air transportation system that enables responsible and sustainable growth. Your efforts, guidance, and continued support will ensure our ongoing success.

That brings us together this week - our ongoing quest to support States in achieving their goals for international civil aviation. Our agenda reveals our priorities. We will discuss practical strategies for balancing air travel growth with environmental stewardship, including ICAO's Finvest Hub initiative, which I mentioned earlier. Experts will also weigh in on cybersecurity, crisis preparedness and advanced

air mobility. With regard to the latter, ICAO is organizing the first ever advanced air mobility symposium next September in Montreal.

2024 is also the ICAO Year of Facilitation. ICAO encourages its Member States to be particularly active in advancing of initiatives in this field this year, should they be related to seamless travel experience through the ICAO Digital Travel Credential, to Assistance to Families of accident victims or one of other several topics covered by Facilitation.

Concluding, I wish to recall that this year ICAO celebrates its 80th anniversary, 80 years since the signing of the Chicago Convention on 7 December 1944.

This celebration offers the opportunity to reflect on the incredible achievements over the last 80 years, but also to reflect on how we must better face present and future challenges.

*Over the past 80 years, safeguarding human lives and well-being has been aviation's top priority. Let us keep this front of mind as we strive to enhance the safety, security, and sustainability of flight, and seek to find ways to raise ambitions.*

*Thank you, and I wish you a very productive week ahead.*

**Spanish translation:**

En los últimos 80 años, salvaguardar las vidas humanas y el bienestar ha sido la máxima prioridad de la aviación. Tengámoslo presente mientras nos esforzamos por mejorar la seguridad, la protección y la sostenibilidad de los vuelos, y buscamos la manera de aumentar nuestras ambiciones.

Gracias, y les deseo una semana muy productiva.