



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**  
ICAO Facilitation Global Forum  
Bogotá, Colombia  
21 October 2024

1. Welcome to the ICAO Facilitation Global Forum. I would like to begin by thanking the government of Colombia for hosting this cornerstone event of our 80th anniversary year, bringing together experts and stakeholders to advance one of ICAO's fundamental objectives: facilitating seamless and efficient air travel. As we celebrate 80 years of progress, here we will also set the stage for the next era of aviation facilitation.
2. Our theme, "Seamless Skies: Efficient Facilitation for a Connected World," underscores the critical role of facilitation in shaping the future of global aviation. The pivotal importance of effective and efficient facilitation to the future of our sector is why ICAO designated 2024 as the Year of Facilitation, in support of our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations.
3. We are moreover meeting at a time of significant change and opportunity. The surge in e-commerce, evolving health security needs, and rapid technological advancements are among the priorities demanding our immediate attention and innovative solutions.
4. ICAO's role in this evolving environment is clear, to foster the emergence of a seamless, efficient, secure and accessible global air transport network.
5. At the core of our vision lies the passenger experience. The ICAO Digital Travel Credential exemplifies our commitment to innovation in facilitation. This technology promises to revolutionize border crossings, enhancing efficiency without compromising security. Our approach is comprehensive. We supplement it with core infrastructure such as the ICAO Public Key Directory

and implement intelligent processes with appropriate data sharing. The results? We are not only improving the individual experience of each passenger but also increasing the capacity and resilience of the entire aviation system.

6. This focus on seamless travel naturally extends to our approach for global health security. The Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) serves as a bridge between aviation and public health, ensuring that our facilitation efforts adapt to evolving health challenges. Our partnerships with organizations like the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization enable us to integrate health considerations into every step of a trip, from pre-flight procedures through to arrival. These collaborations aim to enhance the overall preparedness and resilience of global health infrastructure through improved data sharing and emergency response protocols.
7. Complementing our efforts in passenger transport, we turn our attention to the rapidly evolving air cargo sector. The surge in e-commerce demands innovative solutions in trade facilitation. Our collaboration with the World Customs Organization aims to create a digital ecosystem for air cargo that matches the efficiency we seek in passenger travel. By harmonizing these efforts, we move closer to our goal of truly seamless skies, where both people and goods move swiftly and securely across borders.
8. Taken together, these form a cohesive strategy for the future of facilitation. As we explore these interconnected areas over the coming days, I urge you to consider how each element contributes to our overarching vision of seamless, efficient, and secure global connectivity.
9. Let me emphasize the importance of our discussions here. The outcomes of this forum will guide our preparations for the 42nd ICAO Assembly, helping us identify key priorities for its agenda.
10. Facilitation will continue to feature prominently in the ICAO calendar. Next month, we will host the second dedicated event on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families and the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) symposium. Additionally, a symposium on accessibility

in international civil aviation is being organized jointly with Airport Council International (ACI) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), reflecting our shared commitment to inclusive air travel.

11. During our time in Bogota, we have the opportunity to shape global connectivity in ways that will have lasting impacts on the international community.
12. I urge all participants to carry the momentum from this event back to their States and organizations. I invite you to consider the 2024 ICAO Year of Facilitation as an opportunity to organize events, discussions, and activities to celebrate and advocate for our priorities.
13. ICAO, through its Secretariat at Headquarters and Regional Offices, stands ready to provide advice and support.
14. Together, we can create a future where air travel is seamless, secure, and enriching for everyone. Let us approach this challenge with determination, expertise, and global vision.
15. ICAO's new long-term Strategic Plan for 2026-2050 sets an ambitious course for aviation's future. It reaffirms our commitment to safety and security while emphasizing environmental sustainability, aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The plan prioritizes seamless, accessible mobility for all, underpinned by robust legal frameworks and equitable economic development. Crucially, it places people at the center - passengers and shippers alike - ensuring that our facilitation efforts and technological advancements serve their needs directly.
16. It is no coincidence that ICAO is launching this plan as we commemorate our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We see this milestone as an opportunity to envision and prepare for the decades ahead, much like the visionary delegates attending the Chicago Convention did mid last-century.

17. I would like to highlight that ICAO is celebrating their leadership this December by returning to Chicago, where we will convene an Extraordinary Session of the ICAO Council as well as high-level roundtables to discuss the present and future of international civil aviation. I would like to extend a warm invitation to all our Member States to join us at this memorable event
  
18. Returning to the matters here today in Bogota, I invite you now to make the most of the dialogue by continuing in this same spirit of collaboration. Your contributions at this symposium will be crucial in advancing our vision of seamless skies and efficient facilitation for a connected world, and I wish you all enriching and fruitful discussions.
  
19. Thank you.