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**Opening Address by  
the Council President of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,  
to the ICAO Advanced Air Mobility Symposium 2024  
(AAM 2024)**

*(ICAO Headquarters, Montréal, 9 September 2024)*

*Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues and friends,  
Good morning,*

As ICAO marks its 80th birthday, we find ourselves at an important juncture in aviation's ongoing evolution.

Advanced Air Mobility is a crucial component of this evolution.

It presents us with opportunities and challenges that, while reminiscent of past innovations, are uniquely complex in their scope and potential impact. Our task here is not to dwell on the past, but to shape the future. The discussions held during this symposium will contribute significantly to the development of this kind of air transportation.

This inaugural ICAO Advanced Air Mobility Symposium 2024 is the first step on our collective journey to shape the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) ecosystem. It builds upon the momentum generated by the 41st ICAO Assembly and the recent 14th Air Navigation Conference, both of which recognized the urgent need to address the rapidly evolving AAM landscape.

Our theme, "Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Global Harmonization and Interoperability: Challenges and Opportunities," reflects the complex landscape before us. It demands our collective expertise, innovative thinking, and global collaboration.

AAM represents more than a collection of new technologies; it embodies a paradigm shift in how we conceive of aviation and urban transportation. This shift is characterized by a fundamental rethinking of airspace use, vehicle design, and traffic management, moving towards more flexible, sustainable, and integrated transportation systems.

Technologies like Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft, and UAS Traffic Management (UTM) systems are manifestations of this new paradigm. AAM promises to revolutionize the transportation of passengers, goods, and services by reimagining the very nature of aerial mobility in urban and regional contexts. However, realizing this vision

requires careful consideration and planning at a global, ecosystem-wide level, as we navigate the complex interplay of technology, infrastructure, regulation, and societal needs.

The complexity of this undertaking is immense, necessitating insights from both core aviation stakeholders and new entrants. Your diverse perspectives are vital as we navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

### **The ICAO Mandate and AAM**

ICAO's leadership role is essential in this evolving landscape. During this symposium, we aim to facilitate discussions, listen to diverse perspectives, and learn from your collective expertise. Our goal is to bring all of those elements together to inform the global development of AAM.

Specifically, we seek your insights on current AAM technologies, ongoing initiatives, and the unique challenges you face. We want to understand the potential impacts of AAM in your regions, both positive and negative if any. Your contributions will provide valuable input for ICAO's ongoing work, helping us address the complexities of AAM implementation across varied global contexts.

We particularly want your perspectives on how AAM might be implemented differently across various global contexts. How can we ensure that AAM benefits are inclusive and equitable across different economies and geographies?

Furthermore, we need to understand the potential drawbacks and risks associated with AAM so we can address them fully. This includes examining how these may vary across different cultures and economies.

We also seek your input on how AAM fits into the broader context of transportation innovation. How does it compare to or complement other emerging technologies in your regions?

The regulatory landscape for AAM is complex and evolving. The collective experience and expertise gathered here are invaluable assets. We invite you to share your insights on regulator challenges and solutions, helping us to create a framework that is both robust and adaptable. This framework should not only accommodate but also foster continued technological advancements in the field.

Allow me to highlight that the ICAO Air Navigation Commission has established the Advanced Air Mobility Study Group, demonstrating our commitment to proactive leadership in this domain. This group will play a crucial role in developing a holistic vision and framework for AAM, as mandated by the 41st Assembly.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Maintaining the highest safety standards will remain our top priority. We must develop new operational concepts that seamlessly blend AAM, including UAS and eVTOL operations, with existing air traffic management systems and emerging UTM frameworks.

We also have a very significant opportunity before us to advance our environmental goals, particularly in reducing aviation's carbon footprint through the integration of electric and alternative propulsion systems in AAM vehicles.

To realize the full benefits of AAM's potential to transform mobility, we must find ways to ensure its impact is inclusive and equitable. This includes considering how AAM can support humanitarian assistance, crisis management, and provide other social benefits.

This brings me to my next point: the importance of global harmonization. As we develop AAM systems, we must ensure interoperability across borders. Our success will be measured not just by technological advancements but by our ability to create a truly global, integrated AAM ecosystem.

### **The Path Forward**

Over the next four days, you will engage in discussions covering a wide range of topics. These include technological advancements in UAS and eVTOL aircraft, digital services, and automation. We will also address key considerations surrounding autonomous operations. We will delve into the evolving role of humans in this new ecosystem and consider the new skill sets required for the AAM workforce in the future.

We will address key areas such as safety and risk management, security and facilitation, legal and insurance frameworks, airspace integration, and environmental impacts.

This event will also explore critical components of AAM implementation, including infrastructure development, vertiports design, traffic information capabilities (such as UTM), new approaches for information and data management, and navigation systems. Your discussions will shape our collective understanding and guide our actions in the years to come.

### **Call to Action**

These discussions will directly inform the Call to Action that we will develop during this symposium. This document will be a key outcome of our meeting, synthesizing our collective insights and proposed commitments.

As we formulate this Call to Action, we invite you to consider how its principles can be implemented within your organizations and jurisdictions. Your ongoing engagement and proactive involvement are essential for the successful global integration of AAM.

To this end, I call upon all of you—Member States, industry leaders, innovators, and stakeholders—to engage fully in this process. Share your knowledge, voice your concerns, and propose solutions. This active participation is fundamental to realizing AAM's full potential while effectively addressing its challenges.

As we move forward, let me take a moment to recap them by focusing our work together around three critical objectives. First, we must develop robust, flexible regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation while ensuring safety. Second, we must invest in research and development to advance AAM technologies and operations. Third, we should foster public-private partnerships to accelerate the implementation of AAM solutions. By concentrating on these key areas, we can create a solid foundation for the future of Advanced Air Mobility.

In conclusion, the ideas and commitments generated during this Symposium will play a critical role in shaping the future of aviation. Together, we can create an AAM ecosystem that is safe, efficient, sustainable, and beneficial to all.

I encourage you to approach these discussions with open minds and a collaborative spirit. Let us seize this opportunity to redefine the boundaries of aviation and create a future that serves the global community.

Thank you for your attention and commitment. I look forward to the insightful discussions and concrete outcomes that will emerge from this First ICAO Advanced Air Mobility Symposium. Together, let us chart the course for the future of aviation.

Thank you.