



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO  
Mr. Raymond Benjamin  
to the  
World Customs Organization(WCO) Council  
(Brussels, 24 June 2011)**

1. It is a great honour for me, on behalf of ICAO, to address the Council of the World Customs Organization.
2. Your invitation to address this strategic audience of government and industry decision-makers provides me with the opportunity to reinforce the importance of increased collaboration between the WCO and ICAO to significantly strengthen and protect global trade – a common objective of our two organizations.
3. In just a few minutes, your Secretary General, my colleague, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, and I will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) calling for increased cooperation on air cargo security worldwide and other issues of significance to transportation and trade.
4. By working more closely together, we can better counter the multiple threats posed by terrorism – anywhere and at anytime.
5. In October 2010, authorities thwarted a plot to sabotage two aircraft by means of explosives hidden inside computer printer cartridges. The

incident was a clear sign that terrorists will seek and exploit any perceived vulnerability in the aviation security net. Fortunately, disaster was averted by quick action based on the sharing of intelligence.

6. The incident nevertheless underscored the urgency of reinforcing air cargo security measures.
7. This is not an easy task. The global air cargo system is a complex, multifaceted network for transporting vast amounts of freight, packages and mail on both passenger and all-cargo aircraft.
8. Still, we cannot afford cumbersome procedures and costly delays. The value of air transport lies in speed of delivery. Nothing must unduly impede the timely movement of goods.
9. These specificities define our goal – to improve security without sacrificing efficiency.
10. The solution is clear – optimum, end-to-end security of the global supply chain through the consistent application of relevant and effective controls, from start to finish during the shipping process.
11. Over the past few years, I have observed a growing support for establishing supply chain security. One reason is the very real risk of explosives being planted inside cargo during a multi-stage shipping process.

12. My firm belief is that ICAO and its Member States, the WCO, the International Maritime Organization, the Universal Postal Union and industry partners, all have a crucial and complementary role in making sure that the global supply chain is totally secure.
13. This is the message behind a Declaration on Aviation Security unanimously adopted last fall by ICAO's Assembly and supported by international aviation organizations. It stresses that global cooperation is essential in the development and implementation of measures and best practices to protect the air cargo supply chain, and in all other facets of aviation security.
14. To address new and emerging threats to air cargo, related ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices have been further strengthened and include a new requirement for Member States to establish a supply chain security process. The new provisions come into effect on 1 July.
15. In a few weeks, we will be issuing a State letter urging our Members to develop procedures to distinguish between high-risk cargo and more conventional shipments, and to implement appropriate methods to screen high-risk cargo.

16. In recent months, ICAO and the WCO have been working closely to identify ways in which all means available to us can be employed to more effectively secure air cargo. This inter-agency teamwork is crucial because supply chain issues relate to both aviation security and Customs procedures – hence the need to consider simultaneously the requirements of aviation and Customs security.
  
17. We want to identify potential synergies to improve security and streamline processes that otherwise may inhibit the efficient and timely flow of goods.
  
18. Given the volume of goods transported every day around the globe and the impracticality of screening all cargo, a risk-based approach is by far the preferred strategy. WCO and ICAO experts are examining the application of risk management to cargo in order to identify threats and carry out appropriate security measures. Vetting advance cargo information for this purpose offers much promise.

19. Perhaps the time-tested methodology of “risking” used by the WCO – which involves assessing risk based on essential information about shipments – can be extended to include aviation security. Another interesting possibility is for our respective frameworks of standards to mutually recognize the established concepts of Regulated Agents and Known Consignors in aviation security, and Authorised Economic Operators in the Customs world. The responsibilities of these official functions in the supply chain already share characteristics and overlap at specific points in the transfer of cargo to airlines. Greater coordination could further strengthen security, while increasing efficiency and reducing costs.
  
20. These and other initiatives to improve air cargo security might be considered by ICAO’s Aviation Security Panel. This Panel is composed of experts nominated by States and observers nominated by industry stakeholders. It has recently established a working group whose first objective is to recommend practical measures that States can adopt to enhance the security of air cargo carried on passenger and cargo aircraft. It will also recommend ways to harmonize ICAO air cargo security measures with respect to the standards, policies and guidance material of other key regulatory entities, including the WCO. I am very pleased that the WCO is actively taking part in the deliberations of ICAO’s Air Cargo Security Working Group.

21. I realize that each State must contend with its own set of political, regulatory and administrative circumstances. It is at the national level that changes can and should be made. At the same time, the overall effectiveness of measures requires global harmonization, particularly in the case of air cargo security. The global security net I alluded to earlier is only as strong as its weakest link. We know that – and we must work together to make sure that it remains strong and impenetrable anywhere around the world.
  
22. That is the essence of what I wanted to share with you today. ICAO is actively involved in a wide range of activities designed to enhance air cargo security, in a consistent and harmonized manner, in cooperation with all stakeholders. In this universal effort, the growing collaboration between the WCO and ICAO can be a model for how we tackle any threat to the health and growth of global trade.

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