



Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Regional Conference on Aviation Security
(Moscow, 21 November 2011)

I sincerely thank the Russian Federation for hosting this meeting and for reaffirming its commitment to strengthening aviation security through greater regional and international cooperation.

A number of similar meetings have been organized worldwide in 2011 and 2012. Two have already taken place, in Asia and in Africa, and others are planned in South America, Asia/Pacific and the Middle East. In all cases, the objective is to promote the implementation, in a globally harmonized manner, of the Declaration on Aviation Security adopted by the ICAO Assembly last year. We are also looking at building consensus on critical aviation security priorities and issues in advance of the High-Level Conference on Aviation Security scheduled for September 2012 in Montréal.

Over the next few days, we therefore have a unique opportunity to consider the European perspective for implementing the Declaration.

When I speak of Europe, I am referring not only to the Member States of the European Union or of the European Civil Aviation Conference, but rather to the wider ICAO European and North Atlantic Region. It is an area encompassing 61 States and Territories that all have a vested interest in a positive outcome to this meeting.

I personally attach a lot of importance to supporting aviation security in this Region. In just a few weeks, and for the first time ever, there will be a Regional Officer in the Paris Office dedicated exclusively to aviation security matters. He will work closely with his counterparts at the EU, ECAC and other organizations, complementing their activities and working with States to enhance overall aviation security.

Such cooperation is essential for reaching our individual and collective goals. In fact, cooperation among Member States of ICAO is the catalyst that brought us here today.

Following the unsuccessful attack on a commercial airliner in December 2009, ICAO organized a series of Ministerial-level conferences on aviation security in different regions, all for the purpose of addressing this and other evolving threats. In every case, States committed to protect civil aviation against all forms of terrorism. They emphasized the importance of taking collective responsibility and action, fully recognizing that terrorism is a global problem that requires global solutions.

The regional meetings ultimately resulted in the Assembly Declaration, which I consider an unequivocal statement of intent to eradicate this insidious threat to the global air transport system.

Our challenge at this meeting is to turn nice words into concrete action.

To help the process along, allow me to cite just a few examples of how ICAO is implementing some of the provisions of the Declaration.

The Declaration urges States to strengthen security screening procedures and to use modern technologies to detect prohibited articles. Here, ICAO is working with national aviation security authorities and industry on future passenger screening checkpoint models that could integrate new technologies, intelligence and techniques to detect both objects and persons that may pose a threat.

Where the Declaration urges States to implement strengthened and harmonized measures and best practices for air cargo security, ICAO has already taken the lead. We adopted new and more stringent security standards in Annex 17, notably a requirement for States to establish a supply chain security process for air cargo.

We have also intensified our collaboration with the World Customs Organization and other regulatory agencies to develop appropriate security controls for air cargo. Our goal is to achieve the highest level of end-to-end cargo security while preventing unnecessary delays in the movement of goods.

In the legal domain, ICAO has been instrumental in establishing new air law instruments to criminalize actions that threaten aviation security. The ICAO diplomatic conference in Beijing last year was a milestone in the development of a comprehensive legal framework for international civil aviation. It called on States to fully implement these and other legal instruments dealing with aviation security.

Finally, ICAO is implementing an aviation security assistance strategy based on sound risk-management principles and which focuses resources and attention on Member States with the greatest need for assistance in building and maintaining a robust security framework. The strategy relies heavily on the results of our aviation security audit activities to identify security shortcomings. The work is funded both from ICAO's budget and from voluntary contributions from States that understand and support a global approach to aviation security.

Clearly, the priorities of States are also ICAO's priorities, and we must all work together to respond to the continuing threat of terrorism. Conferences such as this one in Moscow can drive collaborative regional efforts, contribute to global consensus and set the stage for the next year's Aviation Security Conference.

All current and emerging issues will be up for discussion in Montréal, including staff screening as a measure to address the so-called "insider threat" at airports, and the evolution of ICAO's audit programme. On the agenda is another subject of prime concern for many States, namely the sustainability of security measures.

Safeguarding civil aviation remains a formidable challenge. I urge you to take this opportunity to agree on actions that reflect global priorities and contribute to a worldwide solution to the problem of terrorism.
