



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Regional Conference on Aviation Security
(Kuala Lumpur, 11-12 January 2012)**

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this Regional Conference on Aviation Security. I sincerely thank Malaysia for hosting this meeting and for reaffirming its commitment to strengthening aviation security through greater regional and international cooperation.

This is the fourth in a series of such conferences. The first three were held in Asia, Africa and Europe and the final two will take place in the coming months in South America and the Middle East.

In all cases, the objective was, and remains, to support the implementation of the Declaration on Aviation Security adopted by the ICAO Assembly in October 2010. At the same time, we are seeking consensus on critical aviation security issues and priorities as we prepare for the global High-Level Conference on Aviation Security from 12 to 14 September 2012 at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal.

Here, in Kuala Lumpur, we have a timely opportunity to feed into this process by providing the Asia/Pacific region's perspective on implementation issues.

With your valuable insight, we can build on the results of the initial conference of last February, in India, where we agreed on a plan for implementing the nine specific commitments of the Declaration throughout Central Asia.

We can, and we should, adopt a joint statement for Asia/Pacific that takes into account the unique challenges you face here. To that end, I strongly encourage you to share your experiences, concerns and especially lessons learned.

I have no doubt that cooperation will be at the centre of your discussions. Cooperation is the hallmark of global aviation and it is the catalyst for our being here today.

Most of you probably remember the thwarted attack on a commercial airliner in December 2009, when a passenger attempted to detonate an explosive device while in flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. Soon after that incident, I proposed that Ministerial-level conferences be held in various parts of the world to respond to such new and emerging threats to civil aviation.

In every case, States committed to protect the air transport system 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.

These Ministerial meetings ultimately resulted in the Assembly Declaration of October 2010, and which I consider an unequivocal statement of intent to eradicate this insidious menace to the integrity of the global air transport system.

The time has come for turning words into concrete action.

At ICAO, we have already implemented a number of the provisions of the Assembly Resolution.

Where the Declaration urges States to strengthen security screening procedures and use modern technologies to detect prohibited articles, we are working with national aviation security authorities and industry to develop future passenger screening checkpoint models. The goal is to better integrate new technologies, intelligence and specific techniques to detect both objects and persons that may pose a threat.

And where the Declaration calls for strengthened and harmonized measures and best practices for air cargo security, ICAO 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, new security controls for air cargo 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 of September 2010 in Beijing 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. This means that ICAO is focusing its resources and attention on Member States with the greatest need for assistance in building and maintaining a robust security framework. This strategy relies heavily on our aviation security audits to identify deficiencies. 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 ICAO's priorities, and we must all work together to eliminate the continuing threat of terrorism. Conferences such as this one in Kuala Lumpur can considerably enhance collaborative regional efforts, shape consensus, and set the stage for the global aviation security conference in September.

I assure you that 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 security audit programme. On the agenda will be another subject of prime concern for many States – the sustainability of security measures.

Safeguarding civil aviation against all forms of unlawful interference is a constant and formidable challenge. I urge you, at this conference, to agree on specific actions that reflect the particular security needs of the Asia/Pacific region and that further contribute to a worldwide solution to the problem of terrorism in the sky.
