



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO  
Mr. Raymond Benjamin  
to the**

*Eighteenth Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation  
Regional Group (APIRG/18)  
(Kampala, 27-30 March 2012)*

Honourable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a very special honour for me to be here in the beautiful country of Uganda.

I would like to express my gratitude and compliments to the host of the 18th meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group and to the Civil Aviation Authority of Uganda, not only for the planning and preparation of the meeting, but also for the excellent hospitality.

For ICAO, 2012 is a very important year as it will culminate in November with the 12th Air Navigation Conference which will address the Aviation System Block Upgrades – the so-called ASBUs. The ASBUs were first introduced to the international community at the Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium in September 2011 and we must now all work together during the 12th Air Navigation Conference to reach consensus, obtain commitments and formulate recommendations to achieve a harmonized global air navigation system for international civil aviation.

To share with States the ASBU approach to performance planning for air navigation systems at the regional and national levels, a series of workshops will be conducted during 2012. The workshops corresponding to the AFI region will be held in Dakar (in English and in French) from 16 to 20 July, and in Nairobi (in English only) from 13 to 17 August. I trust you will find these workshops extremely worthwhile and I would encourage you to participate.

I am well aware that the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group has been working diligently to tackle air navigation issues facing the region. Over the years, these issues have become more complex and more difficult to resolve, but there is no doubt that improvements to the air navigation system in the AFI region are needed and, indeed, demanded.

To solve some of the long-standing air navigation matters or deficiencies that exist in the African region, I firmly believe that a proactive approach involving States, international organizations and the support of ICAO, is the only way to effectively establish regional implementation mechanisms.

You may ask yourselves... “How can he be so convinced?” It’s easy: when we have collaborated, we have been successful. In the last year, based on the performance-based navigation concept, nearly seventy (70) new user-preferred ATS route trajectories have been implemented and half of these were in the African region. This is a significant development, contributing to safety improvements in the terminal and approach phases of flight, reducing not only operational costs but also CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

ICAO has taken decisive steps to ensure the growth of civil aviation while addressing environmental protection. We have long understood the connection between air navigation system improvements and environmental benefits. The challenge has been, however, to demonstrate this direct link. By joining forces with IATA and CANSO, we now have the means to assess the benefits of operational improvements such as PBN — I am referring to the ICAO Fuel Savings Estimation Tool.

I have been informed that your region will receive the tool during this meeting and I urge the APIRG to deploy this tool widely in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are many air navigation developments underway. With these come challenges that we must work together to overcome. But there are also benefits that will improve safety and efficiency.

In these exciting times, the role of APIRG is as critical as ever. You have the opportunity to make this Group more effective so that the challenges can be met.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a very successful meeting.

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