



**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF ICAO,  
MR. RAYMOND BENJAMIN,  
TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE  
AVIATION SECURITY PANEL**

(Montréal – 8 April 2013)

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all participants to this meeting of the Aviation Security Panel.

ICAO's efforts to enhance global aviation security begin with sound advice, and so we greatly value the expertise available from this Panel. By bringing together experts from around the world and from different sectors, we can benefit from advice that takes into consideration a wide range of views.

Consensus is truly a hallmark of ICAO's work. In no field is consensus more important than in aviation security.

Thanks to enhanced international cooperation, as called for by the 2010 Assembly Declaration on Aviation Security, we have witnessed real progress in strengthening the global aviation security framework.

Last September's High-level Conference on Aviation Security, in particular, was a milestone. Its success is attributed in part to the Panel's unanimity on difficult, longstanding issues — and I congratulate you on a job well done.

I also appreciate your direct involvement in organizing the event. The strong support given to the Secretariat helped to ensure the Conference achieved and even exceeded our expectations. Most importantly, it helped us close critical gaps in the aviation security policy framework, particularly in the vulnerable area of cargo security and the problem of the insider threat.

As a direct result of the Conference outcomes, the Council moved swiftly to approve a fast-track Amendment 13 to Annex 17, in order to more comprehensively address the risk to cargo and mail, and the security measures to be applied to persons other than passengers.

The Conference results were also assured by consensus-building regional events. I am referring, of course, to the series of aviation security conferences that were hosted by States in 2011 and 2012. As with the High-level Conference, ICAO's experience with these meetings was very positive. In all cases, stakeholders agreed on concrete actions for collectively and individually strengthening aviation security in accordance with the 2010 Assembly Declaration.

I am particularly pleased that these regional events, and ultimately the High-level Conference, supported our proposal to implement a more flexible, proactive and risk-based approach to the aviation security audit process. The transition to the continuous monitoring approach will occur next year, with full implementation in 2015.

The Universal Security Audit Programme has been a tremendously successful undertaking, though its findings continue to reveal vulnerabilities and point to the need for more focused assistance. I am confident the changes introduced under the continuous monitoring approach will allow the programme to remain a powerful tool for achieving improvements.

ICAO's efforts to assist States in resolving deficiencies are particularly vital now that the USAP has highlighted many of the legal, administrative and operational problems that must be addressed.

While the Panel naturally focuses on closing gaps in the aviation security policy framework, the consistent worldwide implementation of critical security measures is our greatest challenge and a priority for ICAO in the coming triennium. The Panel can help us strengthen this process by giving recommendations on the best way to measure the effectiveness of our assistance activities.

In the past few years, the sustainability of aviation security measures has emerged as a major theme. The High-level Conference, in fact, strongly urged greater attention to passenger satisfaction through the introduction of more efficient risk-based security and facilitation processes.

It recommended that any development of SARPs take into account the interests of passengers and the need to control the cost of security, largely by focusing on achieving the necessary security outcomes with less emphasis on how these are achieved.

The quest for sustainability is here to stay, given the commitment at the highest level to improve security while minimizing any adverse consequences. It is mainly for this reason that I proposed ICAO pursue, as one of its strategic objectives, the enhancement of *both* aviation security and facilitation.

I am pleased to inform you that the Council has given its approval for this strategic objective for the next triennium, in order to heighten the visibility and importance of our efforts to facilitate air transport, and will seek the Assembly's endorsement this autumn.

As mentioned at the outset, we have made much progress in strengthening aviation security in the past few years. But of course our achievements will mean nothing if we let down our guard. The task of safeguarding civil aviation from acts of unlawful interference remains a formidable challenge because, as we all know, the threat is real and is constantly evolving.

I am confident the spirit of cooperation that has been characteristic of AVSEC Panel meetings will permit us to act decisively on a range of issues. Where aviation security is concerned, we truly have no option but to cooperate fully.

It is my honour now to declare open this twenty-fourth meeting of the Aviation Security Panel. You have important work to do, and I wish you every success in your deliberations.

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