



**Opening remarks by the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Raymond Benjamin,
to the Flight Safety Foundation Business Aviation Safety Seminar**

(Montréal, QC – Wednesday, 10 April 2013)

Thank you Captain Hiatt for your kind introduction.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you all to ICAO's Headquarters here in Montréal today, for this important and timely Flight Safety Foundation Seminar on business aviation safety.

ICAO, as all of you are aware, has a long history of working with the business aviation sector. In fact the first Standards and Recommended Practices for international general aviation were adopted by the Council of ICAO in 1968, almost half a century ago.

An excellent recent example of cooperation between us was the modernization of Annex 6, which subsequently resulted in the very first International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations. This was a defining moment in your community's participation in ICAO through the International Business Aviation Council, and the proposals you submitted were accepted in minimal time by our Member States, Air Navigation Commission, and the ICAO Council – clear evidence of the quality of your work.

But as we consider more specifically today's air transport environment and the challenges facing modern business aviation, what becomes clearly apparent is that there is room for even closer cooperation between us if we hope to achieve our mutual goals.

I will therefore take the opportunity of these opening remarks to review some of the main challenges and opportunities before us, as well as to more specifically highlight the progress we've been making as we continue to optimize our collaborative potential.

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ICAO's over-arching goal is to ensure that the global air transport system better responds to the needs of all members of the aviation community – which include by definition business aviation.

Standardization and regulation have been essential to the stability of global air transport development over the decades, but we must be careful in the sense that an excess of stability can hinder how quickly aviation can react to new challenges.

ICAO therefore seeks at every turn, and with every stakeholder group we deal with, to ensure that our regulatory frameworks balance this need for stability while continuing to adapt to the needs of modern air transport. In other words, we must encourage, rather than hinder progress.

This task is sometimes compared to having to repair a car while it speeds down the highway, as obviously we cannot stop the global aviation system and put it up on blocks in order to adjust and refine it.

This reality makes our task much more complex but, given the historic progress of aviation and its current role in supporting increased economic activity and prosperity worldwide, it is one I would argue we have so far been very successful at.

To help ICAO focus its priorities most effectively in light of these general challenges, we will be concentrating the Organization's efforts over the next triennium into five separate Strategic Objectives. These will serve to drive increased international progress in the areas of:

- Safety
- Capacity and Efficiency
- Environmental responsibility
- Economic Sustainability
- and Security and Facilitation

As we are amongst primarily safety professionals here today, I will be concentrating my remarks in this area accordingly.

One important safety-related development which I would like to highlight from the outset is the important Memorandum of Cooperation signed between ICAO and the Flight Safety Foundation late last year, covering Standards development work, data sharing and analysis, training and technical assistance.

Stronger cooperative ties of this nature will facilitate the harmonization of proactive and predictive safety metrics, as well as the increased global prevalence of a just safety culture, all of which will be of benefit to the full range of operator communities we serve, including business aviation.

This agreement also clearly supports ICAO's Global Safety Strategy for the next triennium, which calls for improved standardization, increased collaboration among aviation stakeholders, new information sharing initiatives and investment prioritization with respect to the technical and human resources required to ensure safe operations over the longer-term.

This strategy in its entirety will be very clearly laid out in the next edition of our Global Aviation Safety Plan, which will be released after it receives endorsement by our Assembly later this year.

Given that the dramatic expansion of the air transport network over the next two decades poses one of the more significant risks to aviation's current safety success rate, I'd like to move on now to review some of our near-term capacity-related challenges.

As with scheduled services as projected through 2030, there is likewise optimism for robust growth in business aviation services over the coming decades, notably when we take into account current sales projections for related aircraft.

At the same time, your sector is also beginning to expand beyond the use of lighter jets to aircraft as large as the Boeing 747-8. This expansion of the size and scope of the business aviation fleet poses significant operational concerns, but ones which I am confident you will continue to manage safely and effectively.

Like many of you here today, I acknowledge these new benchmarks of business aviation growth and fleet development as clear indications that your services are becoming more and more essential to an expanding and increasingly important segment of the world's population.

And yet, while this continued growth and increase in stature are certainly good news for your community, they also reinforce the fact that critical aviation systems are continuing to be placed under greater and greater pressure with each passing year.

This highlights why our focus on safety is more important today than ever before, even though our safety results are also better at this point in history than they have ever been.

With this in mind, and with our new Safety Report due to be released in just a few short days, I wish to acknowledge the general aviation community's need for better international reporting on safety outcomes which are applicable to general aviation operations.

While our current reporting still only focuses on scheduled services, I wish to affirm for you all today that ICAO has heard your calls for the development of a more comprehensive taxonomy that better represents your community's safety performance.

Another development in the safety area, and one which will doubtless be of interest to many of you here today, was that the ICAO Council has now formally adopted a new Safety Management Annex to the Chicago Convention.

The creation of the new Annex 19 consolidates provisions relating to State Safety Programmes and Safety Management Systems into a new single source. It is hoped this document will assist safety stakeholders in government, industry and general aviation as they begin to implement these important international requirements.

As with most of ICAO's more significant achievements, the realization of Annex 19 required collaboration with our Member States and key international organizations, not to mention close consultation with groups such as the International Business Aviation Council. All of these inputs have served to make this document a more practical and effective resource.

As IBAC has recently become an active participant on ICAO's Safety Management Panel, we will also look forward to your community's continued suggestions as we seek to further refine Annex 19's provisions, notably on the scalability of SMS implementation requirements.

I am also pleased that international business aviation, through IBAC, counts itself among the official Observers to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission. In ICAO terms an observer by no way implies a silent participant, and I can assure you that your collective voice is being duly considered as the Commission carries out its important work.

I would lastly highlight that ICAO has additionally formed a new *General Aviation Sub-group* to our *Operations Panel* that can address the most pressing technical needs of your community.

This also brings to mind, however, that there are often non-technical barriers to your operations which are also extremely difficult to overcome. These may involve access to information, the time required to get over-flight and/or landing permits, not to mention airspace equipage requirements that can restrict your operations. I wish to assure you that ICAO will be doing what it can, when it can, to try and minimize these burdens on your operations.

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Ladies and gentleman, ICAO Member States around the world are keenly aware that the growth potential of business aviation can only be realized through optimized policies, regulations and infrastructure. This is part and parcel of the modernization of the global regulatory framework currently under way, both operationally and economically.

At the same time, I invite the business aviation community to remain fully engaged in this process, at the global and regional levels, notably through IBAC's ongoing involvement in the deliberations of ICAO's many Panels, Committees, Working Groups and Conferences.

I wish to end today by commending once again both the Flight Safety Foundation and IBAC for their continued and deepening commitments to ICAO's work. Together, we can help to define a future air transport network that is dynamic, sustainable, and more accommodating to all operators.

I thank you again for the invitation to speak to you here this morning and I wish you all a very productive and engaging Seminar.

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