



**Address by the Council President  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu,  
to the Global Aviation Ministerial Summit**

*(Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – 31 August 2016)*

*Honourable Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,  
His Excellency Sulaiman Al-Hamdan*

*Distinguished Ministers and other Honoured Guests,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure to join you here in Riyadh, the very impressive capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Let me please extend ICAO's deepest thanks and appreciation to His Majesty the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, whose kind patronage of civil aviation matters in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has permitted us to meet here today.

I would also wish to thank our eminent colleagues in Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation for the excellent organization and lovely premises provided for this important meeting.

I would like to begin this morning by stressing how encouraged I am by the key priorities established for this event.

Your goals for more effectively aligned civil aviation planning and programmes, as well as enhanced partnership and cooperation, will be critical to helping the Middle East Region more effectively respond to aviation's key global challenges.

These principles apply across all of ICAO's Strategic Objectives for civil aviation, and they have been essential over the years to how air transport has grown to become so fundamentally important to the sustainable socio-economic prosperity of all States and Regions.

As some of you will be aware, in recognition of the need for enhanced cooperation in the Middle East Region, ICAO and the Arab Civil Aviation Commission (ACAC) concluded a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2010.

This has since facilitated our exchange of statistical information and access to key databases, the organization of joint events, and the promotion and support of training activities.

As we now confront together the challenges of rapid air transport growth, globally as well as in the MID Region, we need to ask ourselves how this cooperation between ICAO, ACAC and our Member States can drive even further progress.

One objective that should receive priority consideration is the establishment of a Middle East/North Africa Regional Safety Oversight Organization, or MENA RSOO.

The RSOO approach is fundamentally about pooling safety resources for shared benefit. Here, in the Middle East, it would assist a good number of States with meeting the targets established under the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), as well as associated Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG) objectives.

Of course, the States in the region are at different levels of Effective Implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. Therefore, some may benefit more from the additional support to be provided by an RSOO. However, ultimately it benefits all States whenever we realize any global or regional enhancement to aviation safety.

I therefore strongly encourage all involved to make the realization of this RSOO a high priority going forward. The next step in the MENA RSOO process will be the establishment of a related Steering Committee.

From a more global perspective, international civil aviation has been very actively engaged of late on a number of important priorities, including among others:

- Flight tracking procedures post MH-370;
- Conflict zone risk management;
- The safe integration of remotely-piloted and suborbital flight operations;
- Cybersecurity preparedness;
- Increased airspace capacity and operational efficiency;
- The safe carriage of lithium batteries;
- And of course, the environment.

The recent terrorist incidents at airport facilities in Istanbul and Brussels, and the loss of EgyptAir flight 804, have also brought forward renewed concerns with respect to a number of safety and security challenges.

In this regard, we are now in the process of consultation with our Member States on new aviation safety and security related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

These are focused mainly on the more rapid location finding of downed aircraft, the prompt recovery of black box data, enhanced airport landside security, persistent risks being posed by insider threats, and improved risk management.

Revisions to our Global Plans for Safety and Air Navigation, the GASP and the GANP, were also recently approved by the ICAO Council and we are looking forward to these being adopted by the upcoming ICAO 39th Assembly.

The proposed revisions to the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan will mainly result in greater prioritization of State Safety Programmes (SSPs) and implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) by airlines and other industry partners.

Considering your rapidly expanding traffic volumes, I am pleased that the implementation of Performance-based Navigation (PBN) and introduction of Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) are identified as high priorities within the framework of the MID Region ATM Enhancement Programme (MAEP).

It is also encouraging that a MID Region Flight Procedure Programme (FPP), planned to be hosted by Lebanon in Beirut, is expected to start operations as early as the beginning of 2017.

It is pertinent to note that the tremendous success of the GASP and the GANP has now led to calls for ICAO to develop a Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP), which we expect to be endorsed by the Assembly.

This underscores the importance also of the aviation security priorities you have been discussing at this Conference, and I would strongly encourage you to adopt the Declaration to help ensure their achievement. Of course ICAO is here to support you in all related efforts, the outcomes of which will benefit not only regional security priorities but global ones as well.

Regarding our shared objectives on aviation's environmental performance, our common goal is to respond to the needs of societies and businesses for safe, secure and environmentally sustainable air travel, now and for the coming generations.

I am therefore pleased that we continue to make progress on all elements in our basket of measures to reduce aviation emissions and our sector's impact on climate change, and that developments such as the new CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standard for aircraft, our work on improving air traffic management efficiency, and the promotion of sustainable alternative aircraft fuels, continue to progress.

To help complement this comprehensive approach to emissions reduction, the ICAO Council approved just days ago the draft Resolution for our 39th Assembly, covering the scope and design of a new global market-based measure (GMBM) for international flight emissions.

This decision came subsequent to a very determined and comprehensive series of consultations which were organized by ICAO also completed by direct States' bilateral and multilateral negotiations, all culminating in the *Friends of the President* informal group meeting that I convened last week.

We have been diligent in our efforts throughout this lengthy consultative process to ensure that the GMBM, which is proposed to come into effect in 2020, is suitably flexible in its application and requirements to mitigate emissions, while not adversely impacting aviation and economic development objectives in the air transport markets where these are most critical.

Equally important to our work was the shared understanding that no one will benefit if the end result of this process is an acrimonious and inefficient patchwork of local emissions regimes.

Outside of the Assembly context, the other important structural changes we are undertaking in ICAO today are being driven by priorities arising from rapid growth in traffic volumes, and importantly the need for greater modernization of airports and air navigation services (ANS) infrastructure.

Dependable financing is a key aspect of every discussion we undertake on infrastructure modernization, and to help address that, ICAO is now convening World Aviation Forums to forge the partnerships and cooperation which are needed to support all of our aviation development goals.

The next of these Forums is being convened at ICAO's Headquarters the day before the Assembly, on 26 September, and we are hoping to see many Ministers in attendance given the urgency with which these matters must now be addressed.

Fostering partnerships in aid of sustainable aviation and economic development is also very much in line with ICAO's ongoing work under our *No Country Left Behind* initiative.

It is presently reprioritizing our Organization's work on the assistance and capacity-building required so that States have the resources they need to effectively implement ICAO's Standards and Policies.

In this context we may wish to consider the establishment of a more structured programme in the MID Region, similar to the ICAO Africa and Indian Ocean (AFI) Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plans. This would enable a coordination mechanism suitable to the participation of all stakeholders, and with specific targets relating to the safety, security and efficiency of your air transport operations.

This type of framework would also benefit related institutional and financial objectives in support of the various initiatives and projects determined.

From a political standpoint we could envisage this being effectively undertaken in close coordination with ACAC, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as ICAO's Middle Eastern Planning and Implementation Regional Group and Regional Aviation Safety Group. The ICAO MID Regional Office would be a further important partner, facilitating the required cooperation and monitoring on selected targets.

Our work under *No Country Left Behind* also highlights another challenge many Middle Eastern States are facing, and I am referring here to the need for dependable skilled human resources development for our current and future aviation network.

You will recall in this regard ICAO's *Next Generation of Aviation Professionals*, or 'NGAP' initiative, which helped to bring the issue of skilled aviation personnel shortages to the forefront in 2009.

NGAP has now been formalized as an official ICAO Programme and is being considered in all areas of strategic importance.

Finally, our Regional Offices continue to be very important to our overall aims and ultimate success under *No Country Left Behind*, and are being restructured and resourced accordingly to adjust to their new responsibilities.

I am very pleased, in this regard, to highlight that Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma joined us as our new Regional Director in our MID Office in Cairo earlier this year, and that he is very much looking forward to supporting your future civil aviation progress, consistent with ICAO's Mission and Role and the needs of Middle Eastern civil aviation.

On that note ladies and gentlemen, let me please congratulate our hosts, and indeed all who have contributed to this important Conference, for breaking such important new ground in terms of identifying your key objectives, and for setting the stage for greatly improved Middle Eastern cooperation for civil aviation.

Thank you.