

Opening Remark for the 3rd ICAO/UNOOSA Aerospace Symposium

Distinguished Representatives, Madame Director, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of ICAO please allow me to extend to you a warm welcome to this symposium.

As you are probably aware this is the third of a series of joint annual ICAO UNOOSA events on the subject of Sub orbital commercial operations.

When we look back to the first event in 2015 we can see that much has been learned over the past 24 months.

Indeed while, we are all experts in our respective fields, this exciting new frontier of transport probably represents one of the most multi-disciplinary challenges ahead of us.

It cuts across every technical subject in both aviation and space. But it also requires a necessary level of harmonization between the governance of international civil airspace and outer-space.

70 Years of aviation standards setting has clearly demonstrated that such harmonization is a critical enabler to ensure a high degree of safety, security and regularity. It also makes sure that the people of the world have access to all aspects of the sector. In other word,, harmonization, makes it fair for everyone.

It has not always been smooth and sometime it was not successful. So it is with the advantage of the lessons we have learnt that we approach new and complex issues as the ones before us these three days.

Let's be clear and honest – in this room are perhaps some who are not sure if aviation has a main role to play, there are those who think that regulation will harm the development of the technology, and there are those who may even feel that it is much too early for us to be having this event at all.

But there are also those who know that the best policies take time to develop, that finite resources such as airspace and ground facilities must be shared, and that one day all of the disciplines represented in this room will have a critical role to play.

And so it remains important for us to collectively be ready for the future.

With that in mind please allow me to briefly introduce the Air Navigation Commission of the ICAO.

It was established by the Convention on International Civil Aviation and serves as the technical advisory body to the Council of ICAO.

It is made up of 19 members who are independent experts nominated by States and elected by the Council.

In more practical terms it is a team that collectively has experience in all technical and many non-technical areas of aviation; that has worked in all sizes and types of aviation systems; and that speaks all languages of the United Nations.

This probably makes the Commission one of the most diverse and best represented bodies within aviation – and therefore one that is very well prepared to address the aviation related aspects of this new sector.

Now, while the Commission has 19 members, the actual team includes observers from all sectors of the industry, and a contingent of more than 300 experts nominated to various ANC Panels who draft policies for international civil aviation.

These 300 plus experts are active members of the community – in other words their main jobs are as pilots, controllers, inspectors, engineers, managers, etc. And this makes them a great source for doing the difficult task of developing that necessary level of harmonization for aviation.

Why does this matter – because at some point – when there is an issue that needs to be resolved in this sector that involves international aviation – the Commission, with all these experts, experience and diversity, will be ready to find the best solution.

Now, of course we need to make sure that the experts work on real problems – one of the lessons we have learnt was that without clear problem statements there the real risk that the policies would not address the issues. ICAO is also careful to make sure that only mature, well informed, provisions are adopted.

To that end the Commission has a clear procedure through which the issues of this new sector can be introduced into its 'work programme'.

This was recently done for the area of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems. And is now also being done for other new entrants.

So as I attend the symposium the next few days I will be looking for these clear problem statements, and in my duty as the President of the Commission, I will be listening and participating in the discussions to try and focus on the real issues so that I can better understand the most effective role the Commission may consider to make this sector a reality.

Before I conclude, please allow me to introduce the Chicago Convention's preamble. It says that future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among nations and people of the world., yet its abuse can become a threat to the general security. Keeping this in our mind, I hope that active discussions and information exchanges will be taken place for the next three days.

Thank you

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