



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**

ICAO Facilitation Regional Forum  
Yaoundé, Cameroon  
3 March 2025

1. I am honoured to welcome you to this ICAO Facilitation Regional Forum. First, let me thank the government of Cameroon for generously hosting this important regional event. It builds on the tremendous momentum generated by ICAO's 80th Anniversary and 2024 Year of Facilitation celebrations. We truly are setting the stage for the next era of air transport.
2. ICAO recognizes Cameroon's exemplary leadership in Facilitation matters, from the comprehensive implementation of Annex 9 to the pioneering role in the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy and the Public Key Directory (PKD). Cameroon's electronic passport programme, showcased at the recent ICAO TRIP Symposium in Montréal, and the successful organization of the October 2024 PKD workshop in Yaoundé, which drew over 80 participants from across Africa, particularly French-speaking States, demonstrate Cameroon's commitment to advancing aviation facilitation in the region.
3. Today, our theme "Seamless Skies: Efficient Facilitation for a Connected World," underscores the critical importance of this leadership and of advancing three key priorities:  
  
First, Digital innovation and security enhancement;  
  
Second, Accessibility and inclusion for all passengers; and  
  
Third, assuring health security and system resilience.

4. These priorities emerge at a crucial time. The surge in e-commerce, evolving health security needs, and rapid technological advancements demand our immediate attention and innovative solutions.
5. In addressing these challenges, ICAO's role will remain clear: to foster the development of a seamless, efficient, secure and accessible global air transport network.
6. Annex 9 — Facilitation provides Standards and Recommended Practices across accessibility, public health, assistance to accident victims, preventing trafficking, and passenger data systems. Effective implementation of Annex 9 strengthens civil aviation's role in sustainable economic and social development.
7. Our panel discussions will examine these identified priorities in detail, guided by the expertise of our facilitation community.
8. Let me now turn to our first priority: digital innovation. Streamlining passenger movements strengthens aviation's contribution to development and enhances the travel experience - a crucial factor for States and businesses. Technological innovations are key to achieving this efficiency.
9. At the core of our vision lies the passenger experience. ICAO Digital Travel Credentials promises to revolutionize border crossings, making them more efficient yet secure. We are building comprehensive solutions through core infrastructure like the ICAO PKD and intelligent and appropriate data sharing. The outcome? States and aviation partners can improve each passenger's journey while increasing the capacity and resilience of the entire aviation system.
10. Our second priority - accessibility to air transport for persons with visible and non-visible disabilities demands attention. Though significant progress in disability access has been made, barriers still exist.

11. ICAO's leadership will drive change, collaborating with Member States to create a disability-inclusive air transport system. Join us for our dedicated workshop on disability access tomorrow.
12. Our third priority focuses on health security. The Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation - CAPSCA - connects aviation and public health, ensuring that our facilitation efforts adapt to evolving health challenges. Our vital partnership with the WHO enables us to integrate health considerations into every step of a trip, from pre-flight procedures through to arrival. This collaboration aims to enhance the overall preparedness and resilience of global health infrastructure through improved data sharing and emergency response protocols.
13. These three integrated priorities - digital innovation, accessibility, and health security - will guide our discussions. Each contributes to our vision of a seamless, efficient, and secure global connectivity.
14. Let me emphasize the importance of our discussions here. The outcomes of this forum will guide our preparations for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly in just a few months' time, helping us identify key priorities for its agenda.
15. Also lying just ahead of us is the 2025 ICAO Facilitation Conference, hosted by the State of Qatar in Doha, from 14 to 17 April. This major gathering will consider all aspects of Facilitation. The Conference will also feature a High-level Ministerial segment, culminating in the Doha Declaration to strengthen States' commitment to enhanced air transport Facilitation. I look forward to seeing you all there in April.
16. Our time here in Yaoundé allows us to shape global connectivity for generations to come.
17. Together, we will create a future where air travel truly serves everyone. Let us approach this challenge with determination, expertise, and a global vision.

18. This is a key goal of ICAO's new long-term Strategic Plan for 2026-2050, which sets an ambitious course for aviation's future. It reaffirms our commitment to safety and security while emphasizing environmental sustainability, aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The plan specifically prioritizes seamless, accessible mobility for all, underpinned by robust legal frameworks and equitable economic development.
19. For all these reasons, I invite you to please make the most of our time together, as your contributions are essential. I wish you enriching and fruitful discussions.
20. Thank you.