

Juan Carlos Salazar of Colombia begins his mandate as ICAO Secretary General

On August 1, 2021, Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar of Colombia officially assumed the office of ICAO Secretary General, succeeding Dr. Fang Liu of China. He assumes this role as CEO of the UN's specialized agency for civil aviation as the international flight network continues to assure the efficient global movement of food, vaccines, e-commerce, and other essential supplies and personnel, despite the air transport industry still being severely confronted by COVID-19, greatly diminished routes, and slowly rebounding international air travel and tourism.

"It is a great honour to be assuming this role at this time, and to have the opportunity to help governments and ICAO play an important part in how this sector builds back better and recovers from the global pandemic," Mr. Salazar commented. "We are still facing some tremendous challenges to the restoration of global air connectivity today, and with many regions and populations all over the world facing prolonged economic, social, and emotional hardship as a result."

Secretary General Salazar is a former Director General of Civil Aviation for Colombia, and speaks fluent Spanish, English, French, and basic Arabic. He has more than 26 years of experience in civil aviation, public policy, and the management of large and complex organizations, and plans to work closely with the ICAO Council to further strengthen the agency's governance and ethical framework, to review the organizational structure of the Secretariat, to build a digital transformation programme, and to modernize the working methods of the Organization to keep pace with aviation innovation.



The President of the ICAO Council, Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano (left), with the Secretary General of ICAO, Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar.

He has also promised to further strengthen ICAO's global presence through its Regional Offices and support for key regional priorities, and to assure that special efforts are undertaken through the Organization to support developing States that have suffered the most devastating impacts of the pandemic. The Organization will further support Member States in the implementation of CORSIA and other capacity-building activities aiming at carbon offsetting and initiatives for reducing emissions from international civil aviation.

"It's important that ICAO remains a key partner for the countries of the world as they work with this agency to recover from the pandemic, to share their skies to their mutual benefit, and to continuously improve the global aviation standards and practices which keep those skies as safe, secure, efficient, and sustainable as the world expects. I will also work to innovate internally and improve the efficiency by which ICAO performs its important standard-setting role, and to assure that it continuously improves in helping governments, industry, and civil society advocates to effectively consult, coordinate, and achieve consensus together."

Mr. Salazar was appointed ICAO Secretary General in February of this year by the ICAO Council, after its comprehensive assessment of a number of international candidates.

"The ICAO Council is very pleased to welcome Mr. Salazar as he officially assumes his new role, and as Council President I look forward to working closely with him in helping to modernize ICAO and make it a more responsive and efficient agency at the service of its 193 Member States," noted ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano. The President also extended the Council's sincere appreciation to the previous ICAO Secretary General, Dr. Fang Liu, recognizing her dedication and contributions to ICAO during her two terms as Secretary General.