



**Opening address by the  
President of the ICAO Council,  
Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu,  
to the Second ICAO/UNOOSA AeroSpace Symposium**

*(Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates - 15 March 2016)*

Good morning everyone,

Let me begin by thanking the United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi for hosting this second ICAO/UNOOSA AeroSpace Symposium.

I am sure we can all agree that the facilities which have been provided for us are exemplary, and that the welcome we have received in this lovely city has been a very warm one.

Last year, at the first Symposium, you addressed some fundamental issues relating to the integration of civil aviation and space transportation.

Since then the commercial space sector has made significant progress, and this year we will have the opportunity to begin addressing some important specifics.

Consistent with the recognition that sub-orbital and outer space flights will foster new tourism and transport markets, investments in related research and development remain at a very healthy level.

This is a very encouraging sign, as is the fact that the number of airframes that have been completed, or that are nearing completion, continues to grow.

Likewise, there has been a steady increase in launches, and commercial spaceports are now becoming operational realities.

As an engineer, I am very excited to see the dream and theory of normalized space flight now becoming such a tangible reality, as I'm sure you all are.

But as the President of the ICAO Council I must also pay very close attention to where your new and pioneering operations intersect with those of our global and extensively standardized sector.

The 12,000+ civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in the Annexes to the Chicago Convention have, after all, been developed and refined over more than 70 years of international air services.

They have helped aviation achieve a remarkable safety and efficiency record over that time, with more than 100,000 daily flights now managed by our network, but in the next 15 years that number is going to double and this presents important concerns to future aeronauts and astronauts.

What is certainly clear is that suborbital and space operations will share airspace with civil aviation.

Traffic in the skies is traffic in the skies, there is no way around that, and it must all be integrated and managed.

And we cannot also lose sight of the fact that this integration will involve new types of crafts with varying flight characteristics and safety risk profiles.

I am every much encouraged, however, despite these significant challenges, that the expertise and track record of civil aviation and space regulators will be up to this task.

At the symposium last year, it was established without ambiguity that the horizon for more frequent and normalized suborbital and space operations is moving closer at an accelerating rate.

Your panel discussions clarified the realistic timelines involved, as well as raising some important, and at times fundamental technical, legal and practical concerns.

Over the last 12 months, ICAO, together with UNOOSA, worked with an expert group to identify several more pressing issues that will need to be addressed in the near-term.

These include:

- **Safety Management of Air Space** and the risks posed to air traffic, inclusive of Space Debris and the ramifications of operational or test failures.
- **Space port safety and operations** – and more specifically where these facilities may be dual purpose or otherwise shared with civil aircraft.
- **Air launches** assisted by aircraft.
- And lastly ‘**space planes**’ or those instances where a new type design otherwise falls under both aircraft and spacecraft definitions during all or part of its operations.

By the end of 2017 ICAO will, together with our global community of Member States and industry stakeholders, agree on a timeline of concrete deliverables to tackle these issues.

Our goal is to satisfactorily resolve these issues for all concerned, consistent with the consensus-based approaches that have made civil aviation the incredible global network it is today, and also to include these new goals and provisions in the 2019 revisions of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Plans.

Your meeting here in Abu Dhabi will be expected to deliver some initial recommendations on these issues – 2017 is not so far away after all and we must begin to get a better handle on all aspects of what will be required.

Later will come the more detailed work on how this guidance can be formally integrated into the ICAO Global Plans.

Ultimately, we need to prepare ourselves for global international aerospace standards and regulations.

First and foremost these will need to be fully integrated with the many thousands we have adopted up until now in civil aviation. This is how to help assure the safety and security of the skies we all need to share.

Also, in line with a wider evolution in ICAO in recent years, the standards to be developed are expected to be performance-based rather than prescriptive, so that they encourage rather than hinder innovation. These, however, will require further time and consultation.

So if we do not find a way to meaningfully and pragmatically manage the important changes you are generating, national requirements will not be harmonized, technology will be over- or under-regulated, and there will be more operational and commercial uncertainties.

This is exactly what needs to be avoided, and as we have amongst us today some world-leading entrepreneurs, academics and regulators, I am sure that good progress will be made.

I wish all of you a very productive time here in Abu Dhabi.

Thank you.