
ICAO Chief urges Global unity for sustainable Aviation



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Doha, April 14 (QNA) – Juan Carlos Salazar, the Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), underscored the critical role of international collaboration in enhancing the safety, security, and sustainability of the global civil aviation sector. His remarks were made during the ICAO Facilitation Conference (FALC 2025), currently being held in Doha. Salazar detailed a new long-term strategic plan adopted by ICAO aimed at improving the aviation

sector's capacity to achieve seamless mobility. This initiative focuses on expanding both national and international cooperation, particularly regarding passenger identity management. Salazar anticipates that 116 countries will develop national plans to address public health risks associated with aviation, ensuring the resilience of the global air transport network.

The strategy is also expected to aid victims of aviation accidents and their families, with Salazar reaffirming that the 1944 Chicago Convention will continue to serve as a flexible and robust legal foundation for addressing international aviation challenges. The Convention includes provisions to prevent disease spread, reduce immigration delays, and enhance coordination between various authorities, safeguarding border safety, public health, and human dignity.

Salazar emphasized ICAO's ongoing efforts to balance efficient air transport with the Sustainable Development Goals. As passenger numbers grow and security requirements evolve, ICAO's strategic framework is essential for smooth border management. He also noted the significance of the 41st ICAO General Assembly session held in 2022, which introduced the Unified Statement on Facilitation Policies. This statement calls for harmonized border control procedures and effective measures against human trafficking in aviation.

The Assembly's discussions also highlighted the need for improved access to air transport for persons with disabilities, with specific standards for airport infrastructure, travel procedures,

and personnel training. Furthermore, the Assembly introduced a framework for assisting aviation accident victims and strategies for pandemic management, drawing insights from COVID-19, especially in terms of health document verification and crisis response.

Salazar also discussed the Passenger Identification Program, a key component of modern identity management in aviation. The program's integrated framework, consisting of comprehensive identity management, standardized travel document issuance, inspection systems, and interoperable applications, allows countries to achieve greater efficiency and accuracy in identifying travelers.

The conference's first day featured a live demonstration (SKYTALKS) on verifying digital travel documents. The event, running from April 14-17 under the theme "Facilitating the Future of Air Transport: Collaboration, Efficiency, Inclusivity," includes discussions on the role of air transport facilitation in supporting the growth of the aviation industry and advancing sustainable development in the sector.