

**OPENING REMARKS BY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE CIVIL
AVIATION AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE, MR HAN KOK JUAN, FOR
24TH LATIN AMERICAN CIVIL AVIATION COMMISSION (LACAC)
ORDINARY ASSEMBLY
23 MARCH 2022 AT AIR FORCE CLUB, MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY**

President of the LACAC, Mr Armando Daniel,

President of the ICAO Council, Mr Salvatore Sciacchitano

Secretary General of the ICAO, Mr Juan Carlos Salazar

Secretary of the LACAC, Mr Jaime Binder,

Honourable Ministers,

Directors-General,

Friends and Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon and greetings from Singapore. I would like to thank LACAC for inviting me to attend the 24th LACAC Ordinary Assembly. It is a great honour and pleasure to finally meet our friends and partners from Latin America in person, after two years of virtual engagements.

Building Back Stronger

2. The last two years have been difficult. COVID-19 decimated international air travel and disrupted the people-to-people exchanges that brought our world closer together.
3. Latin America is one of the regions that leads global aviation recovery. Today, this gathering of aviation leaders from Americas, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, sends a powerful signal to the world, of the global resolve of aviation leaders to revive, recover and rebuild air travel and trade. Thank you, LACAC, for persisting to hold this Assembly, in the beautiful city of Montevideo.

4. When government and industry leaders met at the ICAO High-Level Conference on COVID-19 in October last year, we agreed that when international aviation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, it would not be a return to business as usual; the aviation sector we rebuild must be safer, more sustainable and more resilient.
5. First, safety. COVID-19 has introduced unprecedented challenges: proficiency of personnel; airworthiness of aircraft under storage; familiarity with new protocols and new airport layouts; and safety culture in financially stressed companies. Aviation safety must be our top priority as we ramp up operations to meet demand while accommodating the uneven recovery globally, between regions and within regions.
6. Second, sustainability. Climate change is an existential problem that affects us all. The international aviation system we rebuild must be more sustainable; there is strong expectation for us to do more. How do we continue to grow air traffic while keeping to our commitment on sustainability? This will be the challenge of our generation. It will require strong public-private partnerships, cross-sectoral collaboration and access to green financing. We will also need to work closely together with ICAO and our respective regions.
7. Third, resilience. COVID-19 has unfortunately exposed various vulnerabilities of our aviation sectors. The aviation systems we rebuild must be more resilient and able to respond more effectively to future disruptions. These include financial, manpower, technology and organisational resilience. We will need new capabilities and competencies to future-proof our systems.
8. While the darkest hours are hopefully behind us, building back stronger will require great effort, learning from one another and working together. Aviation leaders and professionals around the world will need new mindsets and competencies, to navigate fresh challenges. We will need to continue to invest in our people.

Supporting Human Capital Development

9. Singapore remains deeply committed to supporting global human capital development and developing future leaders of aviation. We hope that as aviation recovers, growth will be inclusive and accessible to all countries. We are working with ICAO to jointly develop a programme on COVID-19 aviation recovery and

resilience, for Directors-General of Civil Aviation. We will also deepen our collaboration with LACAC Member States in this area.

10. The partnership between the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and LACAC goes back many years. We first signed our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1998. In the last 25 years, Singapore awarded 160 fellowships and had over 1,000 Latin American professional participants at the Singapore Aviation Academy (SAA), the training arm of the CAAS. Through the years, we have made many good friends and learnt from each other.
11. In 2020 and 2021, when COVID-19 disrupted air travel, the Aviation Academy quickly redesigned its programmes so that training could continue virtually. Aviation professionals from thirteen LACAC States participated in these virtual courses. We also held two LACAC-CAAS Roundtables for Directors-General which many of us attended.
12. Today, we will be renewing the LACAC-CAAS MOU for another three years. The signing of the MOU in-person marks a significant milestone in the deepening of Singapore-Latin America civil aviation collaboration. It is timely also. The new training programmes will help aviation leaders acquire new skills, new tools and new experience to rebuild their aviation sectors.

Conclusion

13. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Mr Daniel for your successful Presidency. I would also like to thank Mr Binder for his invaluable help, as Secretary, supporting Singapore's collaborations with LACAC through these years. We re-affirm our commitment to working alongside the new LACAC Executive Committee as well as the Latin American ICAO Council Representatives and Directors-General, to further our shared interests and deepen the friendship between Latin America and Singapore.
14. Finally, I would like to thank Director-General Battagliese for your warm welcome to Uruguay and your inexhaustible hospitality. I look forward to experiencing Uruguay's rich history and thriving culture. In particular, I would like to learn about the country called, in the Guarani language, "the river of painted birds" and why you are called "the Oriental Republic of Uruguay". Of course, all of this, over a glass of Maté. Muchas Gracias. Thank you very much.