It’s a great honour to join you here at this 36th Special Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC).

I wish to extend my thanks to ECAC’s President, Ms. Ingrid Cherfils, for her kind invitation to provide this keynote address today.

And let me also take this opportunity to extend ICAO’s deep appreciation to the Government of France for its very generous hospitality.

ICAO since its establishment has been playing a leadership role in bringing together our member States, regional organizations such as ECAC as well as industry stakeholders and many other parties and players to ensure harmonized global progress on all international civil aviation priorities.

Working together through this strong and shared commitment, we have now firmly established international air transport as the safest and most rapid means of global mobility, while greatly improving its recognition as a key driver of sustainable socio-economic development all over the world.
Our sector today is deeply integrated, dynamic, and characterized by rapid technological change, and historically, aviation has always benefited by incorporating latest technology in aircraft flight management and navigation systems.

However recent developments such as drones, commercial space flights and artificial intelligence are presenting new challenges in terms of safety, efficiency and cybersecurity.

Furthermore, these new developments are expanding the traditional scope of aviation activities and are leading to emergence of new stakeholders with whom ICAO and member States need to relate.

Accordingly, ICAO has been working hard to address these emerging issues. Just last month for instance, ICAO held its very first Headquarters workshop on Artificial Intelligence and the likely impacts of Machine Learning in the aviation industry.

It is important for us to ensure that the safe integration of AI, or any other innovation in air transport in the future must continue to rely on the very strong foundation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) which States and industry have forged through ICAO over the years.

However we must also ensure that our rule-making process is adequately dynamic and fit for purpose in order not to stifle innovation nor lag behind. This would require more performance-based regulation and collaboration with other standard-setting organizations.

This highlights why the most important step which governments seeking to modernize and expand their air transport systems today can undertake is to work closely through ICAO and strengthen their ICAO compliance.

This message is critical today, and one which I repeat in literally every State I visit. It is also the engine at the heart of ICAO’s many assistance and capacity building efforts being coordinated globally under our No Country Left Behind initiative.

The European Region has benefitted from this approach. Air transport liberalization and compliance with ICAO safety and security standards have provided key foundation to establishing more meaningful and profitable aviation connectivity within Europe and with adjacent regions.

The EU’s single aviation market and later the realization of the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA), covering 36 countries has led to significant growth in air traffic while maintaining highest levels of safety and security. Today European airlines are carrying half of all international passengers worldwide.

Globally in 2017 there were over 4.1 billion passengers carried on 37 million flight and with these figures expected to double by the mid-2030 timeframe, all ICAO regions, including Europe, will continue to experience growth.

This level of growth poses significant challenges to States and operators alike as we work together to optimize the socio-economic benefits of this increased traffic, while at the same time working to safely, securely and efficiently manage more and more aircraft in finite amounts of airspace.

Fortunately, we already have the tools to do so.
In the first place we have the global strategies, plans, programmes and agreements in place to ensure that new SARPs are continuously developed to address emerging challenges. In particular, I wish to also emphasize the importance of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP).

Secondly we can look to the cooperation and collaboration of our key partners.

Thirdly ICAO has begun to play a more pivotal role in driving assistance and capacity-building to States having challenges with being ICAO compliant, and working closely with our key partners and other States to help close the related gaps under our No Country Left Behind initiative.

In this regard, our Regional Offices are particularly critical to how we target and succeed with addressing local and regional concerns toward the realization of our global objectives.

ICAO’s European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Region is especially relevant here, given its geographical scope and the vast diversity among the States accredited to our Paris Office. I am therefore grateful for the continuing collaboration between ECAC and the other European institutions with our Paris Office.

Another aspect of our work where Europe and ECAC member States have shown significant resolve and ambition is in our collective efforts to reduce aviation emissions and contribute to combating climate change.

In this respect, I wish to acknowledge the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research or ‘SESAR’ project which is one of the regional precursors to the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP).

SESAR aims to consolidate fragmented European airspace into a single zone and would enable far more efficient routing for civil aircraft and result in significant savings of fuel burn and therefore lead to emissions reductions.

ECAC member States have also contributed immensely to our work on the development of State Action Plans and in reaching consensus on the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to recall the Council’s adoption last week of our first package of SARPs on ‘CORSIA’.

This adoption of the First Edition of Annex 16, Volume IV, to the Chicago Convention, comes less than two years after ICAO’s 192 Member States achieved historic agreement on the overall CORSIA proposal at the 39th Assembly.

As you’ll recall, this was a truly historic development and a first for any global industry sector.

Adoption of CORSIA SARPs complements our achievements on the other measures including adoption of an aircraft CO₂ emissions standard, adoption of a long-term vision on the use of sustainable aviation fuels and continuous updating of the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP).

Gaining agreement on this new Volume IV to Annex 16 was critical to our goals of helping States and airlines to operationalize CORSIA per its established deadlines.
This especially pertains to its monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) scheme, which describes what has to be done, by whom, starting with the collection of information on international aviation CO\textsubscript{2} emissions by airlines as of January 2019.

Also approved at the Council’s meeting in June was the 2018 version of the ICAO CORSIA CO\textsubscript{2} Estimation and Reporting Tool (CERT), which provides a simplified tool for States and their operators to monitor and report their CO\textsubscript{2} emissions. Further agreement was also achieved on the functional requirements of the CORSIA Central Registry (CCR).

We should acknowledge the significant efforts which were made, both at the global-level and by the ICAO Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) and the Secretariat, to ensure that these CORSIA SARPs could be adopted within such a limited timeframe, and that States and airline operators would be prepared to implement them.

I also would like to note here that the CORSIA MRV provisions had been tested before their adoption, with the generous support of the Government of Germany and the active participation of six additional States and 10 airlines.

Our next step will be to ensure that all countries with registered international airlines can fulfill the CORSIA MRV requirements as of next year.

ICAO will continue to actively assist our Member States in these and other CORSIA preparations, both directly and through capacity-building partnerships we’ll help them to establish under the new ACT-CORSIA framework which has been developed.

Future Council work on CORSIA will focus on the timely realization of its remaining Implementation Elements, including the evaluation of carbon market programmes against a set of robust criteria, the determination of its Eligible Emissions Units, and which aviation fuels will meet the CORSIA Sustainability Criteria.

With regard to other ICAO Strategic Objectives, more important progress will be made at ICAO later this year, in October, when we convene the 13th Air Navigation Conference.

A key highlight of this year’s event will be the roll-out of the new Global Aviation Safety Plan, which will feature some updated global targets.

Also under discussion in the safety domain will be the concept of operations for the Global Aviation Safety Oversight System (GASOS), which was introduced in March of last year at the ICAO/EASA Global Forum on Regional Safety Oversight Organizations.

The GASOS approach would lead to the strengthening and recognition of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOS) to enable them to perform safety oversight tasks and functions on behalf of a State or group of States.

The 13th ANC will also discuss structural changes being proposed for the Global Air Navigation Plan, including new executive-level explanations of the technical content, the updated Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBUs), business case tools for Air Navigation Performance Improvements, and the introduction of new Air Navigation ‘Basic Building Blocks’ (BBBs).
The last major decision to be undertaken there will regard States’ approval for ICAO to move forward on an International Trust Framework for future digital communications, which is a key pillar of aviation’s cyber-preparedness.

You would also recall that following the adoption of the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) by the Council last year, we have been conducting Regional Conferences in order to determine regional roadmaps and associated targets to ensure the effective implementation of the GASeP at regional and national levels.

The conclusions of these regional conferences and other aviation security priorities will be further discussed at the Second Global High-Level Conference on Aviation Security in November 2018.

I hope to see the active participation of all ECAC member States at the Air Navigation and Aviation Security Conferences.

It is also my pleasure to invite all of you to the next ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF) to be held in Fortaleza, Brazil in September. The Forum will focus, inter alia, on building partnerships for aviation infrastructure development and ensuring alignment of national and regional plans with ICAO Global Plans.

Ladies and gentlemen, please let me reiterate that ICAO is working continuously to enhance awareness of emerging and ongoing air transport issues, and that our Organization remains the natural venue for worldwide public and private sector cooperation on all global civil aviation priorities.

Today we are exploring new methods to enhance global harmonization and interoperability, researching new technologies and innovations to continuously make air transport operations more safe, secure, efficient and environmentally-friendly, and we continue to advocate for the more liberalized multilateral approaches and open skies which are so vital to a truly global and accessible network.

Taken together, air transport’s many and diverse benefits are of critical importance today to every country’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as presently enshrined under the UN’s Agenda 2030.

But in order to realize those aviation benefits, and improve local prosperity for their citizens and businesses, States must make due commitments to modernize and expand capacity, and to effectively implement ICAO’s global standards and policies.

ECAC and its member States have shown tremendous leadership to date in many of these areas, and as a global agency ICAO appreciates your collaboration and cooperation.

On that note I wish you all a very productive and engaging 36th Triennial Session.

Thank you.