



### African States agree to heighten safe, secure and sustainable air connectivity

For immediate release

**Nairobi and Montréal, 31 August 2023** – The [eighth edition of Africa-Indian Ocean \(AFI\) Aviation Week](#) has resulted in the region’s governments agreeing to work more closely together on the implementation of ICAO aviation safety, security and sustainability standards and plans, with “high performing” States offering greater assistance to those that require the most support.

The event was hosted by the Government of Kenya and took place in Nairobi from 21 to 25 August 2023 with Council Representatives and other Representatives from both States and organizations in attendance.

In his opening remarks, ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano highlighted that the presence of “so many key representatives from States and international and regional organizations present at this meeting is a clear demonstration of the recognition of the importance of aviation to the sustainable development of nations, and of the need for all partners and stakeholders to work closely together to build synergies in Africa.”

Greater partnership around capacity building, particularly to support the next generation of aviation professionals (NGAP), was a cross cutting outcome of the event. States pointed to the “practical application” of the [ICAO Aviation Training and Capacity-Building Roadmap](#) and the significance of continuing support for ICAO training and workshops in priority areas. They recognized the significance of mobilizing resources under the *No Country Left Behind* initiative, and agreed that NGAP and gender equality objectives should be a crucial feature in national aviation planning.

The capacity of Africa’s air navigation systems was also addressed, with the States agreeing to request that the African Union Commission coordinate the establishment of a task force on “the seamless sky for Africa,” and to enhance their cooperation through Collaborative Decision Making (CDM). The digitalization of services was seen as a particularly important priority in this area.

To support partnership between States with “high” and “low” performing safety and security oversight capacities, the ICAO Regional Offices were requested to facilitate cooperation through regional mechanisms, with a special focus on the development of focus projects on achieving the targets set out in ICAO’s aviation safety and security global plans.

The [ICAO Cyber Security Action Plan](#) and the *Aviation Safety Alliance for Africa (ASAA) initiative on the effective incident and accident data collection in Africa* were seen as high priorities for governments, as was the ratification of the *African (Malabo) Convention on cybersecurity and personal Data protection (2014)*.

Sustainability was recognized as an equally important priority, with the development of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) acknowledged as both playing a crucial role in the decarbonization of flight and an extremely promising catalyst for sustainable development in Africa. States and other stakeholders were encouraged to join the [ICAO Assistance, Capacity building and Training for SAF \(ACT-SAF\) Programme](#) and take advantage of all the support initiatives provided under its umbrella.

States were also encouraged to contribute actively to the upcoming [third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels](#), to be held in November 2023 in Dubai, from which a global framework for SAF investment and production is expected to emerge.

Governments acknowledged that the safe, secure, and sustainable development of African air transport would also require the full implementation of ICAO's facilitation and air transport guidance, especially those around the liberalization of air services and on user fees, charges and taxes on aviation. States and stakeholders were encouraged to solicit the political will of leaders by promoting the benefits of fully implementing the *Yamoussoukro Declaration Concerning the Liberalisation of Access to Air Transport Markets in Africa*, and to avoid protectionism.

"Clearly Africa has come to an important turning point in fulfilling its aspirations for national, regional, and international air connectivity on this continent," ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar declared in his closing remarks to the event. "Moving forward we must all resolve to translate our progress this week into effective policies, programmes, and actions that deliver the intended results. Our vision is to connect Africa and the world, and it can only be achieved if we continue to work together."

AFI Aviation Week furthermore provided ICAO's leadership with the opportunity to advocate for the organization's priorities at a series of bilateral and multilateral side meetings, including with the President of Kenya, H.E. William Ruto, at which Kenya's commitment to ICAO and regional cooperation was expressed and welcomed. This was additionally illustrated by Kenya's announcement of the construction of a new headquarters for ICAO's Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAF) Regional Office, which is located in Nairobi, and a voluntary donation of USD 200,000 from Kenya to support the ICAO [AFI Security and Facilitation \(SECFAL\) Plan](#).

In addition to his remarks to the meetings of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for [Aviation Safety in Africa \(AFI Plan\)](#) and AFI SECFAL Plan steering committees, the Secretary General held a meeting with the Heads of AFI Aviation Week Delegations, and undertook bilateral discussions with the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation and the Director General of Civil Aviation of Somalia, Ms. Fardowsa Osman Egal and Mr Ahmed Moalim Hassan, respectively; the Directors General of Civil Aviation of Namibia and Nigeria, Ms. Toska Sem and Capt. Musa Shuaibu Nuhu, respectively; and the Administrator of the United States' Transportation Security Administration, Mr. David Pekoske.

During his mission to Kenya, the Secretary General discussed areas for heightened cooperation with the Director General of the UN Office in Nairobi, Ms. Zainab Bangura; and the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimuna Mohd Sharif.

The Council President and the Secretary General were accompanied during their activities in Kenya by ICAO's ESAF Regional Director, Ms. Lucy Mbugua; Western and Central Africa Regional Director, Mr. Prosper Zo'o Minto'o; Director for Capacity Development and Implementation, Mr. Jorge Vargas, Director of the Air Transport Bureau, Mr. Mohamed Rahma and Director of the Air Navigation Bureau, Ms. Michele Merkle.

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## Resources for Editors

[AFI Aviation Week](#)  
[ICAO's No Country Left Behind initiative](#)

### **About ICAO**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a United Nations agency which helps 193 countries to cooperate together and share their skies to their mutual benefit.

Since it was established in 1944, ICAO's support and coordination has helped countries to diplomatically and technically realize a uniquely rapid and dependable network of global air mobility, connecting families, cultures, and businesses all over the world, and promoting sustainable growth and socio-economic prosperity wherever aircraft fly.

As it enters a new era of digitization, and of incredible new flight and propulsion innovations, air transport is relying more than ever on ICAO's expert support and technical and diplomatic guidance to help chart a new and exciting future for international flight. ICAO is innovating itself to answer this call, and expanding its partnerships among UN and technical stakeholders to deliver a strategic global vision and effective, sustainable solutions.

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