



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the Twenty-Sixth AFI Plan Steering Committee meeting**

(Nairobi, Kenya, August 24, 2023)

1. Distinguished members of the AFI Plan Steering Committee,
2. I wish to welcome all of you to your twenty-sixth meeting.
3. The Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) has been significant in terms of both the development of air connectivity on the continent and progress towards our global objectives.
4. It is therefore an honour for me to be here with you today to discuss both the progress that has already been achieved with the AFI Plan, including through implementation support provided to States, as well as to discuss our partners' initiatives to assure the sustainability of this progress in aviation safety performance in Africa.
5. The AFI Plan was adopted in September 2007, in response to both the elevated rate of aircraft accidents and incidents in the AFI Region, and the overall weakness in the aviation safety oversight capabilities of the region's governments.
6. The programme was formally launched in 2008, for an initial period of four years under the AFI Comprehensive Implementation Programme (ACIP).
7. As a result of the considerable work and activities undertaken by ICAO through the AFI Plan since this time, further progress has been achieved in enhancing aviation safety in Africa.

8. Implementation activities are of course continuing to this day, through the direct assistance being provided to States, and their outcomes are helping to resolve identified safety deficiencies and improve the effective implementation rates for States' safety oversight systems.
9. These efforts have included the deployment of several projects and initiatives implemented by ICAO's Regional Office Safety Teams (ROSTs), in collaboration with AFCAC and other partnering States and organizations.
10. Some key achievements since your 2022 Abuja meeting have included the significant improvement of the effective implementation rates in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone.
11. I would also like to highlight the certification of three new international aerodromes, the deployment of new tools to support the implementation of State Safety Programmes (SSP), and various "Go-team" initiatives focused on improving the quality management of aeronautical information services.
12. But despite this progress, however, many States continue to face challenges with their ICAO compliance, and new significant safety concerns (SSCs) are arising – mainly in the air navigation services (ANS) area.
13. This points to the need for a more holistic approach to be taken, so that States can become more proactive and successful in undertaking their safety oversight functions in areas with high-risk exposure.
14. As you might be aware, the ICAO Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) conducted an evaluation of the AFI Plan between May and August of 2022.
15. The objective of this review was to identify evidence of institutional performance, and to make forward-looking recommendations for improving the implementation of the AFI Plan.
16. These recommendations concerned both the ICAO Regional Offices in Africa and the role of our Headquarters, and I'm greatly encouraged that this meeting will be discussing the new Action Plan which ICAO has developed to address them.
17. The status of the implementation of the AFI Plan work programme for 2022, and the proposed work programmes for 2023 and 2024, will also be presented for your consideration.

18. These work programmes, building on lessons learnt from past years and the recommendations of the OIO Evaluation, are definitely ambitious.
19. But by working together to address them, I am confident that we can further enhance the impact of the AFI Plan and boost the aviation performance of African States.
20. Another important topic on your agenda is the AFI Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOO) structure, and more specifically the funding mechanism to be presented to the upcoming Global RSOO Forum this October in Nairobi.
21. I would take this opportunity to recall the significance of the 2017 Ezulwini Declaration on RSOOs in Africa, which led to the development of a Strategic Plan and its associated roadmap towards the improvement of safety oversight systems on the African Continent.
22. Additionally, the Steering Committee will be presented with the first phase of the ongoing Aviation Professionals Study which was completed this year.
23. You will also be hearing from AFCAC regarding the implementation status of the AFI Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI-CIS) and the Abuja targets, while other partners will contribute their insights on matters pertaining to the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and AFI Plan goals.
24. I would like to acknowledge their valuable support in this endeavor, and extend them my deepest gratitude.
25. I would also like to express my appreciation for the AFI Plan Steering Committee and its Chairperson, for the leadership and guidance they have provided since this Plan was established.
26. Further recognition must go to the close collaboration and partnership achieved among our ICAO Regional Offices, AFCAC, AUC, and other key partners and donors, including several States from other regions, providing funding and experts for the provision of technical safety implementation support to States, as well as the experts of many AFI States who are contributed in-kind to participate in AFI Plan missions.

27. This partnership and solidarity is at the heart of the tremendous progress which Africa is making today on building its key aviation safety and security capacities, and we can never forget how fundamental these principles are to the core value offerings of civil aviation as the world's fastest and most reliable means of travel and transport.
28. On that point, esteemed delegates, I would wish you a very productive meeting while looking forward to your outcomes.
29. Thank you.