



**Address by the
Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar to the
World Aviation Summit and Awards for Excellence 2023
(28-29 November, Abu Dhabi, UAE)**

*CAPA Think Tank – Defining Aviation Future Path
Pre-recorded speech*

1. Good morning,
2. As Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, it is my honour to have this opportunity to illustrate our commitment to the safe, secure, and sustainable development of international civil aviation.
3. I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of this event for the invitation, and for accommodating my remote participation. I sincerely regret that I am not able to be with you in person today.
4. ICAO is a specialized UN agency focused on civil aviation and serves as a global platform for our 193 Member States.
5. ICAO is where States develop and adopt global strategic plans, standards and recommended practices, policies, and other guidance materials, with a view to aligning and therefore optimizing and accelerating their enhancement of the safety, security, sustainability, and resilience of their aviation sectors. This work is undertaken in close consultation with core and emerging stakeholders from across the air transport ecosystem.

6. Given the unique and crucial role of air connectivity as a catalyst for sustainable development, this work contributes to the achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, encompassing priorities such as the elimination of poverty, the correction of the global developmental imbalance and the economic exclusion of women, and the vitally important need for robust climate action.
7. ICAO's work also encompasses supporting our Member States with the modernization of their regulatory framework to foster technological innovation and the expansion of core and emerging air services alike. Liberalization, financing, and sustainable funding are key focuses here.
8. As the pace of innovation accelerates at unprecedented rates, and as non-aviation stakeholders develop products and services with potential air transport applications, our Member States have encouraged us to engage on a path involving more structured, purpose-driven innovation activities.
9. Hybrid and electric propulsion systems, the use of hydrogen, suborbital flights, unmanned aircraft systems and their accompanying traffic management systems, new technologies for border management, and a whole suite of digitalization applications, including machine learning, artificial intelligence and blockchain applications, are just some of the technologies within the scope of ICAO's mandate.
10. ICAO recognizes that innovative technologies present the challenge of keeping aviation systems, information, and data, protected and resilient to cyber threats and risks.
11. In this regard, ICAO has developed an Aviation Cybersecurity Strategy, and a Cyber Security Action Plan to support States and stakeholders to implement the Strategy. Policy, guidance, awareness campaigns, training and capacity building, and the development of an international aviation trust framework to support the confidentiality, integrity and availability of critical operational information are among the actions being undertaken by ICAO to address this topic.
12. All of this requires close consultation and knowledge exchange between ICAO, industry, and academia. The ICAO Industry Consultative Forums offer a high-level dialogue between the ICAO governing body, its Council, and industry CEOs. We also organize broad and inclusive open house events: the ICAO Innovation Fair, the ICAO Advanced Air Mobility Symposium, the ICAO Stocktaking events on aviation in-sector CO₂ emissions reductions, and the ICAO's TRIP symposia are among some of these exciting initiatives.

13. ICAO itself is also innovating and modernizing, in particular to reform of the international aviation standards-setting process.
14. Our work on the establishment of a “direct submission” mechanism aims at creating an additional complementary leaner process for the development of standards and recommended practices.
15. In parallel, ICAO’s governing body has mandated the development of an Innovation Standardization Roadmap by ICAO. This will help prioritize standard-setting work by taking the time horizon for the operational entry of new technologies and processes into consideration.
16. Under my leadership, ICAO is also implementing organizational transformation around People and Culture to enable an inclusive, ethical, coherent and sustainable workplace.
17. This is accompanied by Digital Transformation to facilitate efficient, transparent, simplified and connected digital processes, systems, tools and security.
18. These two pillars go hand in hand with an Operational Transformation pillar to enable strengthened accountability, sustainability, operational excellence and a results-based culture. These transformations are embedded in our triennial Business Plan and are central to ICAO’s updated long-term strategic planning, which is currently under development.
19. All of this is happening within the context of the adoption of a long-term global aspirational goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 by the ICAO Assembly in 2022.
20. Support for this goal also comes from a wide range of industry stakeholders, ranging from airlines, airport operators, aircraft manufacturers, air navigation service providers, fuels industry and many others.
21. Technology, operations and fuels will play crucial roles, with more than half of the needed emission reductions come from Sustainable Aviation Fuels, or SAF, Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels, or LCAF, and other cleaner energies.
22. In this regard, ICAO’s Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for SAF (ACT-SAF) programme has been established to help meet the significant capacity building and implementation support that will be needed, including in accessing financing for developing the SAF industry.

23. Furthermore, ICAO's Third Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3), held in Dubai earlier this month, defined a global framework, marking a key milestone adding to the reliability and predictability of investments, and certainty in market opportunities.
24. ACT-SAF is a great illustration of how ICAO is not just helping governments develop standards, but implement them too. Implementation is of course crucially important, and before closing, I'd like to briefly talk about our implementation support efforts, which include capacity development, technical assistance and resource mobilization.
25. We understand that challenges in achieving high levels of effective implementation of ICAO standards and other guidance materials have repercussions beyond any one State's national borders.
26. We also understand that we have an obligation to support countries by identifying common challenges and working together to achieve cost-effective, collaborative implementation support solutions.
27. I would like to highlight that the standard-setting reform I mentioned earlier also includes implementation considerations.
28. We are working towards participatory and data-informed standard-setting, that addresses existing and emerging global needs, and that align stakeholder goals with the implementation capacity of States.
29. This goal also points to the need for ICAO to develop and offer products and services to address gaps where they exist, and to assist those States facing more profound resource constraints through resource mobilization activities.
30. The prioritization of these objectives is reflected by ICAO's relaunch of implementation support through our Capacity Development and Implementation Bureau.
31. ICAO is committed to expanding implementation activities globally. This will require all of us as stakeholders of the aviation community to come together and pool our data, expertise, and resources, for the benefit of all States.
32. It will also require addressing human resource constraints.
33. I therefore wish to reflect on the importance of attracting young women and men to join the aviation sector.

34. ICAO's "next generation of aviation professionals" programme aims to position aviation as highly competitive within today's extremely competitive labour market, particularly for the exceptional talent aviation needs. We are currently developing an updated strategy to do just that.
35. We must also ensure that nobody in the labour market who has the skills and the desire to pursue a career in aviation is prevented from doing so. There can be many barriers, but gender-related barriers are the ones we need to remove most urgently.
36. I would like to highlight that according to a 2022 UNESCO, OECD and IADB study, much remains unknown about how disruptive technologies will impact men, and especially women, at work. That means that we must be guided by a principles-based approach and best practices, to help ensure that today's gender stereotypes are not built into tomorrow's technological systems. This is part of the key to closing the gender gap.
37. Next year ICAO will celebrate its 80th anniversary on 7 December, the date of international civil aviation day, commemorating the signing of the Chicago Convention on international civil aviation in 1944, and I therefore leave you with the theme for our related campaign to promote the contribution ICAO makes to the aviation sector: "Safe Skies, Sustainable Future: ICAO80". I hope that you will join our celebration.
38. I would now like to express my gratitude to CAPA once again for the opportunity to advocate for these priorities, and to you all for your attention today.
39. Thank you.