



**Opening Address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Grand Opening of 8th African Aviation Week**

(Nairobi, Kenya, 21 August 2023)

*Mr. Mohamed Daghar, Principal Secretary, State Department for Transport,
Colonel Silas Udahemuka, President of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC),
Mr. Emile Arao, Director-General of Kenya Civil Aviation Authority and all African States Directors-
General of Civil Aviation present,
Honorable Ministers and Representatives of the Kenyan Administration and Institutions,
ICAO Council and Air Navigation Commission Members,
Representatives of Partner States, International and Regional Organizations,
The Aviation Fraternity of Africa,
Distinguished Delegates,*

It is my great honour to welcome you to this eighth consecutive AFI Aviation Week on the behalf of ICAO.

I wish to express our special gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kenya for accepting to host this prestigious event and providing the excellent facilities to conduct our meetings in a very efficient and effective manner, here in the very beautiful city of Nairobi.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation, on behalf of the ICAO community and delegates present here, for the warm welcome given to us since our arrival.

I am pleased to see so many key representatives from States and international and regional organizations present at this meeting. This is a clear demonstration of the recognition of the importance of aviation to the sustainable development of nations. It also underscores your recognition of the need for all partners and stakeholders to work closely together to build synergies in Africa.

Moreover, it is an important acknowledgment that States are more prosperous when they are better connected, and that nothing can connect Africa as efficiently and reliably as air transport.

While the industry is still emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, its deepest crisis ever, air transport is recovering and indeed global air traffic is expected to reach 2019 levels by the end of the year. The prospects for Africa are in this respect remarkable.

Along with assuring the continued safety and security of operations, ensuring the sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity of this recovery are now ICAO's top priorities. And that is why we are gathered here today.

The 2023 AFI Aviation Week events will feature the two-day Aviation Symposium to be held just after this ceremony, the meetings of the Steering Committees for the ICAO Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) and Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security in Africa (AFI SECFAL Plan), and some important progress reports from key partners and stakeholders, illustrating their collaborative support to the ICAO Strategic Objectives.

As you are aware, the agendas of these important annual meetings are rich and require careful attention to ensure the emergence of practical and implementable outcomes for the improvement of safety, security, and air navigation systems, as well as the encouragement of the sustainable development of the aviation industry in the region.

The Symposium will discuss several important topics such as the current ongoing transformation of ICAO, key updates on the implementation of the Global Plans, and the other major global and regional initiatives addressing all ICAO Strategic Objectives. Discussions will also encompass shared regional priorities such as the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), current environmental challenges and initiatives, funding for the aviation industry, capacity building and gender equality.

The two Steering Committees, AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan, will review the recommendations of the various Partners and regional groups, which play such an important role in helping ICAO support continuous progress on aviation safety and security in Africa.

In this regard, I wish to express our deep gratitude to the partners for their important updates and tremendous contributions and express my special recognition as well to the AFI plans Donors. Allow me also to recognize the valuable support that has been provided to other ICAO implementation support programmes in the AFI region, such as the Flight Procedures Programme, COSCAP, and CAPSCA.

My gratitude goes equally to African States, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania Togo, Uganda and Zambia, who are providing great support to the Plans, including by releasing their experts to provide the requested implementation support to beneficiary States at no expense.

I would also like to acknowledge certain states that are leading by example. In addition to Côte d'Ivoire and Ethiopia, who received Council President Certificates at the 41st Assembly, I would like to congratulate Burundi, Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo for the outcomes they have achieved under ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight and Universal Security auditing programmes.

Across the continent, these programmes have revealed that effective implementation of the audited safety standards has risen from 42% in 2014 to 57% by 2022, and in the area of security, from 53% in 2015 to 64% by 2022.

These figures affirm the ability of the African air transport industry to safely and securely regain its status as the fastest growing air transport market in the world.

The implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement should, according to the African Development Bank, increase intra-African trade by 15% and result in a net gain of 2.8 billion US dollars in real income for Africans. In this context and in the context of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), appropriate responses by States to the connectivity issue must be priority one.

Significant progress has been achieved towards implementing the Single African Air Transport Market. However, African contribution to the global traffic remains limited. To increase its part, Africa should leverage on key enablers like liberalization, digitalization, innovation and assuring seamless

and reliable air navigation through the effective implementation of the aviation system block upgrade (ASBU) and adequate aerodrome infrastructure.

The AFI Region should fully optimize its approach to the support provided by ICAO both at global and regional levels. In this respect, I would like to emphasize that through its Transformational Objective, ICAO is undertaking several initiatives to enhance capacity building to better fulfil the needs of all stakeholders and Members States. This reflects ICAO's full commitment to support for the AFI Region in achieving its goals and targets, established in its various plans, programmes, and roadmaps. In this regard, it is our strong determination to reinforce the No Country Left Behind initiative with permanent and long-lasting programmes that would provide better assistance to Africa.

Success on these priorities here in Africa requires harnessing synergies and strengthening collaboration between the key players, and I strongly recommend for you to realize the necessary actions and decisions here this week to solidify and enhance your networks and planning.

Before concluding at this important gathering, I would be remiss not to mention ICAO's engagement on aviation decarbonization.

As you know last Assembly ICAO member States adopted an historic decision to decarbonize air transport by 2050. This decision is also referred to as the adoption of the "Long Term Aspirational Goal".

Aviation decarbonization will be reached through the implementation of the so-called basket of measures: technology, more efficient air navigation routes, Sustainable Aviation Fuels or SAFs, including Low Carbon Aviation Fuels, and offsetting through market-based measures.

We know that SAFs and Low Carbon Aviation Fuels will play the main role in the short to medium term. Between 55% and 60% of CO₂ emission reduction in 2050 will be reached through SAFs and Low Carbon Aviation Fuels.

Consequently, the short-term objective is to deploy the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels, making it both affordable and accessible.

ICAO is working very hard with fuel producers, institutional and private investors to make this happen particularly by fostering international partnerships and cooperation with the energy and financial sectors to accelerate much-needed investment in this area.

Investments require a clear regulatory global framework in order to provide certainty.

For this reason, ICAO has called a High-Level Conference on Civil Aviation Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3), late November in Dubai, just ahead COP/28, with the objective to adopt a climate change framework that would provide States, Aviation Stakeholders, Fuel Producers, and Investors with clear perspectives. The Conference's outcome will be pivotal to a global framework for aviation fuels, adding to the reliability and predictability of investments in SAF projects.

We are also helping countries to build local capacities and foster international contacts to optimize their sustainable aviation fuel potential through our ACT-SAF programme, an Assistance and Capacity Building initiative.

SAF production projects in Africa are very limited.

However, I want to stress that Africa has a great opportunity in this area. In fact, the huge feedstock availability on this Continent is of interest for investors. ICAO will work in order to facilitate partnerships and cooperation initiatives with individual States, public and private investors and fuel producers to unlock the opportunities offered to Africa.

Against this background, I urge all of you to be engaged through ICAO on SAF deployment participating actively in the pre-CAAF/3 meeting that will be held in hybrid format on 25 and 26 September and the CAAF/3 that will be held in Dubai from 20 to 24 November.

Finally, I would also like to remind you the of the significance of the upcoming ICAO Air Navigation World 2023 event, taking place in Montréal from 28 to 31 August under the theme “Shaping the skies for tomorrow”, and in Singapore from 23 to 27 October 2023 under the theme “ATM Procedures for today”, as well as the 18th Symposium on the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme and Joint International Criminal Police Organization Biometrics Forum, which is scheduled from 12 to 14 September 2023 in Montréal.

I look forward to the active participation of African States providing a strong voice at the global table, helping ICAO to underscore, through well-attended, in-person global events, that the aviation network is bringing the world and peoples together.

In closing I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the partnership and support of African States and aviation stakeholders to ICAO, and to thank you all for your steadfast commitments to the harmonized and sustainable development of international civil aviation on this continent.

I am confident that this commitment, along with your collective capacity and the synergy of experts from States, partners, and stakeholders, will result in fruitful, timely, and successful deliberations. In this regard, I would like to assure you of the availability of the Secretariat staff to ensure the smooth conduct of these meetings.

Thank you for your kind attention.