



**Opening remarks by the  
President of the ICAO Council  
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,  
to the ACI World Annual General Assembly**

*(Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 22 May 2024)*

*Dear Chairwoman of the ACI World Governing Board, Candace McGraw,*

*Dear Director General of ACI World, Luis Felipe de Olivera,*

*Dear Chairman of ACI Asia-Pacific and Middle East, Emmanuel Menanteau,*

*Dear Director General of ACI Asia-Pacific and Middle East, Stefano Baronci,*

*His Excellency, President of General Authority of Civil Aviation, Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Duailej,*

*Dear CEO of the Riyadh Airports Company, Mr. Ayman Abdulaziz AboAbah,*

*Distinguished participants,*

I wish to thank ACI for the highly valued invitation to be with you today.

Addressing the ACI General Assembly is an honour and a deeply appreciated opportunity to engage with you as industry leaders.

I wish to underline the relevance of the relationship between ICAO and ACI at all levels, strategic and technical. Just a few weeks ago the ICAO Council hosted ACI, together with IATA, CANSO and ICCAIA, for the organization's annual briefing on the State of the Industry. Additionally, ACI is greatly contributing to ICAO policy decisions through its participation in ATAG.

This year, ICAO is celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention charter that established both the fundamental rules of international air transport and ICAO. Our celebrations provide opportunities to acknowledge the achievements of international civil aviation over the last eight decades and to reflect on how international civil aviation should evolve in the decades to come.

Amongst these reflections is our response to the climate emergency.

You know the landmark ICAO Resolution adopting a long term global aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, known as the LTAG and I wish to take the opportunity today to thank ACI for its role in contributing to this turning point.

In order to respond to the priorities, the LTAG has given us, we are racing to make Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and Low Carbon Aviation Fuel both affordable and accessible, as they can provide over half of the needed CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions.

In November last year, a massive leap forward was achieved at the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in Dubai resulting in the adoption of a Global Framework and a global target of a 5% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030.

ICAO is now working with the energy and financial sectors to accelerate much-needed investment in sustainable aviation by fostering international cooperation and partnership. One of our key priorities is the operationalization of the Finvest Hub, which aims to facilitate access to investment capacities and funding from financial institutions, with a special emphasis on supporting developing countries and states with specific needs, in coherence with the No Country Left Behind ICAO policy.

Additionally, 150 States and organizations, including ACI, are now part of ICAO's Assistance, Capacity Building, and Training programme for SAF, known as ACT-SAF, which provides training, feasibility studies, support for SAF certification and policy development, and implementation of specific SAF projects for States.

Airports are of course playing a pivotal role in these efforts, your strong engagement is reflected in the success of ACI's Airport Carbon Accreditation program, and this will be key to you fulfilling your part in supporting SAF accessibility.

ACI World has been very proactive, as evidenced by its release of one of the first sustainable fuel studies, and its contributions to the ICAO Green Airports Seminar in Athens last month, covering plastic usage in aviation, building partnerships, and navigating emerging environmental topics. This has supported ICAO's new Eco Airport Toolkit Publication on Single-Use Plastics, which is set to be published this July on the ICAO website.

There is a lot underway and much more we still need to do together.

Looking ahead, we foresee kerosene, sustainable aviation fuels, electricity, and hydrogen powered flights co-existing over the next decades, along with traditional and new types of aircraft that feature wider wingspans or even blended wing designs to improve efficiency.

Airports will need to be ready to support such innovations, accommodate new aircraft, autonomous ground vehicles, and new air urban mobility, all with zero compromise on safety and security.

ICAO and ACI already have strong platforms for collaborating effectively towards this, such as the Airport Excellence (APEX) Program, which focuses on enhancing safety management systems, runway safety, and emergency preparedness.

Our partnership on runway safety is key to addressing one of aviation's highest safety risks. Your role in the development and roll out of the ICAO Global Reporting Format is fundamental to its success.

Furthermore, ACI's input into ICAO's work on aviation cybersecurity is essential to realizing a robust, holistic, and harmonized framework for international civil aviation as a whole.

Indeed, the aviation security domain had already been generating very high levels of innovation even before the pandemic, due to the constantly emerging issues it confronts, and ACI has been a key and long-standing partner in our advocacy for infrastructure modernization that reflects security by design principles.

ACI and ICAO also recognize the critical importance of capacity building in the aviation industry.

Our collaboration on human resources through training programs, workshops, and conferences enhances the skills and knowledge of today's aviation professionals and the next generation's, thereby improving our operations today and ensuring we're ready for the operations of tomorrow.

I wish to recall that 2024 is the ICAO Year of Facilitation. We are particularly active in encouraging progress in this field this year, particularly in regard to the establishment of national facilitation committees, the accessibility of air transport for persons with disabilities, and the leveraging and interoperability of the ICAO Digital Travel Credential. In fact, passenger facial identification which is based on the ICAO Digital Travel Credential specifications, is becoming common in several airports. ICAO encourages ACI to promote the implementation of these modern tools to its constituents.

ICAO looks forward to working with all of you on these priorities, helping deliver our final goal of globally inclusive and interoperable seamless travel.

The fast pace of innovation is informing many of our priorities. The increasing digitalization and integration of air transport systems and processes across the board has placed cybersecurity as a primary, urgent, and shared priority.

We also need to urgently prepare ourselves for the extraordinary potential of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) and advanced air mobility (AAM).

ICAO is working on provisions for airports to accommodate these operations, including both their integration into core airport operations and the transition to vertiports. By standardizing these rules, we can best assure the safe and efficient development of the emerging unmanned aviation industry.

I strongly encourage you to contribute to ICAO's first ever AAM Symposium, which is scheduled to take place in Montréal in September.

Obstacle Limitation Surfaces is another safety priority of key importance to airports that ICAO is now consulting countries on. This work focuses on better protecting airspace around aerodromes, taking into account modern aircraft performance and the needs of both aeronautical and non-aeronautical communities.

While I've given some immediate priorities, ICAO is always looking further ahead.

Envisaging that airports could also serve as spaceports, ICAO has received an increasing number of inquiries to establish guidance on commercial space launch sites at or near airport facilities.

However, these exciting opportunities cannot distract from vital need to achieve progress on the first priority I presented to you today. Airports must play a proactive role in driving the clean energy transition in air transport and achieving sustainability in this sector by deploying energies for greener operations, supporting new aircraft procedures to further decrease noise and emissions, and addressing the entire airport ecosystem holistically in terms of airside and landside opportunities for increased sustainability.

This Assembly provides a valuable platform for us to build from our strengths, exchange ideas, and identify new opportunities towards all of these goals and many more.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Luis Felipe de Oliveira. Luis Felipe, as you complete your mandate, I wish to thank you on behalf of the entire ICAO community for your energetic support and for the many significant contributions to ICAO's work over the course of your tenure.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention and look forward to the outcomes of this dynamic gathering.

Thank you.