



**Keynote Speech by
The President of the ICAO Council
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma
to the 61st Conference of the APAC DGCA**

(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7 September 2026)

Esteemed Directors General,

Colleagues,

I want to thank the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia and Captain Norazman bin Mahmud for inviting me to address this 61st Conference of Asia Pacific Directors General of Civil Aviation.

It is a pleasure to be with you here in Kuala Lumpur.

I am deeply grateful for the ongoing commitment and support that States in the Asia Pacific Region provide to ICAO's work at both global and regional levels. Your active engagement with the ICAO APAC Regional Office is also deeply appreciated.

ICAO recognises our responsibility to guide the sector, through inclusiveness and global cooperation, towards a safe, secure, and sustainable future.

Aviation is essential to the connectivity and economies of the Asia-Pacific.

But today, our sector faces significant challenges.

Climate change, regional conflicts, geopolitical uncertainties, and the growing demand for global and regional connectivity are among the factors testing our resilience.

Meanwhile, risks such as interference with satellite navigation, lithium battery fires, and evolving cyber threats cross national borders.

All this means our collaboration is more essential than ever.

Through partnership, we can strengthen civil aviation and ensure its ongoing success in the Asia-Pacific, and worldwide.

The theme of this conference is Smart Skies: Emerging Technologies for Safe, Secure, Sustainable and Efficient Aviation.

It is a timely and visionary theme.

Innovation is rapidly transforming our sector, and your region is playing a pioneering role, both in technology and operational excellence.

Advanced automation, artificial intelligence, and connected systems are bringing significant benefits to States, operators, and passengers.

And as we connect more people and more technologies, airspace continues to increase in complexity.

This also increases the need to renew our global commitment to aviation safety and security.

The aviation community has always set ambitious goals and achieved them through close cooperation.

ICAO's vision for 2050 is air transport for all, zero fatalities, and net-zero carbon emissions.

This year, we launched our new strategic plan to guide us towards that vision.

Many countries and regions have already made impressive gains in safety and security oversight. This has been supported by investment in institutions, skilled professionals, and stronger regulations.

ICAO oversight audits confirm that more States are achieving scores above the global average, and the global accident rate continues to decline.

However, recent data show increases in certain accident types and fatalities. Runway safety, turbulence, and mid-air collisions especially require our attention. These trends remind us that our work is not yet done.

Trust in international air transport depends on effective oversight. This trust also depends on well-trained professionals and strong institutions that are committed to ICAO standards.

Prompt and transparent investigations of civil aviation accidents are essential. The timely sharing of findings will help prevent future incidents and uphold public confidence.

We must also increase collaboration on national and ICAO global safety and security plans and programmes.

ICAO will continue to provide standards, training, and capacity-building support to help Member States meet these goals.

We will ensure that no country is left behind as we address emerging risks and seize new opportunities.

I also want to stress the importance of our ongoing cooperation on aviation environmental protection.

APAC States are demonstrating strong commitment to aviation decarbonization, with many initiatives already underway across the region.

This is reflected in the 25 APAC States that have submitted State Action Plans, outlining initiatives and technologies to reduce aviation emissions.

To support their implementation, the ICAO Council welcomed the ACT-LTAG programme, which will strengthen implementation support and facilitate access to financing.

More broadly, the ICAO Assembly has called for accelerated action on cleaner aircraft technologies, more fuel-efficient operations and aviation cleaner energies.

The Assembly also encouraged broader participation in CORSIA, the only global market-based measure for international aviation.

Progress is being made to increase the supply of CORSIA-eligible emissions units. Host country authorization remains critical. I encourage States to expedite the issuance of Letters of Authorization.

Colleagues,

Looking ahead to the near future, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the critical importance of ICAO's upcoming Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference.

This conference will be held at our Headquarters in Montréal in November.

It is an opportunity to discuss how international air transport economic frameworks can continue to support growth, connectivity and the evolving needs of the sector towards 2050.

Discussions will cover issues such as connectivity, liberalization, infrastructure financing, innovation, market developments and future regulatory approaches.

The conference will deliver two important outcomes for our sector.

The first is a comprehensive Conference Report.

It will contain recommendations to guide international air transport economic policy and development for the next decade.

The second is a Ministerial Declaration. This will enable governments to express a shared vision and a collective commitment to conference objectives.

To continue expanding, aviation needs the right global policy framework.

This means we need active input and regional perspectives from the Asia-Pacific States.

The Asia-Pacific region must be at the forefront of shaping the next decade of global aviation policy and innovation.

This is especially important as this region is the world's largest air transport market.

I encourage all States in this region to start preparing national and common positions now. This will ensure your voices are represented.

The ICAO Council has developed a draft Ministerial declaration, and it is now open for consultation with all Member States.

Please take the opportunity to shape the final document so it reflects Asia Pacific's priorities.

Your engagement is essential to ensure outcomes that are meaningful and strong for the global aviation community.

I also want to highlight that ICAO and Airports Council International will host a Global Infrastructure Investor Forum the day before the conference opens in Montréal.

The forum will support the conference's work on the future of aviation infrastructure. It aims to identify actions and financing mechanisms for governments, financial institutions, investors, and industry stakeholders.

Collaboration in these areas is vital for the Asia-Pacific region, particularly as we see rapid growth and ambitious infrastructure development needs.

Distinguished colleagues,

This DGCA conference is a key opportunity to achieve meaningful results for the Asia-Pacific region and the communities you serve.

It is also a crucial time to align your regional approach before the ICAO talks in November.

I thank CAA Malaysia and the Government of Malaysia once again for their hospitality. I thank all of you for your continued engagement and cooperation.

Thank you.