



Opening Remarks by
YB Loke Siew Fook, Minister of Transport
Opening Ceremony
61st Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference
Asia and Pacific Region
7 September 2026 | Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur

SALUTATION

- Mr Toshiyuki Onuma, President of the ICAO Council;
- Mr Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary General of ICAO;
- Yang Berbahagia Dato' Seri Jana Sathiran Muniayan, Secretary General, Ministry of Transport Malaysia;
- Yang Berbahagia Dato' Mohamed Sharil Tarmizi, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia;
- Mr Tao Ma, Regional Director of the ICAO Asia and Pacific Office;
- Yang Berbahagia Dato' Captain Norazman Mahmud, Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia;
- Authority Members of the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia;



- Distinguished Directors General of Civil Aviation and Heads of Delegation;
- Excellencies;
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning, and selamat datang to Malaysia.

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Kuala Lumpur for the 61st Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference for the Asia and Pacific Region, or DGCA/61. Malaysia is honoured to host this distinguished gathering, and we deeply value the confidence placed in us by ICAO and the aviation community of our region.
2. I hope your time in Kuala Lumpur will be both productive and enjoyable, and that the warmth of Malaysian hospitality will facilitate the important work before us.
3. Aviation has become one of the defining forces of the Asia-Pacific century. It enables trade, sustains tourism, connects communities and allows businesses of every size to reach markets far beyond their borders. For an open and trading nation such as Malaysia, aviation is a strategic pillar of national development.



4. The scale of opportunity before us is considerable. In July last year alone, Malaysian airports handled 9.3 million passengers, bringing total passenger traffic for the first seven months of the year to 61.2 million. That monthly figure had reached 96.8 per cent of the level recorded in July 2019. This renewed momentum gives us confidence to plan and prepare for sustained long-term demand.
5. Malaysia's ambition is clear: to strengthen our position as a resilient and competitive regional aviation hub. This requires more than additional capacity. It requires an aviation ecosystem that is well governed, commercially attractive, operationally reliable and trusted by the public.
6. The Government is therefore focused on the foundations that will enable our aviation sector to grow with confidence: modern infrastructure, more efficient airspace, strong regulatory institutions, and above all, **a highly skilled workforce** that support investment while safeguarding the national and public interest.



7. Our commitment is to ensure that growth is pursued responsibly. Safety and security must remain absolute priorities; sustainability must be embedded in long-term planning; and efficiency must translate into better connectivity and a stronger passenger experience.
8. This direction is reflected in the continued modernisation of Malaysia's air navigation system. Initiatives such as Direct Route Operations across the Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu Flight Information Regions demonstrate how smarter use of airspace can reduce flight distances, fuel consumption and emissions while improving operational efficiency.
9. We are also taking a long-term view of aviation's environmental responsibilities. Through the Malaysia Aviation Decarbonisation Blueprint, Malaysia has established a pathway towards net-zero carbon emissions for international aviation by 2050, aligned with ICAO's Long-Term Aspirational Goal.
10. For Malaysia, the transition to lower-carbon aviation is not only an obligation; it is also an opportunity to attract investment, develop domestic expertise and participate in new value chains.



11. At the same time, emerging technologies are expanding the possibilities of flight. Artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft and advanced air mobility have the potential to transform logistics, public services and connectivity. Governments and regulators must provide clarity and confidence as these technologies develop, ensuring that innovation proceeds responsibly and continues to serve the public interest.

12. Malaysia intends to play an active role in this next chapter. We will support innovation through clear policy, proportionate regulation and close engagement with industry, while ensuring that safety, security and public trust are never compromised.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. Our national efforts form only one part of a much larger regional picture. The Asia-Pacific encompasses States with different levels of infrastructure, technical capability and market maturity. If our region is to progress as a whole, that progress must be inclusive.



14. No State should be left behind because it lacks access to expertise, training or technology. Capacity development, technical assistance and the sharing of experience must therefore remain central to our regional agenda.
15. This is where ICAO's leadership plays an essential role. International civil aviation succeeds because States agree to operate within a common framework. ICAO gives practical effect to that cooperation by translating shared principles into standards, implementation support and coordinated action.
16. Malaysia remains firmly committed to this multilateral system. We will continue to support efforts that strengthen implementation, narrow capability gaps and ensure that innovation advances in a manner consistent with the safety and integrity of international civil aviation.
17. Today's conference gives us an important opportunity to advance this work. I hope this conference will produce clear regional priorities, stronger commitments to implementation and practical partnerships that Member States can take forward together.



18. Our discussions must also remain grounded in the people we ultimately serve: the passengers who place their trust in our systems, the communities that depend on aviation for access and opportunity, and the professionals whose judgement and dedication keep aircraft moving safely every day.

Ladies and gentlemen,

19. The decisions taken by aviation leaders today will shape how our region connects, competes and grows for decades to come. We must approach those decisions with ambition and discipline, with openness to innovation and with an unwavering commitment to public trust.

20. Malaysia looks forward to contributing constructively to the discussions and to working with all Member States to translate our shared priorities into tangible regional progress.

21. I wish all delegates a productive and successful conference today. May your deliberations strengthen the foundations of an aviation system that is ready to serve the next chapter of Asia-Pacific growth.



22. With that, it is my great pleasure to declare the 61st Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference for the Asia and Pacific Region officially open.

Thank you.

[END]