



Remarks by the Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the APAC DGCA
7 September 2026

Directors General, Colleagues, and Friends,

1. I am honoured to address this meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation of this vast, diverse, and incredibly dynamic region.
2. This is our first gathering since the ICAO Assembly in October, where 192 States came together in unprecedented participation and consensus to adopt 32 new Resolutions.
3. These Resolutions set a shared ambition for air transport for all by 2050, with zero fatalities and net-zero carbon emissions. Today, I would like to focus on three connected messages: the APAC region's central role in delivering ICAO's long-term strategic vision; the practical opportunities before us through ATConf/7 and the Extraordinary Assembly; and the importance of regional coordination to ensure that APAC priorities are reflected in global outcomes.

[SLIDE 2]

4. The ICAO Strategic Plan for 2026 through 2050 provides clear direction.

5. It sets out how to achieve our aims, by ensuring the safety and security of every flight, strong environmental sustainability, accessible air connections, regional cooperation to ensure no country is left behind, adaptable legal agreements, and widespread benefits from aviation's growth.
6. Working together will place these six goals within our reach.
7. With the first year of the 25-year plan now underway, the APAC region is well positioned to make strong contributions to global momentum from the outset. This region is moreover in an excellent position to shape the momentum.

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8. ICAO's Business Plan for 2026 to 2028 structures our next steps as we move forward, and with results-based management and new oversight dashboards, ICAO now has reliable tools to track progress and focus resources where it matters most.
9. This will also enable us to better identify any issues early on, encouraging and enabling transparent teamwork.
10. And as we move forward, we will build on your successes.
11. In this regard, a major opportunity lies ahead.

[SLIDE 4]

12. States in this region are developing and improving systems for ongoing oversight of aviation safety, security, and environmental issues.
13. Safety and security remains our foremost priority. ICAO will continue supporting States in strengthening their safety and security oversight systems, promoting collaborative approaches to safety risk management, and reinforcing the role of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations as key enablers of effective implementation. I am particularly happy that the SSC issued to Bhutan has been successfully resolved in June 2026. Congratulations Bhutan!
14. Through the No Country Left Behind initiative, ICAO will further expand assistance to States, strengthen partnerships with regional organizations and development partners, and enhance resource mobilization to support sustainable implementation across the region. For APAC, ICAO is working closely with the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) to assist in improving the safety oversight system and build the necessary capacity. ICAO has developed an Implementation Support Roadmap that would help to establish a sustainable oversight system and address immediate safety, security and compliance priorities in the PSIDS.
15. ICAO will also continue assisting States in implementing their State Action Plans and advancing CORSIA implementation and SAF development, while supporting broader efforts to address climate change and promote sustainable aviation growth. I note that 25 out of the 39 APAC States have

already developed their State Action Plans and 26 States have commenced work on CORSIA implementation. I would like to emphasize the importance of advancing CORSIA's harmonized and multilateral approach under ICAO, and ask for stronger support to CORSIA and its robust implementation by all States. In this regard, I would like to express appreciation to active contributions of APAC experts in ICAO CAEP and TAB, which facilitate technically-sound decisions and practical approaches for CORSIA as the global solution for international aviation.

16. In the area of Treaties, Laws and Regulations, priority will be given to supporting the ratification and implementation of international air law instruments, thereby strengthening the legal and regulatory foundations of civil aviation in Asia Pacific region.
17. Modernizing aviation infrastructure and services remains essential to the future growth of the Region. ICAO will support operational improvements, air navigation modernization, and the safe integration of emerging technologies, including UAS, RPAS and Advanced Air Mobility. I am heartened to note that the APAC Region has commenced work on the 30/10 Project and working towards mandating ATFM by 2030.
18. Finally, ICAO will continue promoting air transport connectivity and liberalization across the APAC Region, recognizing aviation as a catalyst for economic integration, trade, tourism and sustainable development.

19. Success in achieving these priorities will depend on strong partnerships, sustained commitment and coordinated action among States, regional organizations, industry stakeholders and development partners. ICAO remains fully committed to supporting these collective efforts.

[SLIDE 5]

20. As discussed by the President in his Opening Address, the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference will be hosted at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal from 16 to 20 November 2026.
21. Discussions at the Conference will proceed under the theme of “Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World.”
22. This signals the critical role our industry plays in jobs, trade, and building stronger communities.
23. This signal is increasingly recognized at the highest levels.
24. More States are making aviation part of their national plans because they see how air transport supports development, social inclusion, and progress toward international goals.
25. Work at the conference will focus on keeping aviation strong and able to meet the needs of our changing world.

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26. Before diving into the agenda items of ATConf/7, it is important to reflect on why this Conference matters and why it comes at such a critical time for international aviation.
27. Air transport remains a fundamental enabler of global connectivity and socio-economic development. Aviation connects people, businesses and markets, and supports trade, tourism and investment opportunities worldwide.
28. Recent years have demonstrated the importance of resilience in the aviation sector. The COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions and extreme weather events have highlighted the need for robust and adaptable policy frameworks.
29. There is also a growing need to ensure sustainable growth of air transport, including through access to cleaner energy sources and the creation of enabling policy environments to support the industry's transition towards net-zero emissions.
30. The Conference will also address the financing of aviation infrastructure and the development of strategic partnerships needed to mobilize investment in airports, air navigation services, and supporting infrastructure.
31. Another important priority is strengthening regulatory oversight and institutional frameworks to support the implementation of ICAO policies and

guidance material, particularly in States with limited resources and regulatory capacity.

32. Finally, aviation is entering a period of rapid technological transformation. Advanced Air Mobility, unmanned aircraft systems, artificial intelligence and data-driven oversight models are creating significant opportunities, while also requiring new approaches to economic regulation and policy development.
33. Taken together, these challenges and opportunities underscore the importance of ATConf/7 as a global forum to establish a shared vision and policy direction for the future development of international air transport.
34. The importance of getting these policies right is reflected in aviation's contribution to the global economy: the sector supports approximately USD 4.1 trillion in economic activity and around 86.5 million jobs worldwide.
35. In terms of Objectives, States and partners will look at ways to update regulatory frameworks so they can keep up with new market realities and technology. The use of data and digital tools will be part of these talks, helping us make better decisions and build flexible systems for the future.
36. A key focus will be making aviation not just stronger, but also more resilient.

37. Delegates will share lessons on planning for emergencies, protecting consumers, building a strong workforce, and making sure supply chains work, even under stress.

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38. We have planned the conference to help you work together and find agreement on key issues.
39. Each day, plenary and panel discussions will bring together States, industry leaders, and experts from the financial sector.
40. Together, they will build common ground and develop practical solutions to the challenges and opportunities I have mentioned.
41. The conference will open with a look at how air transport has changed since 2013, covering major industry trends and the evolution of regulatory frameworks.
42. States will discuss what these changes mean in practice, and consider the role of aviation in economic development, especially for those countries that are still growing their capacity.
43. After that, the focus will turn to growth and investment.

44. Delegates will share their experience and expertise in prioritizing civil aviation within their national economic strategies. This will include ways to align policies so that air transport supports economic progress across the board.
45. The agenda then moves to financing: how to develop and modernize infrastructure using public and private support, and how to invest in building the workforce and skills needed for the future.
46. These discussions will draw on real examples and focus on what works.
47. The next part of the agenda centers on regulation and institutions. States will review how to strengthen oversight, adapt the role of civil aviation authorities, and meet technical assistance and funding needs.
48. The conference will give space to discuss expanding air connectivity within and across regions, and the steps to update frameworks that drive trade, tourism, and resilience.
49. Delegates will share experience on emergency planning, consumer protection, and keeping the system strong when challenges arise. There will also be a close look at user charges, taxes, and how to recover costs for airport and navigation services, including for new operators such as drones.
50. Finally, the discussions will look further to the future.

- 51. The conference will explore how new technologies and business models can fit into today's systems, and what changes may be needed to keep regulation up to date.
- 52. States will talk about the economic opportunities from cleaner aviation energy, and how investments in innovation can bring benefits to every part of the sector.
- 53. Digitalization, improved use of data, and new tools like artificial intelligence will also be high on the agenda, as we work to make air transport safer, smarter, and more sustainable.

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- 54. The Conference has been designed to be highly interactive.
- 55. The objective is not only to present ideas, but to foster dialogue, encourage the exchange of perspectives, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement among all participants.
- 56. Each day will begin with panel discussions and presentations that will help set the scene for the discussions ahead, bringing together experts and thought leaders to share insights and provide valuable context for the consideration of working papers.

57. Beyond the formal programme, participants will also have opportunities to engage through a variety of side events, which will allow to exchange ideas, showcase innovative initiatives, and hear directly from a diverse range of voices from across the aviation ecosystem.
58. I would also like to draw your attention to the schedule for the Extraordinary Assembly. Its Opening Session will take place on Thursday afternoon. The Assembly will then reconvene on Friday afternoon, following the approval of the ATConf/7 Report and the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration.

[SLIDE 9]

59. As I mentioned by the President in his Opening Remarks, the Air Transport Conference will deliver two key outcomes that will help shape the future of our sector. The first is the Conference Report, which will capture a set of recommendations to guide the development of international air transport over the next decade. The second is the Ministerial Declaration.
60. The Ministerial Declaration is much more than a conference document. It is an opportunity for governments around the world to express a shared vision and demonstrate their collective commitment to advancing the Conference's objectives in the years ahead.
61. In preparation for these discussions, the ICAO Council has developed a draft Declaration and approved its release for consultation with Member States.

This gives all States an opportunity to help shape the final text and ensure it reflects our common priorities and ambitions.

- 62. Your input will be essential in building a strong and meaningful outcome that reflects the perspectives of the global aviation community.
- 63. The draft Declaration, along with instructions on how to submit comments, is available on the ICAO website. You can access all the relevant information by scanning the QR code displayed on the screen.

[SLIDE 10]

- 64. The success of this Conference will be determined by your active participation throughout the process.
- 65. The objectives we have set for ourselves are ambitious. They are intentionally forward-looking, designed not only to address today's challenges, but also to help future-proof international air transport for the years ahead.
- 66. The future of aviation will be shaped by collaboration, innovation, and the collective expertise of a broad range of stakeholders.
- 67. That is why we strongly encourage participation from across the aviation ecosystem—and beyond. We want to hear from those who are driving innovation, shaping policy, developing new technologies, operating our air transport systems, and responding to emerging global challenges.

68. Together, we have a unique opportunity to help define the future direction of international air transport. Let us make the most of it.

[SLIDE 11]

69. ICAO is very busy setting up a very fertile ground for discussions at the Conference.
70. The official invitation to the Conference was sent out by means of State Letter on 4 May 2026. The State Letter contains important information regarding the dates, the agenda, registration instructions and important timelines to note.
71. In particular, all Working Papers from States should be submitted to ICAO by September 25th at the latest – to allow for timely translation as well as to allow other participating States to carefully review all proposals.
72. The deadline for registration is October 20th.
73. What would be my take-away message for you?
74. ICAO is encouraging Member States and organizations to coordinate through joint working papers and regional submissions.
75. This will help focus debate and set clear priorities.

- 76. For this region, the seventh Air Transport Conference is a crucial opportunity to share strong ideas from our States, shape global policy, and set the direction for international aviation in the years ahead.
- 77. Your preparation and active involvement, both now and at the meeting itself, will help ensure that the outcomes reflect your priorities and strengths

[SLIDE 12]

- 78. As previously mentioned, the Conference will also coincide with an extraordinary session of the ICAO Assembly.
- 79. The Chicago Convention amendments to expand the ICAO Council and Air Navigation Commission have been ratified by enough States, therefore the elections for new Members will be decided during an extraordinary ICAO Assembly.
- 80. Taken together, November must be seen as a crucial month for the APAC Region to advocate for its priorities and needs.

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- 81. In recognizing these pivotal opportunities, and the crucial importance of all the work highlighted today, I want to stress that ICAO continues to make its own transformation a priority.

- 82. We have reached major milestones in upgrading systems, talent, information security, and data tools, so that States in this region are better supported than ever.
- 83. ICAO's Continuous Organizational Improvement Programme is focused on ensuring you have exactly what you need to prepare, participate and lead at the global level—and through this programme, we will ensure that our support only becomes stronger and more closely aligned to your needs and priorities in the years ahead.
- 84. In this regard, we are happy to share with you the experience and knowledge we gained from our Transformational Objective. I would like to invite States who embark on a similar journey to reach out to us, so that we may impart this knowledge.

[SLIDE 14]

- 85. Building on all this momentum, I invite you to focus on three priorities here and in the coming months.
- 86. In the first instance, it is crucial that you continue to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination on safety, security, and environmental matters.
- 87. Secondly, I urge you to ensure the prompt sharing of information, the active engagement of technical specialists, and careful maintenance of national

records. This will maximize the value of the tools and expertise that are available.

88. And finally, as you prepare for the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference and the next ICAO Assembly, I strongly encourage you to work together to develop a shared position that accelerates progress towards the ICAO strategic vision in this region.

89. Your leadership on these priorities will bring the benefits of safe, secure, and sustainable aviation closer to every citizen, in every State.

Thank you.



**Juan Carlos Salazar, ICAO Secretary
General**

**61st ICAO Directors General of Civil
Aviation Conference (DGCA/61) Asia and
Pacific Region**

7-11 September, Malaysia

**INTERNATIONAL
CIVIL AVIATION
ORGANIZATION**



ICAO – Strategic Plan

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Scan the QR code below to access the complete Strategic Plan



ICAO

The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All

The International Aviation Convention and other Treaties, Laws and Regulations address all Challenges



2026-2028 Business Plan

Turning Strategic into Action



ICAO Business Plan 2026 - 2028

- Structured by the 6 Strategic Goals
- High-priority Enablers to strengthen ICAO
- Applies Results-Based Management



- Monitored through effective dashboards
- Tracks Performance of:
 - Outcomes
 - Outputs
 - Programmes
 - Projects and Activities

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

By Strategic goal

4



Every Flight is
Safe and
Secure

- ✓ Support to States in strengthening their Safety and Security Oversight System
- ✓ Support RSOOs and other stakeholders' collaborative approach in managing safety and security risks



No Country
Left Behind

- ✓ Strengthen partnerships and resource mobilization
- ✓ Expand support to States and advance the “No Country Left Behind” initiative



Aviation is
Environmentally
Sustainable

- ✓ Support State Action Plan development and implementation
- ✓ Advance CORSIA implementation and SAF development



Treaties, Laws
and Regulations

- ✓ Support States in the ratification and implementation of air law treaties.



Seamless,
Accessible, and
Reliable
Mobility For All

- ✓ Advance aviation infrastructure and services modernization, and operational improvements
- ✓ Support UAS, RPAS and AAM integration



Economic
Development

- ✓ Promote air transport connectivity and liberalization in the APAC region



ICAO

Convening of the Seventh Worldwide Air
Transport Conference (ATConf/7)

“Air Transport: Powering Global
Connectivity, Economic Development,
and Resilience in a Dynamic World”

SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE (ATCONF/7)

ICAO HEADQUARTERS
MONTRÉAL, CANADA
16 TO 20 NOVEMBER 2026



Why is the ATConf/7 important?



Global Connectivity

- ✓ Key for socio-economic development



Financing & partnerships for aviation infrastructure

- ✓ Financing for infrastructure
- ✓ Strategic partnerships



Industry resilience

- ✓ Workforce needs
- ✓ Supply chain
- ✓ Consumer benefits
- ✓ Emergency response



Strengthening regulatory oversight and institutional frameworks

- ✓ Compliance with the Chicago Convention
- ✓ Implementation of ICAO Policies and Guidance



Sustainable growth

- ✓ Access to Aviation Cleaner Energy



Emerging technologies & Data-driven oversight

- ✓ Advanced Air Mobility
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence



AVIATION SUPPORTS

USD 4.1 TRILLION
AND **86.5 MILLION** JOBS

Agenda Items



Conference Format

	MONDAY Day 1	TUESDAY Day 2	WEDNESDAY Day 3	THURSDAY Day 4	FRIDAY Day 5
 AM (Plenary)	 AGENDA ITEM 1 Developments in the field of air transport  Panel Discussion / Presentations	 AGENDA ITEM 2 Fostering aviation growth and connectivity through investments in infrastructure, human capital and partnerships  Panel Discussion / Presentations	 AGENDA ITEM 3 Strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks  Panel Discussion / Presentations	 AGENDA ITEM 4 Emerging technologies, new business models and other associated aspects  Panel Discussion / Presentations	 APPROVAL OF ATCONF/7 DRAFT REPORT AND CLOSING CEREMONY  ADOPTION OF MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
 PM (Plenary)	 Consideration of working papers on the subject matter  Closing Remarks	 Consideration of working papers  Closing Remarks	 Consideration of working papers  Closing Remarks	 EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY (Afternoon)	 EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY (Afternoon)
	 Each day begins with insightful panel discussions and presentations in the morning. Afternoons conclude with closing remarks.			 The Extraordinary Assembly will be held on Thursday & Friday afternoons.	



Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World

Montréal, Canada, 16-20 November 2026

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf7), held in Montréal, Canada, from 16 to 20 November 2026, in the presence of high-level representatives of the civil aviation sector, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as global financing and development institutions, under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO):

Highlighting the importance for States to effectively implement ICAO Assembly Resolutions on continuing ICAO policies in the air transport field, and the key role of ICAO's implementation support,



**At its First Meeting
of the 238th Session,
the ICAO Council
authorized the
publication of this
Ministerial Declaration
for comments by
Member States.**



The Ministerial Declaration is now published on the ICAO website.



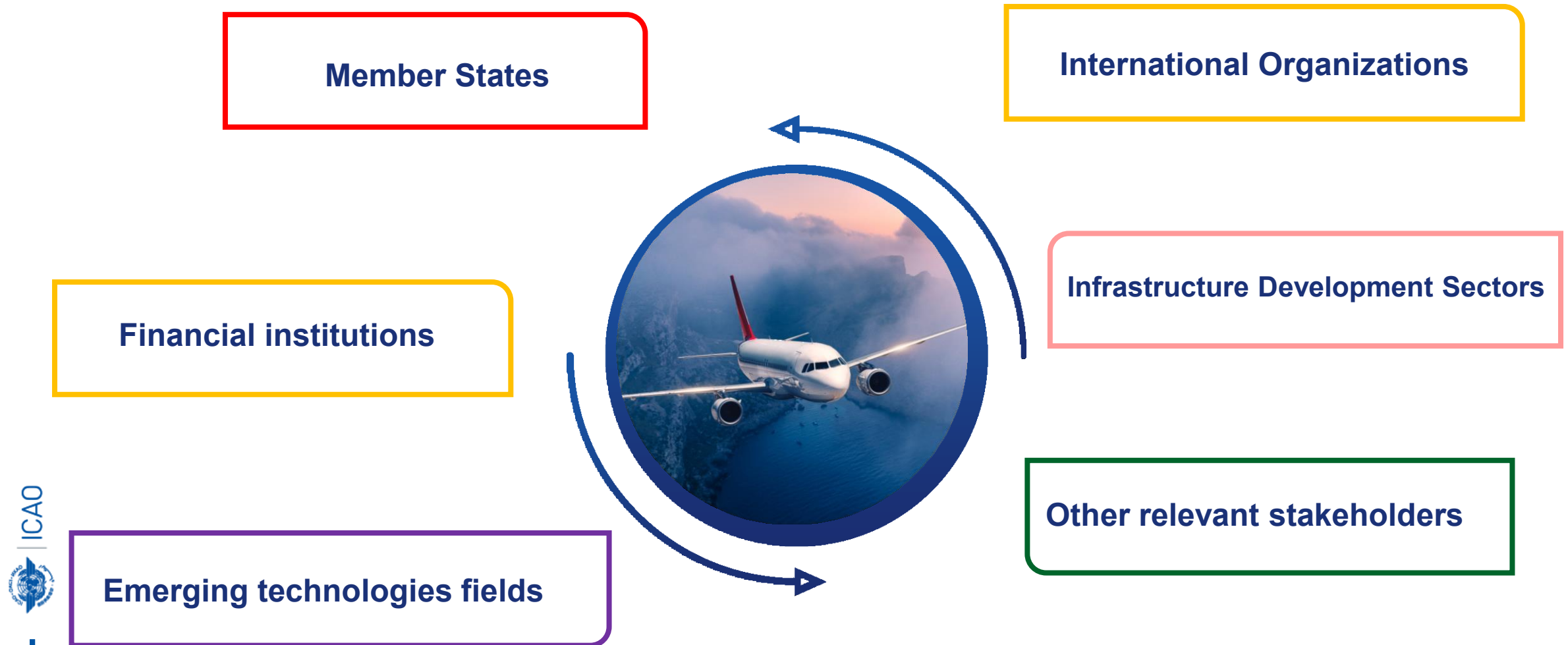
ica0.int/ATConf7



States are invited to provide their comments.



Participation



Important dates



Extraordinary Session of the ICAO Assembly

Protocol relating to an amendment of Article 50 (a) and 56 of the Chicago Convention

- What the Protocols do: Increase ICAO Council membership from 36 to 40 (Art. 50(a)) and increase Air Navigation Commission membership from 19 to 21 (Art. 56)
- Extraordinary Session will be held in *November 2026* in conjunction with the Air Transport Conference



Modernizing ICAO

Strengthened Support to Member States through Transformation

Expertise

Enhanced talent mobility & improved competency framework across the organization

Systems

Modern IT infrastructure with increased business intelligence for reporting

Culture

Continuous Improvement Programme using Kaizen methodology for process gains

Operations

Streamlined process architecture driving financial sustainability & optimization

ICAO's Knowledge and Experience in Transformation can be shared with Member States
contact: spmo@icao.int



Priorities Going Forward

Thank You

