



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACC/DCA/14 — WP/10 Rev.
21/05/26

**Fourteenth Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean
Directors of Civil Aviation (NACC/DCA/14)**
St. George's, Antigua and Barbuda, 1 to 5 June 2026

Agenda Item 8: En Route the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7)

THE CONVENING OF THE SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE (ATConf/7)

(Presented by Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
This working paper provides information on the convening of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7), to be held from 16 to 20 November 2026 at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal, Canada, including its background, theme, objectives, agenda, format and participation arrangements. It highlights the relevance of ATConf/7 to the North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) States and underscores the importance of active regional engagement to ensure that regional priorities and perspectives are reflected in the global policy outcomes of the Conference.	
Action:	Under Section 6
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State letter 26/39 dated 4 May 2026• State letter 25/89 dated 23 October 2025• A42-WP/698, Report of the Economic Commission and ICAO Assembly Resolution A42-26 para. 14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Worldwide Air Transport Conference is the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) principal forum for policy dialogue and decision-making on the economic regulation and development of international air transport. Since its inception, six of such conferences have been convened, providing strategic policy guidance to States and informing ICAO's work programme in the air transport field. The most recent, the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/6), was held in March 2013 under the theme "*Sustainability of Air Transport*".
- 1.2 Since ATConf/6, the global aviation sector has experienced significant transformation. Evolving market structures, rapid digitalization and technological innovation, new business models and entrants, and growing expectations regarding resilience, consumer

protection and sustainability have reshaped the air transport landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed structural vulnerabilities in the system and highlighted the need for adaptive and forward-looking economic regulatory frameworks.

- 1.3 In this context, and pursuant to Assembly Resolution A42-26, the ICAO Council approved the convening of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7) to reassess, where appropriate, modernize air transport policy guidance in support of sustainable, inclusive and resilient growth of international air transport.

2. Theme and objectives of ATConf/7

- 2.1 ATConf/7 will be held at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal, Canada, from 16 to 20 November 2026, in all ICAO languages under the theme “*Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World*”. The theme underscores the role of air transport in supporting connectivity and economic development while strengthening resilience, advancing sustainability and ensuring more equitable distribution of growth benefits among States and regions.

- 2.2 The primary objectives of ATConf/7 are to develop practical, action-oriented policy guidance to support the evolution of a modern global economic regulatory framework for international air transport. In this regard, the Conference aims to:

- (i) Advance economic regulatory frameworks to adapt to evolving market trends and technologies by leveraging data;
- (ii) Enhance industry resilience by addressing workforce, supply chain, market access, emergency response gaps and consumer protection;
- (iii) Mobilize blended financing to support civil aviation infrastructure;
- (iv) Shape economic policy foundations for innovation and emerging technologies;
- (v) Strengthen institutional and human capacity; and
- (vi) Enable sustainable and inclusive growth in air transport.

3. Agenda of ATConf/7

- 3.1 Building on the theme and objectives outlined in Section 2, the agenda of ATConf/7 has been developed through extensive consultations with Member States, international and regional organizations, and industry stakeholders, and subsequently refined by the ICAO Air Transport Committee (ATC), including through the work of the ATC Informal Group. The resulting agenda is streamlined, thematic and outcome-oriented, with a view to facilitating focused deliberations and generating practical policy guidance applicable across different regional and national contexts.

- 3.2 The Conference will be organized around four main agenda items:

- (i) **Agenda Item 1: Overview of development in the field of air transport**
This agenda item will review key developments since ATConf/6, including post-pandemic recovery, evolving market and regulatory dynamics and long-term challenges. It will explore strategic approaches to accelerating aviation

transformation in line with ICAO's Strategic Plan 2026–2050 and the *No Country Left Behind goal*, while highlighting aviation's contribution to economic development and connectivity.

(ii) **Agenda Item 2: Fostering aviation growth and air connectivity through investments in infrastructure, human capital and partnerships**

This agenda item will address the development of aviation infrastructure and related aviation system, including their integration into national development plans through policy alignment and coordination. It will examine approaches to support investment in infrastructure modernization, including fostering stable investment environment diversify funding resources through innovative and blended financing mechanisms.

(iii) **Agenda Item 3: Strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks**

This agenda item will focus on enhancing economic regulatory and institutional frameworks, including regulatory oversight, market access, fair competition, consumer protection and emergency preparedness, as well as charges and taxes on international air transport. Emphasis will be placed on capacity-building in developing States with special needs.

(i) **Agenda Item 4: Emerging technologies, new business models and other associated aspects**

This agenda item will examine the economic regulatory implications of emerging technologies and new business models, including digitalization, artificial intelligence, advanced air mobility, and discuss support and economic opportunities of access to aviation cleaner energies. It will also consider the role of data and digital ecosystems in supporting evidence-based policymaking and resilient air transport operations.

4. **Format and participation arrangement of the Conference**

4.1 ATConf/7 will be conducted using a multi-format Conference structure designed to facilitate focused, inclusive and outcome-oriented deliberations, in accordance with ICAO requirements applicable to Category 2 meetings. The Conference will combine plenary sessions with expert panel discussions, as well as the consideration of working papers submitted by Member States and international organizations., It will be complemented by parallel side events, such as ICAO SkyTalks, to promote broader engagement, interactive exchanges and deeper exploration of emerging and cross-cutting issues.

4.2 Within this framework, working papers are expected to address policy-relevant issues under the Conference agenda and contribute to the development of practical, action-oriented recommendations. Member States and international organizations are therefore encouraged to streamline submissions, including through co-sponsorship and regional or groupings coordination, where appropriate, in order to enhance coherence and efficiency of deliberations. The Conference format also allows for the consideration of a possible high-level Ministerial Declaration.

4.3 Participation in ATConf/7 will include ICAO Member States and approved international organizations, complemented by an expanded range of invited stakeholders to reflect the evolving scope of air transport policy. In addition to the traditional aviation community, participation will extend to relevant international and regional organizations, financial and development institutions, and representatives from infrastructure, innovation and emerging technology sectors, with a view to supporting comprehensive, inclusive and forward-looking policy discussions.

5. **Key considerations and next steps for States**

5.1 The convening of ATConf/7 offers a timely opportunity for ICAO and its Member States to review and shape the future direction of international air transport policy in response to evolving economic, technological and operational developments. Through its focus on growth, resilience and sustainability, the Conference is expected to deliver practical policy guidance to support enhanced connectivity, strengthened institutional and regulatory capacity, and increased investment in inclusive and resilient air transport systems.

5.2 For the NACC States, where air transport is essential to connectivity, trade, tourism and development, the Conference offers a valuable platform to share regional experiences, challenges and best practices, and to ensure that regional perspectives, including those of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), are reflected in global policy outcomes. The Secretariat therefore encourages NACC States to participate actively in the preparatory process and in the ATConf/7, including through regional dialogue and coordination, with a view to contributing to balanced, inclusive and actionable policy outcomes.

5.3 The ICAO NACC Regional Office, in coordination with the South American (SAM) Regional Office and the Latin American Civil Aviation Comision (LACAC) conducted in May 20, the webinar on preparing NAM/CAR/SAM States for the ATConf/7. The event was opened by ICAO NACC Regional Director, Mr. Christopher Barks, ICAO SAM Regional Director, Mr. Fabio Rabanni and the (LACAC) President, Mr. Hector Procella. The explanation and importance of the Conference were commented. The theme of ATConf/7 is: "Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World." Among the key topics presented and discussed were the overview of the ATConf/7 with its six core objectives:

- to advance economic regulatory frameworks to adapt to evolving market trends and technologies by leveraging data.
- to enhance industry resilience by addressing workforce, supply chain, market access, emergency response gaps, and consumer protection.
- to mobilize blended financing to support civil aviation infrastructure.
- to shape economic policy foundations for innovation and emerging technologies.
- to strengthen institutional and human capacity.
- to enable sustainable and inclusive growth in air transport.

5.4 The need and support for regional coordination was emphasized as a cost effective and organized way of putting ideas into Actions. The ATConf/7 explicitly encourages joint or coordinated submissions to enhance efficiency and impact, plus avoiding duplication, increasing political visibility and strengthening regional cohesion. LACAC process for supporting their States were illustrated and commented to all.

5.4 Closing remarks and recommendations for States' best participation in the ATConf/7 were provided, reviewing the critical deadlines of the conference and the opportunities to work together in an organized and coordinated manner. Explore regional coordination opportunities and network with other States for ideas and effective participation and follow-up implementation.

ATConf/7

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPARING FOR THE ATCONF/7

- States are encouraged to extend invitations to ministerial-level authorities from portfolios such as finance, trade, development, environment and infrastructure.
- Identify air transport challenges and needs toward the coming decade, participate actively in the preparatory process, including through regional dialogue and coordination, with a view to contributing to balanced, inclusive and actionable policy outcomes.
- All participants are encouraged to follow-up the timelines and dates for presentation of documentation and sharing of this, to ensure greater coordination among all States.
- Streamline submissions of Working Papers to ATConf/7 and to identify priority issues for consideration, including through regional or group-level coordination and the preparation of joint or co-sponsored working papers, with a view to supporting focused, efficient and outcome-oriented Conference deliberations. (Deadline for Submission: Member States - **25 September 2026**, International Organizations – **9 October 2026**)
- Complete the online registration and provide credentials, no later than **20 October 2026**. This conference will be conducted on a restricted-access basis. Ensure proper State recognition in registering to the Conference.

6 Actions of the Meeting

6.1 The Meeting is invited to

- a) take note of the convening of ATConf/7 and the information contained in State letter 26/39 dated 4 May 2026;
- b) encourage NACC States to engage actively in the preparatory process and to participate in the Conference;
- c) invite NACC States to identify and share regional priorities, challenges and experiences in air transport policy for possible consideration during the Conference deliberations;
- d) take note of the Recommendations from the ICAO/LACAC Webinar on Preparation for the ATConf/7; and
- e) encourage, where appropriate, States and Observer organizations to streamline their submissions to ATConf/7 and to identify priority issues for consideration, including through regional or group-level coordination and the preparation of joint or co-sponsored working papers, with a view to supporting focused, efficient and outcome-oriented Conference deliberations.