



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the ICAO-Singapore Youth for Aviation Programme 2025 Engagement Session**

(Suntec Conference Centre, 16 July 2025)

1. I want to begin by congratulating each of you on your selection for this programme.
2. The competition was intense, with nominations from across the Asia Pacific region, and your presence here today represents the very best emerging talent in aviation.
3. You've demonstrated exceptional achievement, professional promise, and commitment to advancing aviation in your home countries. This is a remarkable accomplishment.
4. I believe I can speak on the behalf of everyone here today in thanking the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore for their outstanding partnership with ICAO on the Youth for Aviation Programme.
5. Singapore's commitment exemplifies how governments can work to ensure that civil aviation has the expertise and workforce it needs to continue the sustainable development of air transport.
6. I would also like to thank the authority for convening and hosting today's engagement session here.
7. The challenges facing our industry are massive, but so are the opportunities.
8. In alignment with ICAO's long term Strategic Plan 2026 - 2050, we are working toward zero fatalities, net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and air connectivity everywhere for everyone.
9. These imperatives will define the next phase of aviation development.

10. Your generation will enter an industry undergoing rapid transformation.
11. We are integrating unmanned aircraft systems and advanced air mobility into existing airspace.
12. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are reshaping air navigation systems.
13. And digital transformation is accelerating.
14. These are just some of the technological, operational, and social dynamics directing the future of our industry.
15. Meanwhile, we must ensure that the benefits of these transformations are spread inclusively. They must be a catalyst for closing, not widening, the gap between developed and developing countries.
16. In addition to the global transformation, the Asia Pacific region also presents unique opportunities and challenges of its own.
17. Here we find some of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, and some of the most remote.
18. I want to highlight that responding to the climate emergency is a first priority for ICAO.
19. In this regard, I am particularly gratified to welcome so many representatives of the Pacific Island States here today.
20. As we work to extend equitable access to aviation expertise and infrastructure to you and all States, we will not compromise on our efforts to decarbonize air transport.
21. This points to the importance of your voices here today.
22. Like safety and security, sustainability is a cross-cutting priority, in addition to being a priority in and of itself.
23. Today's presentations will address innovation and technology, workforce development, and ensuring that No Country is left behind.

24. We are developing frameworks for drone and eVTOL regulations across different regulatory environments. Your perspectives on implementing these technologies in diverse regulatory contexts will help inform our approach, as the ICAO advanced air mobility study group progresses on global interoperability standards.
25. On workforce development, you may have personally felt our competition with other industries for talent – and especially tech and finance –.
26. Your insights on why youth choose aviation are absolutely critical to us.
27. We know that aviation training institutions need to collaborate on standardized curricula, and we know that we need to be better aligned with the specific needs of emerging markets.
28. I am sure you have insights on this and other aspects.
29. Finally, the *No Country Left Behind* theme focuses on inclusive access to all aspects of aviation, and the benefits aviation brings.
30. The ICAO Global Aviation Education Plan aims to bridge academia, training, and industry needs.
31. We see digital training platforms and modernizing aviation curricula as crucial. We want to know what you think about this too.
32. Before closing, let me highlight that Singapore provides an excellent case study.
33. This country operates one of the world's most advanced aviation systems, demonstrating how innovation, regulation, and operational excellence can co-exist.
34. And as we celebrate Singapore's 60th anniversary of independence, we can also celebrate how aviation has served as vibrant and successful catalyst for development here.
35. That is why I believe that the conversations you will have here will also be useful as you advocate for aviation in your countries.

36. And all of this is why I am really looking forward to our dialogue session.
37. Thank you, and let's dive in!