



**Opening Remarks by the  
Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar  
to the 60<sup>th</sup> APAC DGCA**

*Sendai, Japan | 28 July 2025*

1. Thank you for sharing those inspiring words from President Sciacchitano.
2. His message captures perfectly why we gather here in Sendai, under the theme of sustainable skies for increased economic prosperity and social well-being, as reinforced by the new ICAO vision in the long term Strategic Plan 2026 - 2050.
3. I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Japan for its generous hosting of our discussions here today.
4. Japan's leadership in convening us represents a significant contribution to aviation both regionally and globally.
5. The Asia-Pacific region holds many of aviation's greatest promises and offers solutions to many of its most complex challenges.
6. You represent the world's most diverse aviation landscape.
7. From remote island nations to landlocked mountain States, aviation serves populations from thousands to billions, contributing up to 40% of economic activity in tourism-dependent Pacific States.
8. Despite these differences, this region is also marked by a deep commitment to cooperation and connection.
9. This extraordinary diversity and your collaborative approach to it are your greatest strengths. Solutions developed here, tested across your varied operating environments, can indeed work anywhere in the world.

10. This region now accounts for 32 percent of global air traffic and it is home to some of the world's busiest airports, largest airlines and most complex airspace.
11. Yet with this leadership comes great responsibility.
12. Recent tragic accidents remind us that aviation safety cannot be taken for granted.
13. Despite remarkable progress through the Regional Aviation Safety Group and your collective efforts, the principle of the weakest link still applies.
14. When safety standards are inconsistent across the region, this creates vulnerabilities that can have catastrophic consequences for everyone.
15. The average effective implementation score in APAC, as measured by Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) auditing, is only 67 percent.
16. To promote aviation safety in the region, the third Asia Pacific Summit for Aviation Safety (AP-SAS) was successfully organized in Singapore on the theme ***Future-Proofing Aviation Safety: Adapt, Innovate, Excel.***
17. This annual summit brought together more than 500 aviation leaders, regulators, executives and experts from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to discuss emerging aviation safety challenges in the region.
18. Similarly, the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP) EI score stands at 65 percent.
19. Both are below global averages; a gap we must address urgently.
20. As we work towards eliminating fatalities in international air transport, these figures provide us with a warning, and an opportunity for improvement.
21. The States that have achieved higher scores demonstrate that excellence in safety implementation is attainable for all. Their success stories can light the path forward for others.
22. By cooperating and sharing expertise on the effective implementation of these critical standards and recommended practices, we can ensure that every flight in this region reaches its intended destination.

23. Many of these high-performing States possess valuable expertise in regulatory enforcement, bird-strike mitigation, turbulence encounters, and runway safety design, to name but a few areas. This knowledge is invaluable to aviation safety in this region and worldwide.
24. Singapore in collaboration with ICAO hosted the ‘Asia Pacific Regional Training Symposium’ from 16 to 17 July 2025.
25. Over the two days, industry experts and stakeholders gathered to align training programmes with emerging industry needs, strengthen policies to better support the aviation workforce, and implement targeted solutions to bridge the regional skills gap.
26. As a side event of the Symposium, a dedicated Dialogue on Regional Training Partnerships for Capacity Building brought together donor States, regional training organizations, industry stakeholders, and representatives from Pacific Small Island Developing States.
27. This dialogue was successful in building on recent discussions, including the Donor Dialogue on ICAO Training Fellowships held in Abu Dhabi in February 2025, and further deepened engagement with stakeholders on regional training priorities.
28. Over the next four days, you will address the full spectrum of aviation challenges.
29. Firstly, your safety discussions will examine how to strengthen oversight capabilities across diverse infrastructure and regulatory environments.
30. Your air navigation sessions will build on the success of certifying 353 of your 384 international airports and establishing runway safety teams at 208 airports. A significant achievement and placing APAC as the leading region globally in this area.
31. Secondly, your environmental protection discussions are particularly timely as our sector faces growing pressure to address climate change.
32. The region is making important strides in this area. Twenty-four APAC States have submitted the required of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) emissions data for 2023, a critical step in our global market-based measure to offset carbon emissions from international flights. Furthermore, twenty-five States have committed to participate in this programme from January 2025.

33. Vietnam's recent decision to join CORSIA voluntarily from 2026 demonstrates the growing commitment across your region.
34. Similarly, the progress by Brunei, Fiji, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Tonga in submitting updated State Action Plans for emissions reduction shows real momentum.
35. Thirdly, these environmental efforts complement your economic development discussions, which will examine how to enhance connectivity while addressing infrastructure pressures from high traffic growth. Balancing growth with sustainability remains one of our greatest challenges.
36. The ongoing development of ICAO's PSIDS Implementation Support Roadmap shows our commitment to ensuring no Pacific island State is left behind in this sustainable growth journey.
37. Capacity development is central to this inclusive approach. We are looking forward to your discussions on capacity development initiatives, which will draw on the collaborative spirit President Sciaccchitano emphasized.
38. Malaysia's generous contribution of 500,000 USD for APAC capacity development projects has demonstrated great leadership and commitment to this priority. I would also like to highlight that the training programmes supported by Indonesia, Fiji, Pakistan, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Singapore demonstrate how knowledge sharing strengthens the entire region.
39. These capacity development efforts align perfectly with the vision outlined in the Delhi Declaration from your Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference, which provides a clear mandate for your discussions here in Sendai.
40. The Delhi Declaration reaffirms the region's commitment to the Chicago Convention while recognizing the need for concerted effort to ensure safe, secure, efficient, and resilient aviation with minimal environmental impact.
41. Importantly, the Declaration also emphasizes three critical priorities: human resources development, sustainable funding for civil aviation authorities, and gender equality promotion.
42. Your deliberations here come at a particularly important time for global aviation.
43. In just a few weeks, we will gather in Montreal for the 42nd session of the ICAO Assembly, where the future direction of international civil aviation will be determined.

44. The discussions you have here in Sendai will directly inform and influence that global gathering.
45. This presents a significant opportunity to ensure that Asia-Pacific priorities become global priorities. Your collective voice carries the weight of representing one-third of world air traffic and the most dynamic growth region in aviation.
46. Your insights on managing growth while maintaining safety, your innovations in environmental protection, your solutions for capacity development, and your approaches to ensuring No Country is Left Behind will shape the global direction of air transport.
47. One of the major items for the Assembly will be ICAO's Strategic Plan for 2026-2050, our roadmap toward enhanced safety, sustainability, and seamless mobility for all. This Assembly presents a critical opportunity for you to shape how the plan is implemented in accordance with the specific needs and priorities of your States and this dynamic region.
48. In conclusion, I join President Sciacchitano in encouraging you to be ambitious in your engagement with each other, and with the ICAO team. Your collaborative efforts here can overcome the challenges we discussed earlier and build on the strengths demonstrated by your high-performing States.
49. Safe and sustainable skies for Asia-Pacific can and must provide a model for progress on these vital priorities worldwide. The path you chart here in Sendai will resonate far beyond this region.
50. Congratulations again on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the APAC DGCA conferences.
51. ICAO remains committed to your plans and achievements supported by the APAC Regional Office in Bangkok, Sub-office in Beijing, and Liaison office in Nadi.
52. Thank you.