



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the NACC/DGCA/13 Meeting**

(Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 5 August 2025)

1. I am grateful for this opportunity to address this Thirteenth Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of the ICAO North American, Central American and Caribbean Region.
2. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Dominican Republic and to the Instituto Dominicano de Aviacion Civil (IDAC) for hosting this meeting.
3. The Dominican Republic has consistently demonstrated its strong leadership and partnership with ICAO – long may that continue.
4. I would also like to thank each of you for your own commitment to cooperation, as demonstrated by your decision to contribute to this especially significant DGCA meeting.
5. We are gathering just weeks before the 42nd session of the ICAO Assembly, and so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this excellent opportunity to prepare for that meeting and develop this region's contributions to the global deliberations.
6. The wealth of expertise and experience in this room will be key to accelerating progress on the Assembly priorities, which will be discussed tomorrow.
7. So let me take this opportunity highlight the importance of the Assembly's consideration of the ICAO Long-Term Strategic Plan for 2026-2050 – the plan is our roadmap to navigate the dynamic evolutions that are transforming aviation.

8. It is a call to action for all ICAO Member States to achieve zero accident fatalities and net-zero carbon emissions as we accommodate a nearly 300% increase in air traffic projected over the next 25 years.
9. By then, we expect international air transport to serve over twelve billion passengers, offering air connectivity to everyone, everywhere, leaving no country behind.
10. There are some potentially strong headwinds on the horizon, especially in the area of environmental protection.
11. The resolutions of the 41st ICAO Assembly in 2022 reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of international aviation to its future sustainability.
12. The upcoming Assembly is expected to reaffirm that commitment through the adoption of updated resolutions.
13. The Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and sustainable aviation fuels – SAF - are the cornerstone of our promise to achieve the long term global aspirational goal of net zero emissions in international aviation.
14. CORSIA is an unprecedented global effort that was designed to manage and mitigate emissions from the international aviation sector.
15. Maintaining the integrity of this scheme is paramount. We cannot allow its effectiveness to be diluted.
16. But the introduction of overlapping measures or additional international levies being discussed in other settings would do just that – it risks deeply undermining the integrity and effectiveness of CORSIA. The proposed Global Solidarity Levy is a salient example.
17. Far from helping, such measures would lead us towards a fragmented, inefficient, and inconsistent global policy framework.
18. We know from experience - and it's backed up by expert analysis - levies and additional taxes may suppress demand without truly incentivizing efficiency improvements or investments in decarbonization.

19. These additional economic burdens increase costs and divert crucial financial resources that should be directly invested in decarbonization solutions – solutions such as new aviation technologies, the optimization of air operations, and the crucially important production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels.
20. The serious concerns raised by industry echo the stance of ICAO and our Member States on this matter.
21. It is a reminder of the importance of all of us working together, in partnership, towards the achievement of ICAO's long term strategic vision and goals.
22. On that point, I would like to acknowledge that the approval of the Strategic Plan by the ICAO Council was facilitated by the support you showed for the plan at last year's NACC/DGCA Meeting.
23. In addition to our gratitude to Belize for hosting that meeting, I would like to thank you all for contributions to this key outcome.
24. As we move forward, ICAO will continue to encourage progress on the implementation of the plan.
25. We will do this by reinforcing international air law, developing policies and standards, conducting oversight, and supporting Member States in implementing those policies, plans, and standards.
26. This will be further facilitated by regional cooperation.
27. Regional organizations such as the Regional Safety Oversight Organizations ACSA and CASSOS and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization GRIAA will play key roles.
28. In this context, a panel of representatives from several regional organizations will discuss the benefits of regional cooperation and share best practices today.
29. Building on this momentum, national governments are also actively engaged in efforts to realize our strategic goals.
30. That is why your experience and expertise will be invaluable as we refine our approach to them at the upcoming Assembly.
31. And as we bring our global vision to life, I would also like to stress the vital relationship between the Strategic Plan, the ICAO Business Plan for 2026 – 2028, and sufficient resources for ICAO.

32. We have laid a strong foundation for ICAO's future.
33. Yet we face a significant resource challenge.
34. While States continue to give ICAO increasing responsibilities, our budget has not kept pace.
35. Within tight constraints, we are tackling new challenges, such as climate change and cybersecurity, to advanced air mobility and drones, coordination for airspace in conflict zones, GNSS radio frequency interference, commercial space transportation, and complex information systems, to name but a few.
36. I am asking for your help.
37. We need **you** to communicate the importance of our programmes to your finance, transport and foreign affairs Ministries, as they evaluate the ICAO Council's budget request to the Assembly.
38. While air connectivity is crucial for economic and social development, and offers by far the safest mode of transport, investments in aviation safety, security and capacity building are undervalued. These can be seen as lacking immediate and visible returns.
39. This affects both ICAO and the aviation development and operations in your States directly.
40. Please partner with me in helping decision-makers to understand the exceptional value to your countries of ensuring the sustainable growth of air transport and its economic benefits.
41. In particular, we must highlight that enhanced safety and security and increased capacity and efficiency are critical enablers of this growth.
42. I have to reiterate my gratitude for your continued support of the activities of ICAO at the global and regional levels.
43. This will be especially key at ICAO's first ever High-level Pledging Event, which will take place during the 42nd Assembly.
44. The event will aim to address ICAO's needs that are not funded through Member State assessments under the ICAO regular budget. We are aiming to secure multi-year voluntary contributions to supplement ICAO's regular budget.

45. These contributions will be sought for ICAO's catalogue of prioritized implementation support projects for States and Regions.
46. For the NACC region, several initiatives have been included.
47. These include improving oversight for ANS Quality Management Systems.
48. For the CAR region specifically, we are prioritizing strengthened National Air Navigation Planning and ANS Service Provision, Regulatory and Oversight Capacity-Building for Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Advanced Air Mobility.
49. It is very important that you take this meeting as an opportunity to review the region's needs and confirm your support for the resource mobilization in advance of A42.
50. I would also like to highlight a new and very special initiative that we are also asking you to support.
51. Our first-ever ICAO Global Ambassadors Programme will seek prominent air transport leaders to raise awareness of the future opportunities in our sector.
52. Approved by the Council, this programme will support the recruitment of competent and skilled professionals.
53. It will be of great benefit to this region.
54. It will help ensure that women and youth are attracted to the opportunity's aviation offers at a time when we have a critical need for qualified professionals.
55. A State Letter inviting States to nominate such individuals has recently been published.
56. In closing now, I am confident that this meeting will make significant progress towards ICAO's future successes, which will be your future successes.
57. I wish us all fruitful discussions, and look forward to the outcomes of our work.
58. Thank you.