



**Remarks by the Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the EURNAT DGCA
*10 June 2026***

1. I am honoured to address this meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation of this vast, diverse, and incredibly dynamic region.
2. I want to thank Regional Director Rallo for welcoming you to this meeting yesterday on behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization.
3. 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.
4. These Resolutions set a shared ambition for air transport for all by 2050, with zero fatalities and net-zero carbon emissions.
5. The ICAO Strategic Plan for 2026 through 2050 provides clear direction.
6. 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.
7. Working together will place these six goals within our reach.
8. With the first year of the 25-year plan now underway, the EUR-NAT 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.

9. 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.
10. This will also enable us to better identify any issues early on, encouraging and enabling transparent teamwork.
11. And as we move forward, we will build on your successes.
12. In this regard, a major opportunity lies ahead.
13. The Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference will be hosted at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal from 16 to 20 November 2026.
14. The success of these talks and the international frameworks they will define depends in large part on how well regional perspectives are represented.
15. I want to encourage the States in this region to begin preparing your national and shared positions for these talks.
16. This is nothing less than an extraordinary opportunity to shape the next decade of global economic policy for air transport.
17. Discussions at the Conference will proceed under the theme of "Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World."
18. This signals the critical role our industry plays in jobs, trade, and building stronger communities.
19. This signal is increasingly recognized at the highest levels.
20. 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.

21. Work at the conference will focus on keeping aviation strong and able to meet the needs of our changing world.
22. 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.
23. A key focus will be making aviation not just stronger, but also more resilient.
24. Delegates will share lessons on planning for emergencies, protecting consumers, building a strong workforce, and making sure supply chains work, even under stress.
25. These discussions aim to help aviation continue as a source of stability and recovery, both for this region and beyond.
26. Both resilience and growth will require investment.
27. For this reason, the conference will explore how to secure funding to modernize airports, airspace, and other infrastructure.
28. There will be discussions about combining public and private funding, building strong partnerships, and making sure skills and human capacity keep pace with growth.
29. The programme will also look at new technology, cleaner energy, and new ways of doing business in air transport.
30. States will share ideas on how to fit these advances into current systems so that innovation leads to real benefits for safety, security, sustainability, and efficiency.
31. We have planned the conference to help you work together and find agreement on key issues.
32. Each day, plenary and panel discussions will bring together States, industry leaders, and experts from the financial sector.

33. Together, they will build common ground and develop practical solutions to the challenges and opportunities I have mentioned.
34. 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.
35. 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.
36. This session is also a chance to connect our work to ICAO's vision for 2050.
37. After that, the focus will turn to growth and investment.
38. 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.
39. 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.
40. These discussions will draw on real examples and focus on what works.
41. 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.
42. 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.
43. 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.
44. Finally, the discussions will look further to the future.

45. 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.
46. 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.
47. 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.
48. ICAO is encouraging Member States and organizations to coordinate through joint working papers and regional submissions.
49. This will help focus debate and set clear priorities.
50. Side events throughout the week will also offer further chances to learn and connect around key themes.
51. 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.
52. Your preparation and active involvement, both now and at the meeting itself, will help ensure that the outcomes reflect your priorities and strengths.
53. The Conference may moreover coincide with an extraordinary session of the ICAO Assembly.
54. The Chicago Convention amendments to expand the ICAO Council and Air Navigation Commission will soon be ratified by enough States, which will trigger the need for new elections during an ICAO Assembly.
55. States are therefore urged to ratify both Protocols as soon as possible. It is noted that 49 of the 56 EUR-NAT States have already ratified both Protocols.
56. Taken together, November must be seen as a crucial month for the EUR-NAT Region to advocate for its priorities and needs.

57. 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.
58. 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.
59. 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.
60. 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.
61. Building on all of this momentum and the priorities Mr. Rallo presented yesterday, I invite you to focus on three priorities here and in the coming months.
62. In the first instance, it is crucial that you continue to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination on safety, security, and environmental matters.
63. Secondly, I urge you to ensure the prompt sharing of information, the active engagement of technical specialists, and careful maintenance of national records, including the WAGMAR. This will maximize the value of the tools and expertise that are available.
64. 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.
65. Your leadership on these priorities will bring the benefits of safe, secure, and sustainable aviation closer to every citizen, in every State.