Secretary General Introductory Remarks

ICAO Security Week 2026 — Astana, Kazakhstan

Side Event on "Building the Next Generation of Aviation Security Professionals"

Wednesday, 21 October, 14:00–15:15

1. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this **Next Generation of Aviation Professionals** (NGAP) side event on aviation security here in Astana. I thank the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting ICAO Security Week and for its continued partnership in advancing aviation training and workforce development.

2. I would also like to extend a special welcome to His Excellency Mr. Talgat Lastayev, Vice-Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, and thank him for joining us today and for delivering the closing remarks at this event."

3. This Security Week is taking place under the theme "*Secure Skies in a Complex World: Advancing Security in Aviation for All*." Achieving that objective depends not only on strong standards, effective oversight and modern technology, but also on competent aviation security professionals at every level of the system.

4. For aviation security, this is especially important. The threat environment is evolving, technology is changing rapidly, and security personnel must be ready to adapt. At the same time, many organizations are facing competition for talent, changing workforce expectations and the need to transfer knowledge to a new generation.

5. A resilient security system therefore requires a resilient workforce.

6. This is why today's discussion is timely.

7. The ICAO NGAP programme is grounded in a simple principle: aviation cannot remain safe, secure and sustainable without a strong and continuous pipeline of competent professionals.

8. ICAO's mandate is therefore not limited to promoting aviation careers. It is also to support States and the wider aviation community in anticipating workforce needs, strengthening education and training, sharing effective practices, and mobilizing partnerships and resources for implementation.

9. We must inspire the next generation to choose aviation, give them the skills to thrive and create opportunities for them to lead its future.

10. The EUR/NAT region offers a practical example of how this global vision can be adapted to regional needs and translated into action. Over the past two years, regional workshops in Paris and Almaty in 2025, followed by Amsterdam in 2026, have brought together States, industry, training organizations, youth and academia to exchange good practices and explore new approaches to workforce planning and training. I would like to thank Kazakhstan for generously hosting both the Regional Workshop on Workforce Planning and Training and the first Regional Workshop on the Advancement of Women in Aviation in 2025.

11. Building on this momentum, the EUR/NAT Regional Office will soon launch the *ICAO EUR/NAT Aviation Talent Network*. It will bring these partners together to share expertise and develop solutions to attract, develop and retain the aviation professionals needed for the future. The Network will hold regular webinars and an annual in-person event, with the first seminar tentatively scheduled for July 2027.

12. Sustained cooperation of this kind is essential, as no institution can address these workforce challenges alone.

13. Just as the ICAO NGAP vision can be adapted to regional needs, it can also be tailored to specific aviation disciplines. Today's side event focuses on aviation security.

14. Ms. Sonia Hidfi, Deputy Director of Aviation Security, Cybersecurity and Facilitation, and Acting Director of the Air Transport Bureau, will present ICAO's Aviation Security Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Strategy. The Strategy has been designed to help States and industry attract, develop and retain the aviation security workforce needed to meet current and future challenges.

15. I encourage you to consider how the strategy can support your own national and organizational priorities; how workforce data can guide decisions; how training can remain responsive to changing threats; and how governments, employers, educators, young professionals and young scholars can work together.

16. I would also like to highlight that the ICAO NGAP Programme relies on voluntary contributions to advance its work, particularly in the priority areas presented in the Donor Spotlight section of the NGAP brochure before you.

17. Mr. Miguel Marin, Deputy Director of the Capacity Development and Implementation Bureau, is also with us today. I encourage you to reach out to him for further information on the NGAP Programme and on how ICAO, through CDI, can support your State in developing a strong and sustainable aviation workforce.

18. I wish you a productive discussion.

19. Thank you.