



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the 2026 ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Workshop on Counter-UAS**

1. Recent events have shed further light on the genuine threat that unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) can pose to the safety, security, and continuity of civil aviation.
2. Several airports have faced disruptions, and lives have been placed at risk.
3. This is why I deeply appreciate the opportunity to address you today.
4. I commend your commitment to confronting these challenges together, and I am honoured to support your efforts to share your expertise.
5. First, we must clearly understand the reality we face.
6. The increasingly complex and threatening landscape is enabled by technology that is rapidly advancing and ever-more widely available.
7. Around the globe, airspace is affected by rising military tensions and a notable improvement in armament capabilities, including armed UAS.
8. In 2025 and 2026, there have been an alarming number of incidents of UAS incursions and related military air activity here in Central Europe alone.
9. Put another way, this increased use of UAS for malicious purposes reflects not just greater technical capability but also growing intent.

10. States and industry must respond urgently and decisively to these vulnerabilities and to the threats as they arise.
11. We must heighten our ability to detect, track, and effectively identify UAS operating in restricted airspace.
12. And as the threat continues to evolve, we must recognize that no single solution will suffice.
13. Effective counter-UAS approaches require a multi-layered system of equipment, working in concert with sound aviation regulations.
14. Countering the threat posed by UAS to civil aviation also requires coordinated, sustained, and committed international attention.
15. That is why this workshop will foster open dialogue and active collaboration across borders and disciplines.
16. The need for harmonized processes and counter-UAS measures is recognized by aviation security experts, with the ICAO Aviation Security Panel recently calling for a coordinated approach.
17. This does not necessarily mean the development of new Standards, but it certainly requires the implementation of the practical measures, technologies, and operational approaches you will be reviewing here.
18. This implementation can be significantly enhanced by all relevant stakeholders agreeing to robust and coordinated procedures.
19. Airport managers, air traffic control services, air operators, pilots, remote pilots, police, local authorities, and national civil aviation and security agencies are all among the stakeholders who must work together.
20. In our efforts to deploy effective technical counter-UAS solutions, we should recall that non-technological approaches can help minimize and mitigate the potential impacts of the malicious use of UAS, particularly if the primary intent is to cause disruption.

21. As we move forward, we should always prioritize the safety of the public and civil aviation in our responses to a UAS incursion, in line with a pre-established decision-making process.
22. We should also remember that the rapid growth of UAS presents significant opportunities, and that UAS operations are already part of the broader aviation safety framework.
23. This reflects the fact that the integration of UAS is requiring us to carefully manage risks across multiple domains, including safety, security, air navigation, cybersecurity, and privacy.
24. This is especially true in complex and congested airspace.
25. Measures taken to address risks in one area can have implications in another.
26. Security measures intended to protect UAS operations, for example, may introduce operational constraints or safety considerations that must also be assessed and managed.
27. This demonstrates the importance of adopting a holistic and coordinated approach to risk management.
28. Today's discussions will allow us to explore these interdependencies.
29. ICAO is promoting greater coordination and integration of risk information, assessments, and decision-making across aviation domains through its Integrated Risk Management initiative.
30. This approach helps States and industry understand the interdependencies, anticipate systemic risks, strengthen resilience, and make more informed decisions.
31. I am pleased to note that ICAO's Guide to Integrated Risk Management is in the final stages of development.
32. An unedited version is expected to be published by the end of November this year.
33. The guidance will support States and stakeholders in managing the increasingly interconnected risks that accompany innovation and the continued evolution of the global aviation system.

34. Looking further ahead, ICAO's work on Advanced Air Mobility, including the development of our vision and related gap analysis, will also help us identify priorities.
35. In this regard, I would like to warmly invite participants to ICAO's Second Advanced Air Mobility Symposium, which will take place from 1 to 3 December 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand. Under the theme "From Vision to Implementation: Enabling the AAM Ecosystem", the symposium will identify critical pathways from early advanced air mobility operations to safe, scalable and globally interoperable systems.
36. In closing now, I strongly encourage each of you to engage openly over the next two days.
37. The solutions and potential partnerships offered here will enable you to respond more effectively to the challenges you face.
38. I want to underscore that the expertise shared here will also directly inform ICAO's ongoing work to strengthen the global framework.
39. We are committed to our vision of air transport for all by 2050, with zero fatalities and net-zero carbon emissions. Your contributions towards these ambitions are essential.

Thank you.