



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2026**
"Advancing Aviation through the Empowerment of Women"

1. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Angola, in particular, the Honorable Minister of Transport and Angola's National Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC), for generously hosting the third edition of the ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit in beautiful Luanda.
2. Angola's hosting of this important Summit reflects its growing leadership in international civil aviation, and the aviation community's confidence in the country's vision, commitment, and capacity to contribute to the sector at the regional and global levels.
3. I would also take this opportunity to commend the contributions of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and UN Women in the organization of this important Summit. Their partnership and dedication are essential for building an aviation sector that fully reflects the diversity, talent, and aspirations of the global community it serves.
4. This spirit of collaboration is central to our efforts to advance gender equality in aviation.
5. It is also what brings us together today: to celebrate the remarkable achievements of women while recognizing the work that remains to achieve full and meaningful empowerment across our sector.
6. At ICAO, this commitment is reflected in action. The Organization has strengthened its efforts through Council declarations and Assembly resolutions to advance women's participation across the global aviation sector.

7. While progress has been made, it remains slow. At the 42nd Session last fall, the Assembly renewed its call for accelerated action, building on the momentum of the second ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit.
8. Although our industry has made tremendous strides in growth and technological innovation since we last gathered in Madrid, much work remains to fully harness the talents, skills and contributions of women.
9. We know that when women participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and have a seat at the decision-making table, we consistently see stronger innovation, more effective problem-solving, and more sustainable outcomes.
10. Diverse teams challenge conventional thinking, bring broader perspectives to complex issues, and help institutions better understand and serve the societies they represent.
11. Aviation is no different. Every day, women are contributing to our sector as pilots, air traffic controllers, engineers, inspectors, executives, researchers, airport managers, and policymakers.
12. They are shaping the future of our sector, helping us navigate technological transformation, environmental challenges, workforce shortages, and increasing operational complexities.
13. The previous editions of the ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit demonstrated the growing momentum behind the participation of women in aviation. They have provided an invaluable platform for sharing experiences, identifying challenges, and advancing practical solutions.
14. As we gather for this third edition, we do so with a stronger foundation, a broader coalition of partners, and an even greater responsibility to translate ambition into measurable results.
15. Exactly a decade ago, the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted the Organization's first Resolution dedicated to women and their participation in aviation.
16. In the years following the adoption of our first Resolution on Women, ICAO has strived to advance women's participation in aviation, produce data, develop studies and increase female participation in training and capacity-development. These efforts have been supported by our Member States through

initiatives such as promotional campaigns and scholarship programmes, most recently the “Unleashing Aviation Excellence: 193 Women Empowerment”, generously funded by the United Arab Emirates.

17. We have also remained committed to accountability and transparency in advancing gender equality across ICAO. For several years, ICAO has consistently reported to the United Nations on its performance under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).
18. Guided by the UN-SWAP framework, we have worked to systematically integrate gender equality and women's empowerment across relevant areas of our work. This includes strengthening gender considerations in audit and evaluation processes, improving financial tracking of gender-related initiatives, and incorporating gender-responsive approaches into our human resources policies and practices.
19. It is particularly encouraging to see several women serving on the Council of ICAO, many of whom are present here today. Most notably, the Air Navigation Commission has, for the first time in its history, reached a milestone of five women Commissioners. This is a significant achievement and a positive signal of the progress being made toward greater representation and inclusion in aviation leadership.
20. Since the adoption of the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly Resolution, ICAO Member States, industry stakeholders, international organizations, academic institutions and civil society organizations have launched important initiatives aimed at attracting, retaining and advancing women across the aviation ecosystem. The 25by2025 initiative, launched by IATA is an example of an industry-wide initiative aiming to rapidly improve female gender representation across the airlines industry..
21. These efforts and initiatives have generated meaningful progress.
22. Awareness has increased. Networks have expanded. Mentorship and scholarship programmes have flourished.
23. While we should celebrate achievements, we must also be honest about the challenges that remain.

24. Too many talented young girls still do not see aviation as a career path available to them. Too many women continue to encounter barriers that limit their opportunities to enter, remain and thrive in our sector.
25. Action means investing in women's education and outreach. Action means creating pathways into aviation careers. Action means collecting data, measuring results, sharing best practices, and holding ourselves accountable for the commitments we make.
26. Most importantly, action means recognizing that gender equality is not exclusively a women's issue. It is a strategic imperative for the future sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness of global aviation.
27. Let us use these next three days to share experiences, challenge assumptions, learn from one another, and identify concrete actions that will accelerate progress.
28. I thank all of you for your leadership, your partnership and your unwavering commitment to this important cause.

Thank you.