



**Closing 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. Two and a half days ago, we considered one simple question: *How do we build an aviation sector that is truly ready for the future?*
2. Today, as this Summit comes to a close, I believe we have found part of that answer.
3. It lies not in a single initiative or a single policy.
4. It lies in recognizing that the future of aviation depends on whether we succeed in unlocking the full potential of the people who will shape it.
5. Over the past days, we have taken an important journey together.
6. Our Ministerial Dialogue reminded us that progress is not measured by the commitments we announce, but by the results we deliver.
7. Leadership means driving the policies and investment needed for women to participate, advance and lead throughout our sector.
8. From there, we turned to one of the most fundamental questions raised throughout this Summit: *How do we know whether we are making progress?*
9. Again and again, we heard that evidence matters.
10. Without reliable data, we cannot identify barriers. Without meaningful indicators, we cannot measure success. And without accountability, commitments risk remaining aspirations.

11. That conversation reinforced one of the key messages reflected in the Summit Outcomes: that better data and stronger monitoring are indispensable to better decision-making.
12. We also spoke about expanding access to education, training, scholarships, apprenticeships and mentorship. We heard that attracting women into aviation is only the beginning. We must also ensure women have opportunities to develop the skills that tomorrow's aviation will require, from digital technologies and artificial intelligence to sustainability and next-generation operations.
13. We were reminded that young people are looking for something more than a career.
14. They are looking for purpose. They want workplaces that embrace innovation, flexibility, inclusion and opportunity.
15. Listening to the voices of the next generation was one of the most valuable conversations of this Summit, because the future workforce is telling us what the future workplace must become.
16. Creating those workplaces is not simply good for young people. It is good for aviation.
17. We also explored the importance of visibility. When young girls see women leading airports, airlines, civil aviation authorities, manufacturing companies and international organizations, they begin to imagine themselves there too.
18. Role models do not simply inspire. They expand what people believe is possible.
19. And finally, we acknowledged an essential truth.
20. No State, no regulator, no airline, no international organization can achieve this transformation alone.
21. The partnerships represented in this room—and the willingness to learn from one another—are perhaps this Summit's greatest achievement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

22. Throughout these discussions, one message has become unmistakably clear.
23. Women are not simply part of aviation's future. They are essential to it.

24. Global aviation is entering a period of unprecedented growth.
25. One finding from ICAO's forthcoming Landmark Study, the first of its kind to provide a comprehensive evidence base on the status of women across our sector, gives us every reason for optimism.
26. The study reveals that nearly eight out of ten women surveyed told us they still see themselves working in aviation five years from now – even if it is in another role.
27. That is a remarkable expression of confidence in the future of our sector. Our responsibility is to ensure that aviation becomes a place where that confidence is rewarded with opportunity.
28. The study also reveals that three quarters of women identified mentoring as important to their careers, yet fewer than half had access to a mentor.
29. Creating more visible women leaders and stronger mentoring networks is essential to strengthening aviation's future leadership pipeline.
30. Over the coming decades, we will need more pilots, engineers, technicians, air traffic controllers, safety inspectors, digital specialists and senior leaders than ever before.
31. We simply cannot meet that demand while overlooking half of the world's talent.
32. That is why ICAO is committed not only to convening conversations like this one, but also to providing practical tools that help turn ambition into action.
33. In the weeks following this Summit, ICAO will release the Landmark Study results in addition to two important resources.
34. First is the Mainstreaming Women Empowerment in Aviation Toolkit, designed to help States and organizations integrate the participation and advancement of women into their policies, programmes and institutional practices.
35. And accompanying it, an online learning course that will help translate knowledge into implementation.

36. Before I conclude, let me express once again my sincere appreciation to the Government of Angola for its outstanding hospitality and leadership in hosting this Global Aviation Gender Summit.
37. My thanks also go to our partners, UN Women, IATA, every speaker, moderators, sponsors and members of the organizing team, and to every one of you participants who contributed your experience, your ideas and your commitment.
38. When you leave Luanda, I hope you do so with more than inspiration.
39. I hope you leave with practical ideas, renewed determination, and with the conviction that every action taken in your own organization can contribute to a stronger, safer, and more resilient global aviation sector.
40. ICAO stands ready to continue this journey with you.
41. Thank you and I wish you all a safe journey back home.