



**Opening Remarks by the ICAO Secretary General,
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,**

at the AFI Aviation Week Events – Eleventh Edition
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, 27 July 2026

1. I welcome you all to this important gathering.
2. We meet here in Cairo with a common purpose. We are here to shape the future of aviation in Africa.
3. Progress on three key priorities will enable us to move forward.
4. Our first priority is to bring partners together to mobilize resources for sustainable progress. This meeting itself is proof of your commitment to working together.
5. The Government of Egypt has graciously hosted this important event. I thank His Excellency, Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the President of Egypt, and Dr. Sameh Elhefny, the Minister of Civil Aviation.
6. Egypt's generosity, and leadership, has set an inspiring example for us to reflect on, and follow throughout AFI Week.
7. Aviation is a powerful force for human progress, and the coalition here is as broad as your commitment. It is strong enough to support real implementation.
8. Experts from States, industry partners, and stakeholders across the air transport ecosystem have gathered here.
9. Your combined strengths will lead to productive and timely meetings.

10. ICAO Secretariat staff are also here to help and ensure our meetings are effective, and impactful. We are committed to ensuring these meetings drive progress in aviation through Africa and the Indian Ocean.
11. This is tightly linked to our second priority: to strengthen African leadership and ownership of air transport.
12. ICAO forecasts that Africa will be among the world's fastest-growing aviation market. This means that we have a critical moment for action before us.
13. African leadership matters now more than ever.
14. Regional integration matters now more than ever too.
15. Africa has already made strong commitments, meaning we have a strong foundation for progress.
16. We must implement the Single African Air Transport Market.
17. This step will help States enjoy the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
18. The outcomes of the AFCAC 2026 African Air Transport Convention and Exhibition stand before us. The Lomé Declaration and the Implementation Matrix are clear.
19. Africa is ready to accelerate the Single African Air Transport Market.
20. Africa will improve connectivity and deepen integration through civil aviation.
21. This is how Africa will demonstrate global leadership, supporting ICAO's vision for air transport worldwide.
22. ICAO is ready to help accelerate your progress.

23. We empower African leadership with focused support, in line with the plans and roadmaps you set and the capacity-building activities we are actively improving to meet the specific needs of all ICAO Member States.
24. You have key opportunities throughout AFI Week.
25. The Eleventh Meeting of the Directors General of Civil Aviation will review new developments. It will assess aviation performance, and provide guidance on the challenges you face. And it will set Africa's priorities for this year and next.
26. The Third Meeting of AFI Plans Steering Committee will review the progress of the AFI Safety Plan, AFI SECFAL Plan, and the Human Resources Development Fund.
27. The Committee will be looking into the implementation of the work programmes and of its previous decisions and recommendations.
28. The accountability provided through this review is crucial to continuing the excellent progress Africa has already achieved.
29. Looking further forward, the Aviation Symposium will push key initiatives. We will share best practices. We will name challenges. We will find solutions to improve performance.
30. African experts will take the lead.
31. Finally, the Donor Dialogue will provide a crucial opportunity to strengthen implementation through global partnerships with States, international organizations and industry stakeholders.
32. It will reinforce African ownership of the AFI Plans and discuss voluntary financial and in-kind contributions in support of priority activities under the AFI Safety Plan, the AFI SECFAL Plan, and Human Resources Development Fund.
33. These meetings will prove strong ownership by Africa, and that Africa's success depends on it.

34. That is why I want to thank African States and partner organizations for your continued support and leadership.
35. Some of you have provided experts to help States, at no expense. This is true partnership.
36. We value your solidarity and your shared ownership.
37. Through commitment and partnership, the AFI Region made great progress in the past year.
38. And so much more can be done by pooling and aligning not just regionally, but at the global level.
39. Aviation in Africa is growing, and with strong demand comes big opportunities.
40. We see potential for economic growth, integration, and social development.
41. That is why our third priority is to align African aviation with the global vision and strategy.
42. This year's AFI Week marks a milestone.
43. This is the first year of the ICAO Strategic Plan for 2050, which foresees air transport for all, with zero fatalities and net-zero carbon emissions.
44. Immediate progress towards this vision will be driven by the ICAO Business Plan for 2026 through 2028.
45. These documents show the way forward for all States, including those in the AFI region.
46. ICAO is clear about its priorities. Safety, security, sustainability, resilience, and inclusion are our stated goals now.
47. We will be discussing this in depth throughout AFI Week.

48. Aligning your consensus with them will enable you to accelerate the achievement of these epic aspirations.
49. We have fully adopted these objectives and they are fully reflected in African aviation planning.
50. However, the story doesn't end there.
51. I want to highlight that this AFI Week is also a crucial opportunity for Africa to shape air policy worldwide.
52. Your consensus here must inform the deliberations at the ICAO Worldwide Air Transport Conference in November, which will determine aviation's global economic and investment frameworks for the next decade.
53. Let me conclude now with the following thoughts.
54. Your alignment on aviation policy and standards is vital to Africa's connectivity.
55. Africa must lead the international dialogue on aviation, and Africa must express its vision for air transport to the world with one voice.