



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar,
to the AFI Aviation Symposium
at the Eleventh Africa-Indian Ocean Aviation Week Events (AFI Week)
*Cairo, Egypt, 28 July 2026***

1. Africa's aviation leaders have gathered with us here to address the advancement of air transport across the continent and Indian Ocean.
2. Through your generous sharing of expertise, we will draw inspiration from your recent achievements.
3. We will explore how we can move forward on the technical and organizational challenges and opportunities air transport is facing, today and tomorrow.
4. This expertise will create solutions for Africa and for the world.
5. The programme for this Symposium covers aviation's challenges and opportunities comprehensively.
6. Consequently, the topics we have identified are broad, and diverse.
7. These topics include emerging threats like GNSS jamming and spoofing, challenges with API and PNR implementation, environmental sustainability, project financing and investment, skills development, innovation, and preparations for the upcoming Worldwide Air Transport Conference.
8. Progress on these topics will accelerate our achievement of ICAO's strategic vision of air transport for all by 2050, with zero fatalities and net zero carbon emissions.

9. Your active participation in these discussions will ensure you are part of this accelerating momentum.
10. Your first priority here must be to address the urgent and complex challenges in the sector identified by the eleventh meeting of Africa and Indian Ocean Director Generals of Civil Aviation.
11. The decisions, ideas, and partnerships developed at this event to respond to these challenges must then drive progress by informing practical actions for States and stakeholders.
12. In addition to addressing these urgent topics, we must also prioritize strengthening the sector's foundation for the long term.
13. One significant challenge is the shortage of qualified technical personnel in many States.
14. This shortage jeopardizes the ability of States to meet safety, security, and other obligations under the Chicago Convention. It is therefore also a risk to the development or even resilience of State air connectivity.
15. In response, we must invest in human resources, upgrading systems, and creating the conditions needed for sustained growth.
16. Finally, we must also prioritize Africa's preparation for new aviation challenges by enhancing innovation and resilience.
17. The industry here faces both opportunities and challenges as it grows. These include new aircraft types, new technologies, security risks, financing needs, and climate change,
18. Africa must therefore improve and sustain civil aviation performance by investing in capacity, supporting innovation, and developing the workforce.
19. ICAO is ready to support all these efforts through its Regional Offices and Capacity Development and Implementation activities and support programmes.
20. We must also recognize and appreciate the crucial role of partners, donors, and funding agencies in undertaking this crucial work.

21. That is why this Symposium will look into how to strengthen the mobilization of resources.
22. Before I close, I am pleased to share a new ICAO initiative that demonstrates our commitment to turning global standards into action
23. In response to requests from African States and the need for harmonized passenger data systems, ICAO will launch the API PNR Implementation Support Programme for the AFI region
24. This programme will give participating States full support, including readiness assessments, implementation roadmaps, expert mentoring, technical assistance, and practical tools
25. These measures will help States create sustainable, interoperable, and Annex 9 compliant API and PNR systems
26. We will begin with a first group of States that are ready to implement and with our partners, we will mobilize more resources to expand this support across Africa
27. This initiative shows ICAO's dedication to helping States beyond standard setting by delivering support that leads to results
28. Together, we are building a more connected, secure, and resilient aviation system in Africa
29. This will strengthen border management, make travel easier for legitimate passengers, and move us toward our shared goal of safe, secure, and sustainable international civil aviation
30. Addressing all these issues requires us to work together, in alignment with the ICAO Strategic Plan and Vision for 2050.
31. I encourage you to contribute your experience and ideas so we can find practical solutions for aviation in Africa, and beyond.
32. In this way we can ensure aviation is a stronger driver of social and economic development in Africa, and that African expertise and leadership informs the development of aviation worldwide.