



**Remarks by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma,
to the 75th Special meeting of ECAC Directors General of Civil Aviation**

(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, 27 August 2026)

*Excellency, State Secretary for Transport of the Republic of Moldova,
Distinguished Director-Generals of Civil Aviation,
Distinguished representatives,
Distinguished participants,*

I want to thank ECAC for inviting me to address this 75th Special meeting of ECAC Directors General of Civil Aviation.

It is a pleasure to be with you here in Chişinău and I would like to extend my congratulations on the National Day of the Republic of Moldova.

I also wish to thank the Civil Aviation Authority of the Republic of Moldova for their warm hospitality.

This is my first time addressing you as the President of the ICAO Council, and I am honoured.

I am very grateful for your continued support of the activities of ICAO at the global and regional levels, and for your enhanced engagement with the EUR/NAT Regional Director over the last few years.

I want to encourage ECAC to continue this momentum with the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Office through regular exchanges of information.

International civil aviation continues to be the safest and most reliable mode of transportation to connect the world. It has proven to be essential for people, economies, and global connectivity. ICAO stands at a pivotal moment, to lead aviation into a safe, secure, and sustainable future anchored in inclusiveness and global participation. I am committed to strengthening our core responsibilities and advancing aviation in full alignment with ICAO's shared strategic goals.

Climate change, conflicts and geopolitical uncertainty, and growing demands for global connectivity are among the factors that are testing the resilience of our institutions.

That is why our collaboration is so important.

Collaboration enhances our ability to serve the region.

It also shapes the progress of aviation at the global level.

This same spirit of cooperation will be central to the discussions at ICAO's upcoming 7th Worldwide Air Transport Conference taking place at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal from 16 to 20 November 2026.

The success of these talks, and the international frameworks they will define, depends in large part on how well regional perspectives are represented.

Therefore, I would like to seize this opportunity to share with your region, ICAO's vision for the conference and encourage the States in this region to begin preparing your national and shared positions for these talks.

Europe must help shape the next decade of global economic policy for air transport.

Discussions at the Conference will proceed under the theme of “Air Transport: Powering Global Connectivity, Economic Development and Resilience in a Dynamic World.”

This signals the critical role our industry plays in jobs, trade, and building stronger communities, increasingly recognized at the highest levels.

Aviation supports approximately USD 4.1 trillion in economic activity and around 86.5 million jobs worldwide.

We must expand this contribution by getting the global policies right.

We have planned the conference to help you work together and find agreement on key issues.

Each day, plenary and panel discussions will bring together States, industry leaders, and experts from the financial sector.

The conference will open with a look at how air transport has changed since the previous air transport conference held in 2013, covering major industry trends and the evolution of regulatory frameworks.

States will discuss what these changes mean in practice, and consider the role of aviation in economic development, especially for those countries that are still growing their capacity.

After that, the focus will turn to growth and investment.

Delegates will share their experience and expertise in prioritizing civil aviation within their national economic strategies. This will include ways to align policies so that air transport supports economic progress across the board.

The agenda then moves to financing: how to develop and modernize infrastructure using public and private support, and how to invest in building the workforce and skills needed for the future.

These discussions will draw on real examples and focus on what works.

The next part of the agenda centers on regulation and institutions. States will review how to strengthen oversight, adapt the role of civil aviation authorities, and meet technical assistance and funding needs.

There will be discussions on expanding air connectivity within and across regions, and the steps to update frameworks that drive trade, tourism, and resilience.

Delegates will share experiences on emergency planning, consumer protection, and keeping the system strong when challenges arise. There will also be a close look at user charges, taxes, and how to recover costs for airport and navigation services, including for new operators such as drones.

Finally, the discussions will look further to the future and explore how new technologies and business models can fit into today's systems, and what changes may be needed to keep regulation up to date.

States will talk about the economic opportunities from cleaner aviation energy, and how investments in innovation can bring benefits to every part of the sector.

Digitalization, improved use of data, and new tools like artificial intelligence will also be high on the agenda.

The objective is not only to present ideas, but to foster dialogue, encourage the exchange of perspectives, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement among all participants.

Colleagues,

As I mentioned earlier, the Air Transport Conference will deliver two key outcomes that will shape the future of our sector.

The first is the Conference Report.

It will capture recommendations to guide the development of international air transport over the next decade.

The second is the Ministerial Declaration.

It is an opportunity for governments around the world to express a shared vision and demonstrate their collective commitment to the Conference's objectives.

In preparation for these discussions, the ICAO Council has developed a draft Declaration and approved its release for consultation with Member States. This gives all States an opportunity to help shape the final text and ensure it reflects our shared priorities and ambitions.

Your input will be essential in building a strong and meaningful outcome that reflects the perspectives of the global aviation community.

Finally, I want to share that ICAO is working with ACI to host a Global Infrastructure Investor Forum the day before the conference.

The Forum will inform the Conference discussions on how to ensure aviation infrastructure meets the need for a safe, sustainable, and rapidly expanding global air transport network.

The Forum will identify specific actions for ICAO, ACI, governments, financial institutions, investors and industry stakeholders in this effort.

It will also identify financing mechanisms and ways to support them, strengthen collaboration on investment and long-term financing.

Colleagues,

The success of this Conference will be determined by your active participation.

Our objective is to meet not only today's challenges, but also to help future-proof international air transport for the years ahead.

That is why we strongly encourage participation from across the aviation ecosystem—and beyond.

We want to hear from those who are driving innovation, shaping policy, developing new technologies, and responding to emerging global challenges.

I also want to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of our continued cooperation on aviation environmental protection. CORSIA remains the only globally harmonized market-based measure applying to CO₂ emissions from international aviation.

I encourage European States to continue their strong support for CORSIA and to work with ICAO to advance aviation decarbonization through cooperation, multilateralism and globally harmonized solutions. Together we will accelerate progress towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions from international aviation, in line with our vision for 2050.

Distinguished colleagues,

This meeting is an opportunity to drive meaningful impact for the region and the communities you serve.

It is a crucial opportunity to align in advance of the ICAO talks in November.

I want to thank ECAC and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Republic of Moldova once again for this opportunity, and all of you for your continued engagement and cooperation.

Thank you.