



**Keynote Remarks by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma,
to the IATA Wings of Change**

(Brussels, Belgium, 15 October 2026)

Esteemed colleagues,

I want to thank Mr. Reynaert for the superb introduction.

Global aviation needs Europe's commitment and leadership.

Global aviation also needs IATA and ICAO to continue strengthening our already excellent collaboration.

I want to thank IATA for this important opportunity to explore the way forward.

For decades, civil aviation has created opportunity, prosperity, and peace worldwide.

We must ensure air transport continues to fulfil this mission by overcoming the challenges we face.

Of these challenges, decarbonization is the most significant.

The governments of the world have committed to the ICAO aspirational goal for carbon neutral growth.

In addition to carbon neutral growth, the ICAO climate framework sets an ambitious target of net-zero carbon emissions from international aviation by 2050.

This means we will decrease emissions as aviation continues to grow.

At the ICAO Assembly last October, all 192 of the 193 ICAO Member States in attendance supported the ICAO climate framework. This reflects growing recognition of the effectiveness of ICAO solutions.

ICAO is monitoring aviation's progress on decarbonization.

Our reporting on this progress contributes to the credibility of our approach.

ICAO has received 155 State Action Plans that account for 99 percent of the emissions from international civil aviation.

ICAO's frameworks, standards, and plans are crucial to our global approach.

They provide the certainty needed by industry and investors.

The ICAO CORSIA offsetting and emissions reduction scheme is key.

Its monitoring and reporting system also covers 99 per cent of international aviation CO₂ emissions.

It is the only practical climate solution for air transport today.

The scheme's implementation is supported by ICAO programmes like ACT-SAF and ACT-CORSIA.

These programmes help our Member States implement the right policies and infrastructure to accelerate aviation's green transformation.

These programmes ensure Member States can fully benefit from the economic opportunities presented by this transformation.

We have already attracted more than 280 partners through ACT-SAF.

A key indicator of our success has been our SAF feasibility projects.

Thirty-eight studies have already been completed or initiated, with more to come.

We see unprecedented opportunities for growth and diversification.

Investment in new energy production, refueling networks, and airport upgrades will open new opportunities.

This investment will create value and employment across many regions, including in emerging economies where they are needed most.

To achieve this, ICAO will guide policymakers to the solutions, so governments can take the bold and coordinated actions that are needed.

Colleagues,

The strength of the ICAO framework and the broad support it currently enjoys is still at risk.

Collective and harmonized action through ICAO is the most effective way to address climate change and the best way to support aviation's long-term sustainable growth.

One of the most significant risks is the fragmentation of policy and markets.

The effectiveness and credibility of global solutions is undermined by uncoordinated national and local rules, like the proposed expansion of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

Extra taxes, or duplicative measures and requirements / would also cause damage to the multilateral global approach.

We must ensure that States remain aligned.

We must also ensure States enhance and increase their activities in support of the ICAO framework.

A key priority here is ensuring States accelerate their issuance of Letters of Authorization / for CORSIA-eligible carbon credits.

This will increase availability and contribute to the momentum around decarbonization.

The failure of States to update policies to meet current needs may also present another risk.

Frameworks created before Sustainable Aviation Fuels, digital airspace, and advanced mobility are presenting challenges for air transport stakeholders.

This is especially true for developing regions / and for innovators entering airspace with new technologies.

Challenges around investment for large projects, closing regulatory and skills gaps, and scaling new technologies and fuels are also among the major challenges we face.

Colleagues,

Sustainable Aviation Fuels and other cleaner energies aim to introduce at least five percent of CO₂ emissions reduction by 2030.

Looking further ahead, cleaner fuels are expected to deliver over half of the emissions reductions we need by 2050.

These fuels are crucial to completing the progress driven by advances in aircraft, airport infrastructure, and operational efficiency.

This transition means large financial investments are needed.

We estimate that carrying out our plan will require 3.2 trillion US dollars in new investment by 2050 for cleaner energy sources alone.

Supporting this effort, ICAO is making it easier to access finance.

The Finvest Hub, for example, is bringing investors and developers together.

It focuses on lesser developed States and regions.

States and regions that fortunately often have the natural resources needed to produce SAF.

Through the ICAO Fininvest Hub, we now have almost 50 projects seeking more than 17 billion US dollars in investment.

Together, these projects represent an annual production capacity of more than 4.2 million tonnes.

More must be done.

This will require close teamwork among countries, industry, carbon market partners, and others.

Action on all these issues by governments at the ICAO Worldwide Air Transport Conference in November will be critical.

This Conference will reform the global economic framework for air transport.

Strong action must be taken now, because there will not be another Conference for another ten years. That will be far too late.

ICAO is asking governments to include cleaner aviation energy in national strategies.

We are asking governments to align national efforts with ICAO in order to simplify regulation, reduce barriers, and build effective markets so that all can take part.

New approaches to financing and project development will also be essential for investment.

Countries must promote fair competition and equal access to opportunity, and avoid taxes or fees that may reduce growth or cause extra burdens for users.

Plans must be created to encourage new infrastructure and decarbonization, and make sure investment and reinvestment continue.

Colleagues,

We must protect aviation's contributions to peace and prosperity.

These contributions must be secured through logical policy choices resulting from government and industry working together.

ICAO will guide and support these efforts.

Through our urgency and unity, we will ensure that civil aviation grows as it fulfills its essential role in global society.

Thank you very much.