



**Opening keynote by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 42nd Plenary (Triennial) Session
of the European Civil Aviation Conference**

(9 July 2024, Strasbourg, France)

*Dear ECAC President,
Dear ECAC Executive Secretary,
Directors General of Civil Aviation,
ICAO Council Representatives,
Dear Director General of the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European
Commission,
Distinguished guests,*

I wish to thank ECAC for inviting me to address this 42nd Triennial Plenary Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference.

Of course, you know that I have participated in several ECAC Triennial Sessions here in Strasbourg, albeit in a different capacity.

You will understand that it is particularly endearing for me to address you today in my role as President of the ICAO Council.

I also wish to take the opportunity to thank France, the Host Country of the ICAO Regional Office and of ECAC for the unwavering support provided to both Organizations. In this regard, I wish to take the opportunity to highlight the enhanced coordination and cooperation between ECAC and ICAO's Paris Office throughout the last few years, which benefits you all.

As we all know, the establishment of Regional Organizations such as ECAC have been promoted by ICAO with the objective of helping support States in their pursuit of ICAO objectives at the regional level.

ICAO appreciates and recognizes the remarkable ECAC engagement and support to ICAO policies and to ICAO's regional activities in the EUR/NAT region.

Additionally, the presence of influential European leaders in the ICAO Council, several of which are present here today, underscores the region's strong voice in shaping international aviation's sustainable, resilient, and robust future.

This year, ICAO is celebrating its 80th anniversary. This celebration offers the opportunity to reflect on the important achievements over the last eight decades, critical to the current economic and social development of our world.

However, ICAO intends to take this opportunity not solely to reflect on the excellent achievements, but more importantly, to reflect together with all stakeholders on how aviation development will continue to be supported by ICAO over the next decades.

For this reason, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 80th Anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention, the Council is in the process of approving the 2026-2050 ICAO Strategic Plan.

I will not enter into details on the Strategic Plan, but I wish to underline that it will have to continue to pursue the highest global safety and security levels supporting the sustainable development of air transport along three dimensions: Environment, economic and social.

This development will have to be pursued in a manner that No Country is Left Behind. For this reason, the No Country Left Behind initiative will become an integral part of the ICAO Strategic Objective.

Actually, ICAO is already implementing a new approach in this specific regard.

The change of the Technical Cooperation Bureau into Capacity Development and Implementation Support Bureau is definitely not a cosmetic change. It is an Organizational one, and I would say cultural change. It is a dramatic change whereas technical cooperation, assistance, capacity building and implementation support activities are driven by the One ICAO approach and no longer “in silos”.

More in general, the 2026-2050 Strategic Plan is in continuity of the agenda for modernization that was initiated 4 years ago addressing: working methods and environment, governance, and relations with industry.

Regarding Environment and in particular Climate Change, as you know, a massive leap forward has been achieved at the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November last year in Dubai, with the adoption of a Global Framework for SAF and LCAF and cleaner energies development and deployment. In particular, I wish to recall the global target to achieve of 5% CO₂ emissions reduction by 2030.

Now, we must deliver.

Just a few weeks ago the Council approved a roadmap that will guide ICAO implementation activities, starting with financial and human resource allocations without which most of the Global Framework would remain on paper.

This will be done through a re-prioritization process that the Secretariat has performed within the perimeter of the regular budget that, as you know, is systematically not sufficient to cover all the tasks assigned by ICAO Assemblies, but mainly through resource mobilization, requesting consequently your support.

Amongst the several activities, the Finvest Hub, which was so well received during CAAF/3 in Dubai, will be an important project establishing a platform to facilitate investment partnerships, particularly in the interest of countries and regions that do not have SAF production.

Additionally, I am happy to share that 150 States and organizations are now part of ICAO's Assistance, Capacity Building, and Training programme for SAF, known as ACT-SAF. This includes ECAC and 12 ECAC States.

Remaining in the area of Climate Change, I wish to recall that ICAO is focusing more intently on non-CO₂ emissions. The Symposium organized in Montreal in September will offer an excellent opportunity to take stock of the scientific progress and will offer the opportunity to outline future ICAO initiatives in this regard.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, the celebrations of the 80th Anniversary will offer the opportunity to reflect on the challenges that will have to be addressed by air transport, and by ICAO in particular, in the next decades, starting with the forecasted increase in passengers air traffic from approximately 4.5 Billion this year to approximately 11.4 Billion in 2050. These apparently simple figures paint a dramatic picture of the challenges that will have to be faced to reach aviation decarbonization by 2050. That is, to reach Net-Zero while aviation continues to grow substantially.

Additionally, it will grow faster in Countries or Regions that have done less so far. This will require common efforts, in accordance with the No Country Left Behind strategic objective, so that air transport development continues enhancing safety, security, and capacity. We need to remain focused and not allow ourselves to become complacent.

The systematic introduction of new technologies, and innovation will support this development while at the same time cybersecurity will become more and more crucial in aviation.

As you know, ICAO remains fully committed.

The adoption of an ICAO Cybersecurity governance will help implement the cybersecurity roadmap integrating all Secretariat and Panels activities.

Regarding innovation, I would be remiss if I did not stress that we must prepare ourselves for the extraordinary potential of remotely piloted aircraft systems and advanced air mobility (AAM).

ICAO is supporting our member States on the regulatory aspects and the first ever AAM Symposium will take place in Montréal in September. I invite you all to participate.

As 2024 is also the ICAO Year of Facilitation, we are particularly active in encouraging the advancement of initiatives in this field this year. By leveraging the ICAO Digital Travel Credential, the interoperability of these initiatives with other entities can be eased and we look forward to working with all of you to make such globally interoperable seamless travel a reality.

Another very significant and extremely important focus of our work in this area is on the provision of Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families. Respect for victims of aircraft accidents and their families' mental, physical and spiritual well-being is paramount to ICAO and to all aviation stakeholders.

The ICAO Council is assuring continuous advocacy and attention for these important global priorities with the insights and appeals of committed representatives of victims and their families. Furthermore, the Council, with the support of all stakeholders, is helping States set the regulatory framework. In this context, the second symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their

Families (AAAVF) is planned to be held in the Kingdom of the Netherlands in November later this year, and I wish to thank again the host State for its support.

Before concluding today, I would also like to stress that we will not be able to achieve our objectives unless we are successful in breaking down barriers to participation in aviation. Women continue to be massively underrepresented in our sector, and we must accelerate and improve our efforts in support of gender equality.

The Call to Action resulting from the 2nd ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit in Madrid provides 26 specific actions that we can take to do so. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge you to join us in implementing it.

Over the past 80 years, safeguarding human lives and well-being has been aviation's top priority. Let us keep this front of mind as we strive to enhance flight safety, security, and sustainability, and seek to find ways to raise ambitions.

I look forward to positive and crucially important outcomes of our collective efforts. I will also await with interest your fruitful discussions at this 42nd Plenary Session of ECAC. You will help shape the future of aviation in Europe and beyond.

With that, I wish you highly successful and productive discussions.

Thank you.