



ICAO

**Opening keynote by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the Ninth Edition of AFI Aviation Week**

(15 July 2024, Libreville, Gabon)

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Son Excellence Dieudonné Loïc Ndinga Moudouma, Ministre des Transports, de la Marine Marchande et
de la Mer,
Directeur général de l'Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile du Gabon, Général Eric Tristan Moussavou,
Honorables Ministres,
Membres du parlement,
Représentants du conseil de l'OACI,
Secrétaire général de l'OACI,
Distingués invités et collègues,*

En tant que président du Conseil de l'OACI, je suis vraiment heureux d'avoir l'opportunité de prendre la parole à l'ouverture de la neuvième édition de la Semaine africaine de l'aviation de l'AFI.

I sincerely thank the Government of the Gabonese Republic for hosting this prestigious event and providing excellent facilities here in vibrant Libreville. Your warm welcome illustrates the importance Gabon places on aviation within its national strategy for development.

The AFI Aviation Week has become the largest aviation gathering on the African continent, bringing together stakeholders from across the region and beyond. Over the coming days, you will participate in several crucial events.

- a. The Tenth Meeting of the Directors-General of Civil Aviation Authorities of the AFI Region
- b. The Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan)
- c. The Thirteenth Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa (AFI SECFAL Plan)
- d. The AFI Aviation Symposium covering ICAO's Strategic Objectives

- e. The Extraordinary Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) and the Regional Aviation Safety Group for the AFI Region (RASG-AFI)

These meetings provide vital opportunities to advance aviation priorities for this continent, enhancing performance and addressing challenges within the framework of the African Union Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

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

Africa represents 3% of global traffic and over 20% of global airspace, presenting both challenges and opportunities as aviation's center of gravity shifts east and south.

For a region characterized by vast distances and diverse geographies, aviation is a crucial enabler of connectivity.

In this regard, the implementation of the SAATM is fundamental. I am pleased to see that some indicators have started giving a positive trend regarding the SAATM implementation. However, we have to accelerate this process.

I wish to invite you all to do your best to fully implement the SAATM in the whole continent recalling the benefits that open air transport market can bring in terms of connectivity and consequently in terms of economic and social development of Africa.

In order to have a successful implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market, there is a need to implement high levels of safety and security standards.

In this regard, I commend the Africa-Indian Ocean Region for its achievements over the past years.

Across the continent, the USOAP and USAP programmes have shown that effective implementation of audited safety standards has risen from 42% in 2014 to 57% by 2022.

In the area of security, from 53% in 2015 to 64% by 2022. These figures don't give the indication of excellence yet, but show clearly that Africa is committed and well prepared to address the growth of air transport market in the region.

A few words of current main global air transport priorities.

- a. **Safety and Security remain paramount** and we must remain focused on enhancing these fundamental aspects of aviation, not allowing ourselves to become complacent.
- b. **Decarbonization:** The Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November last year in Dubai marked a significant step forward with the adoption of a Global Framework for SAF and LCAF and cleaner energies. The global target to achieve a 5% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030 is ambitious but necessary. ICAO is committed to supporting the implementation of this framework, ensuring that no country is left behind. Initiatives like the Finvest Hub and the ACT-SAF programme, which already includes 23 African States, and 150 States and organizations overall, are critical to this effort. The ICAO Council has adopted just a few weeks ago a roadmap

for the implementation of the Global Framework. Through a re-prioritization exercise and a relevant resources mobilization, the Secretary General will be now better positioned to allocate to human resources crucial for the implementation of the Global Framework.

- c. **Emerging Technologies:** As we look to the future of aviation, ICAO is actively supporting our Member States on the regulatory aspects of emerging technologies like remotely piloted aircraft systems and advanced air mobility (AAM). In this context, I am pleased to announce that the first-ever AAM Symposium is planned in Montréal this September. This event will be a crucial platform for addressing these emerging technologies and their integration into our global aviation system.
- d. **Facilitation:** As 2024 is the ICAO Year of Facilitation, we are encouraging advancements in this field, particularly through initiatives like the ICAO Digital Travel Credential. We are aiming to make globally interoperable seamless travel a reality.

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, and I am very glad that the Secretary General will present it to you during this week, 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 from the Technical Cooperation Bureau to the Capacity Development and Implementation Support Bureau is definitely not cosmetic. It is an Organizational one, a change in culture. 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”.

Before concluding, I wish to invite you all to be engaged actively in upcoming events, particularly in the ICAO Fourteenth Air Navigation Conference in Montreal this August. The theme "Performance Improvement Driving Sustainability" reflects our commitment to innovative solutions that address environmental challenges while adapting to the rapid evolution of operations and technologies.

As we celebrate 80 years of international civil aviation, let's affirm our commitment to safeguarding human lives and well-being as aviation's top priority. Over these eight decades, we've seen

remarkable progress, but there is still much to achieve. ICAO remains dedicated to providing the necessary implementation support to its Member States as we work together to enhance the safety, security, and sustainability of air transport.

J'attends avec impatience les résultats de vos discussions de cette semaine et les effets positifs sur l'aviation en Afrique et au-delà. Ensemble, nous pouvons garantir que l'aviation africaine continue de progresser vers de nouveaux sommets en jouant un rôle central dans la croissance économique du continent.

Merci et je vous souhaite une neuvième édition de la Semaine de l'aviation de l'AFI bien réussie et productive.