Keynote Address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the ICCAIA Annual General Meeting and Conference 2025

(Montréal, 26 March 2025)

Distinguished colleagues,

I wish to thank Mr. Jan Pie, Chair of ICCAIA, for the kind invitation to address this Annual General Meeting and Conference and for this opportunity to share my thoughts and reflections with you this afternoon.

As the aviation sector faces increasing challenges, a close relationship and continued cooperation between ICAO and the industry is essential.

ICAO and ICCAIA's partnership is not new. It has delivered concrete results in safety standards and technological integration for some time. ICCAIA's technical expertise has been crucial in developing the regulatory frameworks for integrating new technologies, particularly in unmanned aviation and advanced air mobility.

And as we are witnessing, innovation is transforming aviation at an extraordinary rate - from advanced air mobility to sustainable technologies. ICCAIA's expertise is crucial in helping us adapt our regulatory frameworks to these changes.

With your indulgence, I will share some thoughts on how ICAO envisages the evolving scenario over the coming decades. I am referring here to the recently adopted ICAO strategic plan 2026-2050. This strategic plan was adopted as ICAO celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the Chicago Convention, not by reminiscing over the achievements of the last 80 years but with eyes wide open on the future and what's in store for our sector in the years ahead.

When we think of the future, one word comes to mind – Growth. ICAO expects that passenger traffic will increase from approximately 4.6 Billion in 2024, i.e. the same pre-pandemic level, to 12.4 Billion. Approximately 2.7 times. Air Cargo will grow from 265 Billion FTK, Freight tonnes Kilometre, to 630 Billion, 2.2 times. This will imply a corresponding impact on the Global GDP and jobs (including 14 million new jobs on sustainable fuel production alone)

Such tremendous growth will require a huge effort from all aviation actors in order to support it. ICAO, for its part, has identified 6 strategic goals that must be pursued in order to support this growth.

First and paramount, are safety and security. ICAO's goal is to enhance the safety and security of every flight so that we can achieve zero fatalities from aviation accidents and incidents. This is, and always will be, our raison d'etre.

We are also actively pursuing decarbonization. Here I must stress Your crucial role in achieving the Long Term Aspirational Goal of zero CO_2 emissions by 2050.

Our experts, and I refer to experts from Member States but also to industry experts who participate in ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection or CAEP, consider that technology will contribute with approximately 22% to the achievement of this goal. We know what is already achieved with the most recent aircraft generations, but we are eager to see what the industry will bring over the next decades.

Of course, ICAO is ready to support Industry initiatives related to innovation. For this reason, we are developing a standardization roadmap that will help identify at the earliest stage possible, the needs related to the development of standards for innovation.

However, we know that the massive contribution to achieve the net zero goal is the use of SAF, LCAF and other cleaner energies. They will contribute approximately with 55% CO_2 emissions reduction. We know that SAF availability is currently low but it is increasing. This is also thanks to the results of the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November 2023 in Dubai, which adopted 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. I believe that you will have the opportunity later this afternoon to assess the progress achieved in this area thus far.

I also wish to highlight that at the 13th ICAO CAEP meeting last month, ICCAIA helped advance CO_2 monitoring methodologies, noise-CO_2 dual stringency standards, and life-cycle assessment methods for sustainable and hydrogen-based fuels. Beyond this meeting, your technical expertise has been essential in developing noise certification standards for supersonics, strengthening the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation—known as CORSIA—and advancing our understanding of climate adaptation and non-CO_2 emissions.

This work directly contributes to our Long-term Global Aspirational Goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Industry is also taking decisive action. Aerospace manufacturers are strategically investing in sustainable aviation fuel production and establishing financing alliances to increase fuel availability. The Finvest Hub will create funding pathways by connecting sustainable aviation projects with investors. The opportunities it will provide will be especially important for developing States.

In addition to it's support for ICAO's environmental objectives, ICCAIA has been an important contributor to ICAO's work on Advanced Air Mobility (AAM). Through the ICAO Panel for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, or RPAS, ICCAIA helped develop comprehensive international operating standards.

This work resulted in the ICAO Council's adoption of Part IV International Operations in Annex 6 last March. RPAS operators will now hold an operator certificate, alongside established requirements for remote pilot licenses, airworthiness certificates, and Command and Control (C2) Links

provisions. This is a considerable step towards integrating RPAS into the conventional aviation system. It will open a new horizon for deploying these technologies and the economic opportunities they offer.

Nevertheless, as we continue to make substantial progress, me must be mindful of the increasing challenges facing aviation that I alluded to at the opening of these remarks. A concrete example is Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Radio frequency interference which continues to persist in several regions globally and poses a significant and ongoing risk to civil aviation. Your crucial support for ICAO's work has enhanced the precision and reliability of Global Navigation Satellite Systems while strengthening their protection against interference and spoofing. Additionally, your expertise helps ensure ICAO Standards align with industry standards from the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics and the European Organisation for Civil Aviation Equipment or EUROCAE.

I wish to reiterate that ICCAIA’s cooperation is critical and must continue. Our enhanced cooperation is essential to ensure a resilient, sustainable, and vibrant future for aviation. And this event and your discussions this week show that same spirit of cooperation.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish you a very productive conference.