



**Opening Address
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the Grand Opening of
7th African Aviation Week**

(Abuja, Nigeria, 16 May 2022)

1. On behalf of ICAO, it's my great honour to welcome you to this seventh consecutive AFI Aviation Week.
2. I wish to express our special gratitude to the Federal Republic of Nigeria for accepting to host this prestigious event, here in the very beautiful city of Abuja.
3. Your presence here today is a clear demonstration of the strengthening civil aviation commitment and solidarity on this continent.
4. Moreover, it is an important acknowledgment that we are stronger and more prosperous when we're better connected, and that nothing can connect Africa as efficiently and reliably as air transport.
5. Furthermore, I interpret our in-person presence today as another very important step toward putting this pandemic behind us and reconnecting the world.
6. AFI Aviation Week for 2022 will feature the DGCA Meeting to be held after this ceremony, the meetings of the Steering Committees for the ICAO AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan, and some important progress reports from key partners and stakeholders.
7. It will also comprise a Symposium, where topics of common priority such as the operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), current environmental challenges and initiatives, and the status of ICAO Global and Regional Plans implementation will be discussed.
8. The Ninth DGCA Meeting following this opening session will review and identify priorities relating to the evolution of aviation performance in the AFI Region.
9. It will further explore the post-pandemic air traffic recovery forecast, related outcomes from ICAO's High-level Conference on COVID-19, and ongoing efforts to expand skilled human resource development in Africa.
10. The ICAO AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan meetings will meanwhile focus on their 2021 implementation reports, and the review and approval of their updated 2022 work programmes and projects. The committees will also review the recommendations of the various regional groups which play such an important role in helping ICAO to drive continuous aviation safety and security progress in Africa.

11. In this regard, I wish to express our deep gratitude to our partners for their important updates and tremendous contributions, and express my special recognition as well to the AFI plans Donors, some of them present with us today. Also, I want to recognize the valuable support to other ICAO regional implementation support programmes in the AFI region such as the Flight Procedures Programme, COSCAP, CAPSCA and other regional projects.
12. Let me now highlight some key priorities; In the near-term, the recovery of African air transport, so that it can safely and securely regain its status as the fastest growing air transport market in the world, must be priority one.
13. This means addressing persisting regulatory barriers, financial constraints, and the still too-slow pace of air transport liberalization. ICAO is contributing to these outcomes today through the Draft Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines we have developed, and the new multilateral convention on the liberalization of air cargo services.
14. A second key priority is to make determined efforts to address and decrease CO2 emissions even as we work together to recover and increase traffic volumes.
15. Here much of our near-term response will rely on lower emissions Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), more efficient operations and flow management, and the global offsetting being managed under the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).
16. In the longer-term, aircraft will ultimately have to decarbonize, and for that to happen we need to promote and nurture innovation and move entirely to zero emission propulsion solutions.
17. The third key priority for us is to ‘build back better’ post pandemic, and to make our sector more resilient to future pandemic events.
18. This will require us to focus and deliver on a fully digital and contactless passenger experience, and one which seamlessly integrates with digital passenger security, health status, and border control systems overseen by governments.
19. Taken together, these combined challenges help to explain why “innovation” and “resilience” are the key themes we have identified to motivate States at this year’s 41st ICAO Assembly.
20. This event will be seeking several important global commitments later this year, both to augment the incredible phase of aeronautical and digital development we’re now in the midst of, and to consider how it can further augment our traditional strategic objectives for safety, security, efficiency, and sustainability.
21. It will also need to reflect on ways to assure digital capability and capacity amongst all States and stakeholders, so that no countries are left behind as this wave continues to transform international aviation.
22. Success on these priorities here in Africa requires harnessing synergies and strengthening collaboration between the key players, and I urge you to realize the necessary actions and decisions here this week to solidify and enhance your networks and planning.
23. In the meantime, we will look forward to the active participation of AFI States at the upcoming High-level meeting on States’ Long-term global Aspirational Goal (LTAG), which ICAO will host in Montreal from 20-22 July.

24. I also urge all African States and relevant organizations to attend the 41st Assembly which will take place late September- early October this year, both to assure that African aviation has a strong voice at the global table, and to help ICAO underscore, through a well-attended, in-person global event, that the aviation network is once again bringing the world and its peoples together.
25. Ladies and gentlemen, in closing I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the partnership and support of African States and aviation stakeholders to ICAO, and to thank you all for your steadfast commitments to the harmonized development of international civil aviation on this continent.
26. You have made some incredible and very steady progress in recent years, and I wish you more of the same resulting from the very dynamic engagements we have ahead of us here in Abuja.
27. ICAO remains fully committed to supporting the development of civil aviation in Africa, and is very appreciative of the member States and organizations contributions to achieving this goal.
28. Thank you for your attention.