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**Keynote Statement by
ICAO Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the International Association of Aviation
and Aerospace Education (ALICANTO) Annual General Meeting
ICAO HQ on 14 March 2024**

1. As Secretary General of ICAO, I am very grateful for the invitation to address you today.
2. ALICANTO is a significant platform for advocacy toward our clear and critical collective goal: to make sure that everyone who has the ability and the desire can pursue a career in air transport.
3. There is a place in aviation for everyone, and indeed we need everyone.
4. This points to the crucial importance of ALICANTO's mission and advocacy for global aviation: Education, in line with the expertise, ambitions, and priorities of its members.
5. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on all your accomplishments thus far.
6. Since its inception, ALICANTO has filled a significant gap in air transport's global cooperation framework.
7. ICAO sees many areas for increasing involvement and partnership with universities through ALICANTO, and accelerating progress towards a truly inclusive, resilient, and sustainable global aviation sector.
8. Everyone here recognizes the critical importance of ensuring that aviation attracts and retains the best and the brightest talent that our coming generations have to offer, and the pivotal role of welcoming diversity and breaking down barriers in that context.

9. ICAO is expecting air traffic volumes to exceed 2019 levels this year, and to have doubled by the time today's pre-schoolers are ready to enter your institutions. This means that the challenge is urgent.
10. The challenge is exacerbated by demographic trends, including an ageing global population with decreasing birth rates, along with social and economic trends, like the increasing attraction of other high-tech industry sectors, and the introduction of new business models in aviation.
11. All of this raises the spectre of fewer air transport professionals available to occupy the broad range of operational, regulatory, commercial and technological positions our industry demands.
12. This speaks to the need to identify ways to guide the balanced movement of aviation personnel between States and regions as competition for human resources increases within the industry. That is vital to ensuring that all States and regions have dependable aviation workforces at their disposal.
13. ICAO's current priority key terms provide signposts for areas we can deepen and broaden our cooperation to respond to these challenges.
14. Obviously, we must promote aviation careers and expand outreach to younger generations, but more specifically, we should do more to raise awareness of the social importance of careers in aviation. I am thinking about aspects like aviation's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, our role in humanitarian relief, and our progress on climate action. We believe that this will broaden the appeal of aviation careers.
15. We also need to address the disruptive entrants in our industry, like Advanced Air Mobility actors and to open discussions on topics like their impact on air operations and the increasing automatization level of future aircrafts systems.
16. And to ask what these developments mean in terms of required competencies.

17. In the longer term, yes, this new aviation ecosystem is planned to be autonomous. However, it is still expected to require a massive amount of aviation professionals, considering the scale the industry expects the ecosystem to grow to.
18. It is moreover expected to be a very hi-tech environment, based on cutting edge technologies for which practical applications are only just emerging now, like Artificial Intelligence. Building this capacity is a key priority for ICAO.
19. This means we will need to enhance forecasting and modelling for human resources requirements, which will in turn enable us to anticipate and address these and other challenges.
20. Driving this forward will require fostering increased partnership and engagement among educational institutions, States and industry, which is the second key priority I'd like to highlight today.
21. While ICAO has a terrific amount of experience with the latter – in fact we are celebrating 80 years of this work in December – we need ALICANTO to be a central part of our efforts and bring in your members.
22. I would like to take a moment to express ICAO's deep appreciation of how ALICANTO promotes greater coordination among academia, and a unified voice.
23. This will help us to better liaise with industry, education and labor governmental bodies around the review and alignment of curriculum content to meet industry needs and innovation.
24. This alignment is in fact the third key priority I'd like you to keep in mind at this event.
25. Improved liaison will also enable us to access your expertise in promoting diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunities, particularly in terms of increased access for girls and youth to STEM educational programmes and resources. And the benefits will of course go both ways, as we can share governmental and industry perspectives in return.

26. On the subject of increased access for girls and women, let me now focus on the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, as accelerating the progress on women's participation in aviation as essential.
27. Last year was a busy year, with the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023 and the adoption of its Call to Action, which we have been diligently implementing and promoting since.
28. 2024 is also shaping up to be an exciting year for our outreach and advocacy efforts in this area. We are establishing a Global Ambassadors Programme this year, and offering female participants a discount on ICAO's training courses.
29. I'd like to highlight that we have some exciting activities planned under our Next Generation of Aviation Professionals initiative too.
30. We'll be developing a communications campaign to raise awareness about aviation careers opportunities and the positive impact of aviation. In parallel, we'll also be establishing partnerships with relevant stakeholders to expand the initiative's project management capacity.
31. Additionally, and in support of the first key priority I mentioned earlier, I would like to underscore our efforts under the initiative to encourage States to conduct workforce baseline studies. This will comprise assisting them in collecting data beyond the data on licensed personnel they already report to ICAO, and it will help them identify their future aviation workforce needs and required training capacity.
32. Now, I am certain that there are opportunities for us to take these initiatives as models for future partnership.
33. ICAO is indeed very grateful for the support that ALICANTO has already provided us, particularly in terms of promoting ICAO initiatives among its participating institutions.
34. I would like to highlight the significance of both the Global competition for youth, under the theme of "Innovation and Resilience in aviation," and Global competition on innovation for university students, launched on 26 September 2022. Students worldwide proposed innovative solutions to

create a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient aviation ecosystem for 2050, and the winners were announced at the 2024 Innovation Fair on 13 March.

35. ALICANTO was part of the jury and was represented by Ms. Angela Albritton. ALICANTO also ran the proposals through a plagiarism check to support the assessment and selection process. We are very grateful for your assistance in the assessment, ranking, and selection of the innovative proposals of each participating team.
36. Let me also mention that the Academic Paper Competition under ICAO's first ever Global Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) 2024 Symposium is still open. We are moreover making special accommodations for students and academia to attend this unique, exciting, and inspiring event.
37. Finally, the 2024 Innovation Competition was announced at the Innovation Fair, on the topic of Artificial Intelligence for Aviation.
38. We hope that these two current competitions will provide another avenue for us to renew our partnership with you.
39. In concluding, I hope that the priorities and initiatives I have presented this morning will help nourish your reflections and discussions, and I would like to wish you all a very dynamic and constructive meeting.
40. Thank you.