



Remarks by Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary General of ICAO
Fourth edition of the North Bund Forum
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Video Message

Distinguished guests, colleagues,

1. It is my great pleasure to address you today as Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO. You have gathered at a pivotal moment in aviation history – a time of unprecedented challenges, and of extraordinary opportunities.
2. That is one of the reasons why I regret that I could not join you in person for this fourth edition of the North Bund Forum, on “Digital, Smart and Green: Co-creating a New Ecosystem of Global Shipping and Aviation.”
3. You have before you an important opportunity for knowledge exchange and mapping on an issue that is very high among ICAO’s priorities, and central to our activities.
4. For 80 years, we have been leading the international alignment of technical standards and strategies, facilitating the safe, secure, and sustainable development of our 193 Member States' aviation sectors and air services. Our role is to help the global aviation community navigate complex technical and administrative challenges, setting the standards that have made air travel the safest mode of transport.
5. ICAO also plays a crucial role in capacity building and implementation support for our Member States. We provide tailored assistance, training, and support for the development and deployment of new technologies and practices. We conduct feasibility studies, coordinate efforts between States and organizations, and help bridge the gap between global standards and strategies and their implementation by governments, operators, and manufacturers.

6. As ICAO celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, our reflections on our journey have renewed our determination to ensure equitable and sustainable access to air transport and to the vitally important and unique benefits it brings.
7. This mission is more crucial than ever as we address the integration of digitalization and decarbonization, reshaping global civil aviation to create a more sustainable and efficient industry.
8. I would like to underscore that the convergence of digital transformation and environmental sustainability presents significant opportunities for aviation.
9. Advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing air traffic management. These smart systems optimize flight routes, reducing both fuel consumption and emissions. ICAO's digital facilitation initiatives, such as Digital Travel Credentials and electronic cargo documentation, are another great example of how we're simultaneously enhancing efficiency while building capacity.
10. By embracing these technologies, we're making tangible progress towards our decarbonization goals.
11. But to fully harness digitalization for sustainable aviation, we need a robust, standardized global digital infrastructure. ICAO continues to serve as the multilateral platform for this cooperation, ensuring interoperability and global harmonization of our digital solutions.
12. A great example of this is our work on the ICAO Electronic Personnel Licence (EPL). Since November 2022, we've introduced global standards for EPLs, paving the way for a paperless, more efficient licensing system for aviation personnel worldwide. I'm particularly proud to note that China has been at the forefront of this initiative, assisting with its development and then being the first country to implement our EPL verification solution. This showcases how international cooperation through ICAO can swiftly turn innovative ideas into global realities, enhancing both efficiency and resilience in our industry.
13. Of course, all of this requires financing, and ramping up the production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels is the great financing challenge of them all. The achievement of our net zero goals is expected to require cumulative investments of around 3.2 trillion US dollars between now and 2050.

14. Recognizing this, ICAO is launching the Finvest Hub to connect aviation clean energy projects with financing opportunities, democratizing access to sustainable development resources for all States.
15. The Finvest Hub exemplifies how digital solutions can catalyze decarbonization efforts. By leveraging digital financial technologies, we can efficiently channel investments into critical areas such as sustainable aviation fuel production and green hydrogen development.
16. Let me commend your host country China for its progress in both digital innovation and green aviation. Your achievements, especially those in domestic Sustainable Aviation Fuel production and green hydrogen development, demonstrate the powerful synergy between innovation and sustainability goals.
17. Before concluding, I would like to reiterate that as we move forward, every digital advancement in aviation brings us closer to our environmental goals.
18. ICAO is committed to supporting this transformation. We invite all stakeholders to join us in this crucial endeavor to build an aviation industry that is truly fit for the future – one that embraces digital innovation to achieve our sustainability objectives.
19. Thank you.