



Airlines 2024 Conference – 25 November 2024

Speech by the ICAO Secretary General

1. Since the beginning of my tenure as Secretary General of ICAO, I have stressed the importance of strengthening relations between ICAO and those who have made aviation the success story it is today: our diverse industry partners. And so it is a sincere pleasure to be with you today and share ICAO's vision for the long-term future of the sector.
2. Before I do so, let me turn briefly to the past. In just a few days, ICAO will celebrate the 80th anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention on 7 December 1944. The Convention was negotiated and adopted – with significant contributions from the United Kingdom – whilst World War II continued to rage. It is a Convention which has stood the test of time.
3. The theme of our anniversary is "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future." This phrase captures both our long-standing commitment to safety and our dedication to achieving our zero fatality and net zero emission goals. It is a call to action, embodying the spirit of cooperation that has defined our industry from the very beginning.
4. We recently marked a historic moment. For the first time in 20 years, the ICAO Council adopted a new long-term Strategic Plan for 2026 through to 2050. As we celebrate ICAO's 80th anniversary, this plan aims to empower our collective response to current and future challenges and opportunities in aviation.
5. Our vision is both clear and ambitious: "A safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation system that connects the world for the benefit of all nations and people."
6. This vision is driven by three aspirations:

- i. The goal of Zero fatalities in international aviation from accidents and acts of unlawful interference;
 - ii. The long term global aspirational goal of Net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 for international aviation operations; and
 - iii. The goal of aviation to serve as an integral part of a thriving, connected, accessible, inclusive, and affordable transport system for people and goods, contributing to socio-economic development, while ensuring no country is left behind.
7. To turn these aspirations into reality, we have developed six strategic goals:
 - a) Every flight is safe and secure
 - b) Aviation is environmentally sustainable
 - c) Aviation delivers reliable, accessible, and seamless mobility for all
 - d) No Country is Left Behind
 - e) The International Civil Aviation Convention and other Treaties, Laws and Regulations address all Challenges, and that
 - f) The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All.
8. If you allow me, I would like to elaborate on just some of these points, starting with our unwavering commitment to safety and security. We are leveraging cutting-edge technological advancements and fostering enhanced international cooperation to create a future where every flight is not just safe, but demonstrably secure.
9. Environmental sustainability is of course a key priority for ICAO – many of you have heard me insist on this point before. We recognize the need for aviation growth to meet increasing global demand. But this growth must be sustainable. Our aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 shows our commitment to addressing climate change while fostering the continued development of our industry.

10. As we look to the future of international civil aviation, we must recognize that while safety, security, and environmental protection remain core pillars of our common efforts, aviation's continued success depends on its economic viability. This balance is essential not only to the growth of civil aviation and the efficiency of air transport but also to the global economy, driving the expansion of travel, trade, tourism, and economic opportunities.
11. The "No Country Left Behind" strategic goal remains a cornerstone of our efforts. We are actively restructuring our activities to provide better support for Member States. A key aspect of this is fostering seamless cooperation between ICAO and industry partners to deliver more effective support.
12. However, setting goals is not enough. As an Organization, ICAO needs to equip itself with the right tools to achieve them.
13. So what does that mean for our Organization? It means continuous organizational improvement, striving for positive change, enhancing digitalization for some of our standard making processes so we are more agile in developing and maintaining the crucial Annexes to the Chicago Convention is just one example.
14. It means promoting innovation within ICAO and across the sector.
15. And it means investing in our human capital – making ICAO and the aviation industry a great place to work. That includes comprehensive learning and career development programmes for our staff and making real progress in line with our commitment to attract a diverse, capable new workforce to grow aviation over the coming decades.
16. I know that later today, you will have a focused discussion here on the journey to net zero emissions and so, please allow me to spend a few moments to give my perspectives on this key topic.
17. A year ago, in Dubai, ICAO Member States adopted the ICAO Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF), and other Aviation Cleaner Energies. That Framework sets out a collective global aspirational Vision to reduce CO₂ emissions in international aviation by 5 per cent by 2030 through the use of cleaner energy sources.

18. But to achieve that Vision, the greatest challenge is in the area of the financing of SAF, LCAF and other cleaner energy sources, which are critical enablers for the collective progress toward the LTAG. Closing the financial gap would unlock the establishment of SAF, LCAF and other cleaner energy sources supply chains and generate volumes that would bring the sector closer to the aspirational goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
19. When it comes to financing SAF, LCAF and other cleaner energy sources, the numbers are significant. According to ICAO analysis, we are looking at investments of around 3.2 trillion US dollars by 2050.
20. That is why ICAO is developing the Finvest Hub, an innovative climate financing facilitation measure. Think of it as SAF matchmaking. It will act as a catalyst for multi-stakeholder cooperation to enhance access to financing for decarbonization projects.
21. In this regard, I would also like to highlight that more than 200 States and organizations are now part of ICAO's Assistance, Capacity Building, and Training programme for SAF, known as ACT-SAF.
22. With a range of capacity building activities, we are striving for crucial support for SAF development and deployment, offering training, feasibility studies, business implementation reports, support for SAF certification and policy development, and implementation of specific SAF projects for States.
23. All of these efforts – investing in our people, driving innovation, and strengthening partnerships – are setting the stage for the successful implementation of the 2026-2050 Strategic Plan which I mentioned earlier. I believe they will form the foundation upon which we will build a safer, more secure, and sustainable future for international civil aviation.
24. As we embark on this ambitious journey with our new strategic plan, I want to emphasize that our success relies on our collective efforts and commitment. Everyone in this room plays a pivotal role in making what is a global vision into a day-to-day reality.
25. Today the three industry associations who have organised this conference are putting forward a joint declaration which highlights that we all share the same vision of our common future. This is a powerful statement and on behalf of ICAO, just a few days before we celebrate our 80th anniversary, I would like to say thank you.

26. Together, we have the power to build a future where aviation continues to connect, enrich, and serve all nations and peoples.
27. I am excited by what lies ahead: our continued collaboration in realizing this bold vision for the future of aviation.
28. Thank you once again.