



**Recorded message of the ICAO Secretary General  
Opening of the AFCAC Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Plenary  
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo  
26 November 2024**

1. As Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and on behalf of the President of the ICAO Council, I am privileged to address this Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Plenary Session of the African Civil Aviation Commission at a moment of significant opportunity for African aviation.
2. Our gratitude extends to Your Excellency, President Sassou Nguesso, for your gracious invitation to participate in this prestigious gathering. It is an apt reflection of the Republic of Congo's growing prominence in international aviation.
3. I regret that I was not able to join you personally today as you gather in advance of 25th anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision which I will be pleased to attend on 28 November.
4. This watershed agreement opened new horizons for air transport markets across Africa, demonstrating the foresight of African leaders in advancing the objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063. The Decision remains a powerful example of how regional cooperation holds the possibility of profound transformation for aviation and air services specifically.
5. This year also holds special significance as ICAO and our Member States mark the 80th anniversary since the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Just as the Chicago Convention enabled the dramatic growth of international civil aviation through the provision of a common framework for the safe and orderly development of flight, the Yamoussoukro Decision holds the same promise for Africa through its framework for liberalization. Both agreements exemplify how shared commitments and harmonization can break down barriers to aviation development.
6. This milestone year provides Member States and Organizations an opportunity to build upon these foundational achievements.

7. Seizing this opportunity is nothing short of crucial towards the achievement of the United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, advancing the African Union Agenda 2063, and implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area.
8. In this regard, the evolution of ICAO and AFCAC's partnership, particularly through the 2021 Project Implementation Agreement, reflects our shared commitment to progress. This framework provides AFCAC and the African Development Fund with institutional support for the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) project.
9. It is strong partnerships like these that enabled our organizations to adapt and succeed throughout the significant challenges of the past. Recent years have witnessed the strengthening of our collaboration, particularly in supporting African States across all ICAO Strategic Objectives through coordinated initiatives and technical assistance.
10. These partnerships will continue to serve us as we respond to the imposing and exciting opportunities ahead, which are included in the recently approved new long-term ICAO Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2050.
11. One of the goals in this Strategic Plan embodies the principle that no country should be left behind in aviation development. We are committed to supporting all Member States in implementing international standards, with particular attention to developing nations. This involves customized support programmes, targeted capacity building, and active collaboration between Regional Offices, headquarters, and industry partners to address specific national needs.
12. ICAO Member States have also set an ambitious goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 – a commitment that will reshape the environmental impact of air transport while ensuring its continued growth.
13. We are also fully committed to progress towards achieving our zero fatality from aircraft accidents and acts of unlawful interference aspirational goals.
14. This means that while we pursue the promise of the Yamoussoukro Decision to expand air services here in Africa, we must also look at how new technologies and other innovations can be harnessed to ensure there is no compromise on our safety and sustainability commitments.
15. The 80th anniversary of the Chicago Convention reminds us that we will be building on a proud and unparalleled track record as we do so. It also presents ICAO and all aviation stakeholders with an opportunity to renew our commitment to connecting the world through safe, efficient, and sustainable air transport.

16. As we celebrate these milestones, let me congratulate African States on your achievements, and express confidence in our continued collaboration toward an even stronger future for African aviation.
17. I wish you a very successful plenary session.
18. Thank you.