



**Closing Address**  
**by the Secretary General**  
**of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**  
**Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar**  
**at the closing of**  
**9th African Aviation Week**  
**(Libreville, Gabon, 19 July 2024)**

1. As we conclude five transformative days of the 9th African Aviation Week, I am filled with optimism for the future of aviation in Africa. This event, meticulously organized by ICAO and graciously hosted by Gabon, has surpassed our expectations in fostering collaboration and charting a strong course for progress.
2. I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the Gabonese Republic, Général de Brigade Brice Clotaire OLIGUI NGUEMA, represented here today by Vice President M. Joseph OWONDAULT BERRE, and to the Gabonese Government for their exceptional hospitality and commitment to advancing aviation in Africa. My appreciation also goes to the Heads of Delegations and Directors General of the Civil Aviation, the Chairs of the AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan, and the distinguished Representatives to ICAO, as well as my colleagues from the ICAO Secretariat. Your efficient management and results-driven collaboration have been key to the success of this event.
3. Throughout the week, we have explored the crucial role of aviation in Africa and made important progress on our key goals. The leadership demonstrated by the Directors General in improving African aviation has been nothing short of inspiring. Let's keep this momentum going. Let us harness this energy to build a robust and sustainable future for aviation across the continent.
4. I am particularly encouraged by your full support for ICAO's new long-term Strategic Plan for 2026-2050. This comprehensive plan will enhance our impact in each State and improve performance across all segments of the aviation sector, embodying our commitment to leave no country behind.

5. We have also made great progress in further strengthening our AFI Plan, AFI SECFAL Plan, and the Human Resources Development Fund. The new ad hoc committee we have set up will help these programmes work even better and achieve more in the coming years. I pledge my full support, and that of the entire ICAO Secretariat, to deliver tangible results.
6. I want to thank our partners and donors for their commitment. Your continued support is crucial for these plans to succeed.
7. The strong consensus reached during the symposium on key priorities fills me with great confidence. I believe we are on track for significant improvements in African aviation – encompassing safety, security, efficiency, environmental protection, as well as sustainable economic and social development.
8. A major milestone of this week has been the agreement to establish a new group that combines the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) and the Africa-Indian Ocean Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI) activities, as decided at APIRG/26 & RASG-AFI/9. The new group comes complete with a Procedural Handbook and new Working Methods. We've also planned a smooth transition to avoid disruptions and keep progress on track. This change will help us work more efficiently and effectively across Africa's aviation sector. I commend the Chairs of both Groups and all the stakeholders for this achievement, which will be submitted to the ICAO Council for endorsement.
9. I've been really impressed by the quality of ideas and initiatives presented this week. It shows how dynamic and innovative the aviation industry is in Africa  
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10. Africa is at a turning point. You're ready to improve air connectivity across the continent dramatically. As we do this, we must ensure gender equality and female empowerment – in fact, achieving this goal depends on it. That's why ICAO will continue to lead and encourage stronger commitment from Member States and stakeholders to advance gender equality and women empowerment at the national level.
11. As we transition from AFI Aviation Week to implementation, the real work begins. It is imperative we translate the progress made here into effective policies and actions that deliver real results. ICAO

is fully committed to supporting the development of civil aviation in Africa. We deeply appreciate all the States and organizations contributing to this goal.

12. Once again, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Vice President M. Joseph OWONDAULT BERRE for being here today. Your presence underscores Gabon's commitment to developing aviation as a driver of economic and social progress.
13. Thank you all for your active participation in these five intensive and inspiring days. I also want to express again my sincere appreciation to Gabon for its incredible hospitality.
14. I wish you all safe travels home to your families and loved ones.
15. Thank you.