

Insights from the Secretary General of ICAO

How has ICAO responded to the increasing urgency of climate action, and what progress has been made over the last triennium?

The last triennium has been a period of dynamic transformation for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and international aviation, marked by accelerated progress in sustainability efforts. The latest assessments from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have made it unequivocally clear that human activities — particularly greenhouse gas emissions — have caused global warming. Emissions remain alarmingly high, putting the 1.5°C limit at immediate risk without deep, rapid, and sustained reductions across all sectors.

These findings reinforce the urgency for bold and coordinated action across all sectors, including aviation. ICAO, under the mandate of its 193 Member States, has embraced this responsibility with renewed determination, working closely with governments, industry, and other stakeholders over the past three years to deliver meaningful progress in advancing aviation's transition towards cleaner energies.

A major milestone during this period was the historic adoption of the Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal (LTAG) for international aviation at the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly. The LTAG of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 now stands as a central driver of environmental work in the ICAO Strategic Plan 2026 - 2050, providing a clear long-term vision and anchoring the Organization's efforts to support a sustainable future for international civil aviation.



Could you expand more regarding the tangible progress ICAO has achieved since the adoption of the LTAG?

Since the adoption of the LTAG at the 2022 Assembly, significant progress has been made across multiple areas. By adopting the ICAO Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF) and other Aviation Cleaner Energies, ICAO and its Member States agreed to strive to achieve a collective global aspirational Vision to reduce CO₂ emissions in international aviation by 5 percent by 2030, through the use of aviation cleaner energies. The Global Framework is underpinned by four Building Blocks — Policy and Planning, Regulatory

Framework, Implementation Support, and Financing — guiding ICAO's collaborative work with the aerospace sector to ensure that our shared vision for aviation decarbonization becomes reality.

ICAO has been advancing with the full-scale implementation of the Roadmap for achieving the LTAG and Global Framework, providing structured, inclusive, and progressive pathways for emissions reductions through the deployment of such cleaner energies worldwide. Notably, the ACT-SAF Programme has been instrumental in supporting the global scale-up of SAF, LCAF and other cleaner energies with a strong emphasis on capacity-building for developing countries. Simultaneously, the launch of the ICAO Finvest Hub is poised to mobilize critical financing for aviation decarbonization projects. Progress has also continued through the development of the monitoring and reporting methodology to support the LTAG tracking, and the continued robust implementation of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

At a more technical level, ICAO's environmental work streams have also achieved notable results during this period. These include the refinement of life-cycle assessment methodologies for SAF, and the development of integrated noise-CO₂ stringency standards for aeroplanes. Parallel initiatives have advanced ICAO's work on non-CO₂ climate effects, airport and operation-related environmental measures, and climate adaptation strategies, further reinforcing the sector's collective progress toward achieving wider environmental objectives.

How does ICAO promote innovation in aviation environmental protection, and how are outreach activities helping to accelerate progress?

Innovation continues to be at the core of ICAO's environmental strategy. Through the annual ICAO LTAG Stocktaking events and dedicated innovation seminars, ICAO has provided vital platforms for States and stakeholders to exchange knowledge, showcase technological advances, and foster collaboration on cutting-edge solutions. These outreach activities also reinforce the strong spirit of partnership that drives ICAO's initiatives. By creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and information-sharing, ICAO helps ensure that innovations are not only developed

but also widely disseminated across all regions and actors of aviation.

Building on these efforts, ICAO held its first-ever Non-CO₂ Emissions Symposium in 2024, and brought together experts from industry, academia, governments, and international organizations to explore scientific developments, measurement techniques, and mitigation strategies related to non-CO₂ climate effects from aviation. The Symposium underscored the importance of enhancing scientific understanding and integrating new knowledge into ICAO's work on environmental protection, recognizing the broader climate impacts of aviation and supporting a more holistic and evidence-based approach to sustainability.

Innovation and aviation's cleaner energy transition requires significant financial investment. How is ICAO helping to bridge the gap to facilitate access to financing opportunities?

Financing aviation decarbonization is a global challenge that requires global solutions. The Organization recognizes that many States, particularly developing countries, face specific hurdles in mobilizing the resources needed to scale up cleaner energy deployment and innovative technologies. ICAO's leadership in this area is firmly rooted in its commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and building practical pathways for States and stakeholders to participate fully in aviation's cleaner energy transition.

To help bridge the critical gap between innovation and financing, ICAO launched the Finvest Hub initiative to facilitate access to funding, by matchmaking aviation decarbonization projects with potential public and private funds and investors. The Finvest Hub will feature a knowledge platform of financing sources, project opportunities, and matchmaking mechanisms. ICAO is intensifying advocacy and outreach efforts to expand the Finvest Hub's reach, engaging with multilateral development banks, private financing institutions, and international organizations.

The signing of a landmark Memorandum of Cooperation between ICAO and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in October 2024 exemplifies this approach, leveraging synergies to enhance access to climate finance

through innovative platforms such as IRENA's Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) platform. Through these collective efforts, ICAO is not only advancing its Global Framework for Cleaner Energies but also ensuring that the momentum behind aviation cleaner energy transition is matched by real, tangible opportunities for financing the sector's sustainable transformation.

As ICAO continues to advance aviation's environmental goals, what is the pathway forward, and what will be essential to ensure the continued success?

The achievements of the 2023–2025 triennium reflect the collective determination of the international aviation

community to address the challenges of climate change, local air quality, and noise with practical and forward-looking solutions. However, the journey ahead requires even deeper cooperation, greater investment, and stronger partnerships among States, industry, and all stakeholders.

Aviation connects the world — and it must do so in a sustainable manner. ICAO calls upon the global community to continue working together with resolve and ambition, to ensure that international aviation remains a driver of economic growth, peace and cultural exchange, and sustainable development for generations to come.

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