



**Chicago Extraordinary Council Session Opening Remarks by  
the Secretary of  
the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar**

*(Chicago, USA – 5 December 2024, Thursday, 9:05 AM Local Time)*

Mr President, Distinguished Council representatives, honoured guests, Secretariat colleagues - good morning.

1. Today is of course an opportunity to consider what ICAO and our industry should look like when it comes to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the year 2044. But before looking to the future, let me turn briefly to the past. The Chicago Convention, negotiated and adopted whilst World War II continued to rage, has stood the test of time. The theme of our anniversary - "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future" - reflects our long-standing aspirations and dedication to achieving our zero fatality and net zero carbon emissions goals. It is a call to action in the enduring spirit of cooperation that has defined our industry since its inception.
2. And the Long-Term Strategic Plan that we unveiled last month charts an ambitious course for aviation from now until 2050. It reflects both our highest aspirations and our practical determination to achieve them.
3. At its core are six strategic goals that will shape aviation's future. We commit to ensuring every flight is safe and secure – building on our remarkable safety and security record while adapting to new technologies and emerging risks and threats. We pledge to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 – evolving aviation from a contributor to climate change into a leader in sustainable transport.
4. We will deliver seamless, accessible, and reliable mobility for all – breaking down barriers and creating a truly inclusive aviation system. We will ensure a robust and adaptable international legal framework for our sector, able to face new and emerging challenges. And through our unwavering commitment to leaving no country behind, we will ensure these benefits are shared equitably across our global community.

5. However, setting goals is not enough. As an Organization, ICAO needs to equip itself with the right tools to achieve them. This means continuous organizational improvement, striving for positive change. It means promoting innovation within ICAO and across the sector. 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. But I always wish to underline our commitment to attracting a diverse, inclusive and capable new workforce to grow aviation over the coming decades.
6. I would like to see an efficient use of resources. I would like to see our enhanced implementation support approach helping States build capacity where it is needed most. I would like to see our strengthened partnerships with industry and stakeholders creating new pathways for innovation and investment.
7. It is clear that we need to embrace the transformative role of technology in aviation's future. From sustainable aviation fuels to artificial intelligence, from advanced air mobility to new approaches to air traffic management –innovation must be integrated into our way of thinking and working, all the while ensuring that the needs of all our Member States are met.
8. Before I conclude, I have the honour of sharing a message from the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, who unfortunately could not be with us today but who has sent his reflections on this historic occasion:

“I congratulate the International Civil Aviation Organization on the 80th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Across the decades, your organization, which the Convention established, has expanded dramatically, from 54 nations gathered in Chicago in 1944 to a membership of 193 today.

ICAO now stands as a powerful example of multilateralism in action.

Your organization is also a reminder of aviation’s importance to our world - connecting people, supporting livelihoods, sustaining economies, and supporting humanitarian responses to emergencies, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The history of the aviation sector is also a tale of resilience and adaptability. Today, aviation faces one of its greatest challenges: addressing the climate crisis. Accounting for around 2% of global carbon dioxide emissions, aviation is one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonize. But with innovation and investment, it can be done.

The ICAO's new Long-Term Strategic Plan points the way. The plan's emphasis on prioritizing concrete emissions reduction over offsets, environmental protection, and capacity building - particularly through the

"No Country Left Behind" initiative – aligns with the 2030 Agenda. And I commend ICAO's leadership to achieve net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

Turning these goals into reality will require rapid action.

Carbon pricing, low-carbon fuel standards, and subsidies for the production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels will be vital, as well as steering public and private investments toward technological innovation.

Today, as we commemorate your milestone anniversary, let us recommit to a safe, sustainable and prosperous aviation sector for all humanity.”

9. Like the visionaries who gathered in this room 80 years ago, we face many challenges and opportunities. They created a framework that transformed aviation from an instrument of war into a force for peace and prosperity. Today, we must transform it again – making it efficient and accessible, sustainable and inclusive.
10. Together, we can achieve these ambitious goals. Together we can ensure that aviation continues to connect and serve all of humanity.
11. Thank you.