



**Closing Remarks by the
ICAO Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the ICCAIA Annual General Meeting and Conference 2025
27 March 2025**

1. Thank you for inviting me to deliver the closing remarks to your Annual General Meeting and Conference 2025. I am pleased to build on some of the themes the Council President addressed yesterday while sharing my perspective on our collaborative path forward.
2. I commend your remarkable achievements in maintaining the highest levels of safety and security while driving sustainable growth. Your industry leadership, working in partnership with governments worldwide, is essential to achieving our shared vision of zero fatalities and zero-carbon emissions in the international air transport sector.
3. For 80 years, ICAO and industry have collaborated toward a shared purpose. While our foundation lies in the 1944 Chicago Convention, our vision has evolved to meet today's challenges. As articulated in our new Long-term Strategic Plan, we envision a safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation system that connects the world for the benefit of all nations and people. This vision reflects three core aspirations: zero fatalities in air

accidents, net-zero carbon emissions, and accessible, inclusive, and affordable air services for all.

4. To realize this vision, ICAO's mission is to lead international civil aviation as a key driver of social and economic development. We enhance aviation safety, security, and environmental sustainability within a growing global system by advancing air law, developing policies and standards, monitoring implementation, and supporting State capabilities — all for the benefit of nations and people worldwide.
5. This mission can only be fulfilled through an enduring partnership between ICAO, industry, and governments — a relationship characterized by intensive consultation and balanced consensus among all stakeholders who have a direct stake in aviation's future.

The ICAO Long-term strategic plan

6. This September, we will present our Strategic Plan to the 42nd ICAO Assembly, where our 193 Member States will deliberate on strengthening our common path forward. The technical insights and industry leadership demonstrated during your conference these past three days will contribute to the Assembly's deliberations.

7. To operationalize our vision and mission, the Strategic Plan establishes six interconnected goals that will guide our work through 2050. These goals translate our aspirations into concrete objectives, creating a framework that ensures *No country is Left Behind* as aviation continues to evolve. Let me share these goals and how they relate to our partnership with industry.
8. First, every flight is safe and secure. Your Safety Workshop discussions highlighted two critical aspects, supporting regional safety initiatives and embracing new technologies. These insights will help us develop standards and recommended practices that both foster innovation and guarantee continuous safety improvement
9. Second, aviation is environmentally sustainable.
10. Success in environmental sustainability depends on unique agreements reached through ICAO's consensus-building processes. Your Cross-Industry Panel on Non-CO2 impacts offered valuable contributions to this process, helping forge a workable path forward on this complex priority. Just as with our existing environmental frameworks, any future agreement will recognize and protect aviation's essential economic role while advancing our environmental objectives.
11. Achieving our environmental goal requires both policy harmonization and new technology investments. Your Leaders Forum showcased the critical partnership between public and private sectors in this effort. Together we can

accelerate progress towards net-zero carbon emissions for international aviation by 2050. This collaborative approach will also help us minimize aircraft noise and reduce non-CO2 emissions to the lowest levels possible.

12. Achieving our environmental sustainability goal will require significant adaptations to aviation operations and infrastructure. Sustainable aviation fuels, new aircraft technologies, and optimized air traffic management all demand industry innovation. Your expertise in implementing these practical solutions will be essential to meeting our sustainability commitments.
13. Third, aviation delivers seamless, accessible, and reliable mobility for all.
14. ICAO continues to collaborate with industry in developing standards and recommended practices that facilitate smooth air navigation and travel through airports and borders. We constantly evolve these standards and practices to reduce operational complexity and costs for operators while enhancing the customer experience.
15. Beyond standards development, we are coordinating global efforts to modernize airspace management. This work is especially crucial given today's rapid technological evolution in areas like autonomous flight and unmanned traffic management. By developing appropriate frameworks and harmonized procedures, ICAO ensures these emerging technologies can be safely integrated while supporting our goal of seamless, accessible mobility for all air transport users.

16. Fourth, No Country Left Behind. This foundational goal recognizes that a global aviation system functions effectively only when all Member States can participate fully.
17. ICAO leads collaboration and cooperation efforts for continuous capacity building, enabling the achievement of safety, security, efficiency, and sustainability goals worldwide. Your Industry Priorities session demonstrated how manufacturers and operators contribute to this mission by helping overcome resource limitations in infrastructure, finance, training, and supply chain access – especially in developing countries. This ensures the benefits of aviation are enjoyed by all people, regardless of where they live.
18. Fifth, we ensure the International Civil Aviation Convention and other treaties, laws and regulations address all challenges. This goal recognizes that our legal foundations must evolve alongside our rapidly changing industry.
19. ICAO continuously adapts international aviation law to address current and emerging challenges. This legal foundation provides the stability businesses need for long-term planning while creating the flexibility to address new operational realities. Your continued engagement helps ensure these frameworks reflect real-world industry needs and opportunities as we move toward ICAO's centenary and beyond.

20. Sixth, the economic development of air transport assures the delivery of economic prosperity and societal well-being for all. This goal emphasizes aviation's role as a critical driver of global economic growth and human development.
21. Together, we will build a resilient economically viable, and affordable civil aviation system that brings measurable benefits to all people, supporting every Member State and expanding commercial opportunities for operators and manufacturers. Your innovations in efficiency, sustainability, and accessibility directly contribute to this goal by making air transport more viable and beneficial worldwide.
22. To achieve these six strategic goals, I now want to address the critical enablers that will support their implementation.
23. For our plan to succeed, we have identified four fundamental enablers that require our immediate attention.
24. First, ICAO must continue improving as an organization. We have already implemented several new digital platforms to make us more efficient, and we are streamlining internal processes to make us more effective. This momentum needs to be sustained and built upon.
25. Second, we must embrace innovation across everything we do. New technologies and practices are transforming aviation, creating both

opportunities and challenges. Our Innovation Strategy helps Member States harness these advances in ways that deliver practical benefits throughout the global aviation system. By encouraging creative solutions throughout ICAO's work, we're enhancing both efficiency and effectiveness while supporting all our Strategic Goals.

26. Third, we must address the critical aviation workforce challenges through our Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative. With projected industry growth between 2026-2050, we face unprecedented personnel demands across all specialties. Meeting these needs requires tapping into all available talent pools. Women — who currently represent only 5% of the global aviation workforce — are a crucial demographic for filling this gap. The ICCAIA fireside chat highlighted how providing equal access to training and development can create the qualified, merit-based workforce our industry requires. This approach is about expanding our talent pipeline to ensure aviation has the skilled professionals necessary for future growth.
27. Fourth, we must leverage partnerships, intensify resource mobilization, and utilize financing tools to amplify ICAO's impact. This enabler is critical to strengthening our capacity to deliver on all the strategic goals.
28. Today, I am asking for your help to advocate for continued political and financial support for ICAO's ambitious 25-year vision among governments worldwide. Your associations' relationships with governments and regulators position you well to amplify our message and highlight the value of our

frameworks. While industry cannot ensure government actions, your informed advocacy creates powerful reinforcement for ICAO's diplomatic efforts.

29. As part of this effort, ICAO is developing innovative funding solutions to meet the industry's evolving needs. A prime example is our Finvest Hub — a global platform connecting aviation sustainability projects with investors worldwide. This platform will facilitate funding for sustainable aviation fuel production, clean energy infrastructure, and decarbonization initiatives, helping scale up SAF production and providing airlines with more energy choices.
30. We are launching the Finvest Hub recognizing that aviation's sustainability success — whether initiatives established by industry or standards decided by States — depends on strong partnerships and accessible funding, particularly for developing States. Your industry expertise and government relationships will be invaluable in maximizing this platform's impact.
31. In closing, I want to emphasize that our industry partners are integral to everything I have discussed today.
32. Aviation stands at the cusp of unprecedented market expansion and technological revolution — as your discussions these past days have highlighted. Yet we face a serious challenge. A severe funding shortfall at ICAO threatens to undermine decades of safety progress and market development.

It directly threatens the \$3.5 trillion global aviation ecosystem, where safety and economic growth are inextricably linked.

33. This funding gap affects everything from our Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, our early warning system for safety risks, to our ability to develop standards for Advanced Air Mobility, coordinate responses to GNSS interference, and support environmental initiatives like our Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal, ACT-SAF, and the FINVEST Hub.
34. For emerging economies seeking to leverage aviation for economic development, ICAO's capacity to provide implementation support and technical guidance is essential. Without it, we risk creating a widening gap between established and emerging aviation markets, effectively denying many regions aviation's benefits just as technological innovations could accelerate their development.
35. Your discussions here in Montreal will directly inform our work at the 42nd Assembly. The technical contributions you have provided demonstrate industry's commitment to aviation's sustainable future and strengthen the foundation for State decision-making.
36. Between now and the Assembly, I encourage all of us to consider how we can deepen our cooperation to ensure these deliberations translate into meaningful action for air transport's future.

37. Thank you for this opportunity. I wish everyone success in tomorrow's workshops and safe travels home.