



**Opening Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the AFI Aviation Symposium
at the Tenth African Aviation Week (AFI Week)
*Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 27 May 2025***

1. I am honoured to welcome you to the AFI Aviation Symposium, which is a major highlight of the AFI Aviation Week. This year's remarkable turnout is a fitting tribute to this milestone tenth edition of the AFI Aviation Week.
2. Your collective presence here is a reflection of the depth and strength of collaboration and shared vision for aviation in and for Africa.
3. Allow me to first express my heartfelt appreciation to the Republic of Zimbabwe for graciously hosting us at Victoria Falls. I am sure the beauty of this setting will inspire our discussions and ambitions.
4. This Symposium will discuss various initiatives in and for Africa, share success stories and challenges, and develop strategies to further enhance aviation performance in the region.
5. The symposium will also discuss the Africa and Indian Ocean region's aviation future in the context of ICAO's new Strategic Plan for 2026-2050 and Business Plan for 2026 - 2028.
6. The Strategic Plan is designed to fully enable international civil aviation as a key driver of social and economic development, while ensuring environmental sustainability. It will structure and guide States' long-term commitment to aviation as a strategic and essential catalyst for sustainable development.

7. Over the past 80 years, we have been very successful in fostering aviation safety as a catalyst for the exponential growth of international air traffic. However, that growth was not always globally inclusive or geographically balanced.
8. Now we are looking toward 2050, when we expect to serve over twelve-point-four billion passengers. Most of that growth is forecast to happen in emerging markets, where its impacts will be most strongly felt. ICAO is committed to ensuring that African nations have every opportunity to benefit.
9. That is why our new vision calls for: "A safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation system that connects the world for the benefit of *all* nations and people."
10. It aims to ensure that aviation is as an integral part of a thriving, connected transport system that leaves *No* Country Behind. It will also drive progress towards zero fatalities in international aviation, and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
11. We are already well on the road towards achieving this, and in this regard, I wish to express our deep gratitude to our partners.
12. Your very significant contributions, which extend well beyond the financial aspects, are crucial, generous, and highly appreciated by everyone present here today.
13. I want to express special recognition the AFI AND AFI SECFAL Plans Donors, namely China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Türkiye, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the United States' FAA and TSA, along with the European Union, the EASA, Airbus, Boeing, , and Bombardier.
14. There are also many other States and organizations pledging support in different manners to whom we are equally grateful.
15. This includes the essential support provided to other AFI implementation support programmes, such as the AFI-Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI-CIS) and Facilitation Cooperative Experts Scheme (AFI-CES), the African Flight Procedures Programme, and the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA Programme).

16. States are also providing very significant support to the implementation of Plans by releasing experts to beneficiary States at no expense. Here, I would like to express our gratitude to Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.
17. Now, the Symposium's agenda is both rich and carefully targeted, designed to develop African solutions and strategies that align your continent with the global plan for aviation's future.
18. Together, we will forge new initiatives to enhance aviation safety *in* Africa,
19. We will advance the development of robust air navigation infrastructure and services *for* Africa, and we will strengthen our response to emerging security threats while improving facilitation processes *throughout* Africa.
20. We will also future proof African aviation.
21. We will seek to optimize air transport connectivity for sustainable economic development, advance feasibility studies for sustainable aviation fuel implementation, and accelerate progress towards gender equality through the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals programme.
22. In short, the symposium will address the foundations of a more resilient, sustainable, and future-ready aviation sector in Africa, and the ways to build them.
23. I invite you to keep front of mind that your contributions will be instrumental in shaping the roadmap for our collective progress. This symposium offers a strategic opportunity to reaffirm our commitments and to take bold steps forward, together.
24. I now wish you successful and productive deliberations.
25. I look forward to reviewing the outcomes, which I am confident will provide valuable insights for enhancing the development of aviation in Africa.
26. Thank you for your kind attention.