



**Address by the
ICAO Secretary General
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the First Meeting of the Steering Committee of the AFI Plans
during the Tenth African Aviation Week
(Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe)
Thursday, 28 May 2025**

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the First Meeting of the Steering Committee of the AFI Plans. These are the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa - the AFI Plan - and the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa - the AFI SECFAL Plan. We aptly meet here in Victoria Falls, a destination that demonstrates the power of air connectivity to unlock Africa's potential.
2. This meeting is significant as it is our first time meeting as a joint committee, following the adoption of the Governance Structure report. This unified approach positions us to better coordinate our efforts and present a compelling case to development partners who share our vision of strengthening African aviation.
3. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Ad Hoc Committee and the Plans Steering Committee for their excellent collaboration and their achievements.
4. Combining the governance structures of these three initiatives will improve oversight and allow better alignment with ICAO policies and regional priorities.
5. Importantly, it creates a single, coherent platform for resource mobilisation. Development partners will see a unified African aviation agenda with clear priorities and better use of our resources, leading to better decision-making, more efficient implementation across the continent, and stronger partnerships with those who invest in Africa's future.
6. I would like to reiterate ICAO's commitment to work closely with the new structures to achieve our common goals and objectives.

7. At this meeting, we will build the foundation for sustained progress across three regional programmes.
8. We will review the AFI Plan, the AFI SECFAL Plan, and the HRDF.
9. The Steering Committee will review several items: the progress on decisions from the thirteenth AFI SECFAL Plan meeting, our 2025 work programme, current finances, the 2026 work programme and projects, and the AFI SECFAL Plan Document for 2024 to 2030.
10. This review will highlight the remarkable progress we have achieved in aviation safety, security, and facilitation across the continent over recent years, demonstrating the many positive outcomes of cooperation between African States and partner organizations.
11. These outcomes are supporting the achievement of both the Global Aviation Safety Plan Targets and the Abuja Safety Targets. On that point, I am pleased to confirm that many African States have greatly improved their safety systems, as shown by their higher Effective Implementation scores under the ICAO USOAP programme.
12. Our projects are also moving forward steadily. These include work on airport certification, state safety programme implementation, oversight fundamentals, and aeronautical information management as well as technical training.
13. You will hear detailed updates on these projects during our meeting.
14. In addition to the obvious direct benefits, the progress we have achieved provides us with a very credible foundation for approaching development partners for the next phase of our work. We are building on proven success to chart an even more ambitious course for the future.
15. ICAO's Office of Internal Oversight has confirmed the value of the AFI Plan through a detailed evaluation. The Office looked at the programme's design, relevance, management, and governance. Based on their recommendations, we have prepared several improvements to strengthen the programme even further. We will share these proposals with you today.
16. And looking forward, the ICAO Council and the Forty-first Assembly have supported extending the AFI Plan. We have prepared a new Programme Document for 2025 to 2030, which we will also present for your consideration and approval.

17. We will also cover our review of the Strategy and Roadmap for an AFI Regional Safety Oversight Organization. We worked with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency on a feasibility study, and validated it at our workshop in Kampala, Uganda, last month. We will present those results today and discuss how to align them with Africa's policies.
18. We will also look at ICAO's aviation infrastructure gap analysis and traffic forecasts for Africa. ICAO worked on this with the African Union Commission, helping to collect and analyze data. I am pleased to announce that the Aviation Infrastructure Gap Analysis Report is now available. Now, we will continue working with the Commission to develop viable projects based on what we found.
19. We are working on the human resources gap too. In this regard, I would like to highlight the significance of the several training programmes we have started under the HRDF. At this meeting, we will be presenting our training plans for the rest of this year, as well as for 2026.
20. Finally, I would also like to highlight that the landmark Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport was adopted in April this year. This Declaration has provided momentum toward our shared priorities in this particularly crucial area.
21. The achievement of the Doha Declaration was built on the groundwork laid at our Regional Facilitation Forum in Yaoundé. African States and partners came together there to shape a common vision. The Declaration now provides us with clear direction to strengthen security and facilitation across Africa.
22. We are encouraging all States and stakeholders to continue promoting facilitation and its benefits in your countries.
23. Your successful advocacy has seen the number of African States in the ICAO Public Key Directory grow from three members in 2015, to twenty-one today.
24. In closing now, let me reiterate that the path forward requires sustained commitment and strategic partnerships.
25. We need to strengthen the partnerships across all States, regional and global organizations, and industry stakeholders. We also need to increase our joint technical work. But most importantly, we

must present a unified voice to the international community - one that articulates Africa's aviation priorities clearly and demonstrates our readiness to deliver results with the right support.

26. Your discussions over these days will shape how we engage with development partners and mobilise the resources Africa needs to achieve its aviation potential. I wish you productive deliberations as we work together to advance air transport throughout Africa and build the partnerships that will sustain our progress.

27. Thank you.