



**Speech by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation 2024**

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*Honorable Prime Minister of India,
Shri Narendra Modi,
Honorable Ministers for Civil Aviation from the Asia and Pacific Region,
Your Excellencies,
Namaste.*

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to you Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for gracing this historic Conference. Your presence underscores the vital role of civil aviation in the economic and social development of India and of the Asia Pacific region.

Yesterday and today, we engaged in interesting discussions about the future of aviation in this dynamic part of the world. In particular, I underlined that this Region is recovering well from the unprecedented challenges of the global pandemic, reaching and even exceeding pre-pandemic traffic levels. I also recalled that ICAO forecast envisages in Asia-Pacific an average passenger traffic growth rate of 9% per year in the next 5 years compared with an approximately 6.1% world average growth rate.

Today, we must stand ready to transform those discussions into concrete actions through the adoption of the Delhi Declaration.

As we prepare to take this significant step, I would like to highlight the challenges but also the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

In this regard, I wish to mention three high level priorities for ICAO. First priority is to continue to pursue high levels of safety and security. We must remain focused on enhancing these fundamental aspects of aviation, not allowing ourselves to become complacent when we consider the very positive statistics. In fact, the recently issued ICAO Safety Report for scheduled commercial air travel in 2023 shows that the fatality rate dropped to 17 people per billion passengers in 2023, down from 50 people per billion passengers in 2022.

This data is very promising. However, each aviation accident is one too many. For this reason, ICAO has set the aspirational goal to reach zero fatalities from aviation accidents and acts of unlawful interference.

Additionally, as I mentioned yesterday, ICAO audits under the USOAP programme in this region shows that there is a need to work together to improve the level of implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices in several countries.

In this regard, we have to work on capacity building. ICAO is committed to address the diverse needs and resources of different States.

Second priority is Environmental sustainability. After having adopted at the 41st ICAO Assembly the global Long Term Aspirational Goal of net-zero CO₂ aviation emissions by 2050, ICAO is now leading several initiatives to achieve this Goal. The third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in November last year in Dubai marked a significant step forward with the adoption of a Global Framework for SAF and LCAF and cleaner energies. The global target to achieve a 5% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030. In this regard, I wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge and express appreciation for the great engagement of many Asia-Pacific States in the development and production of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF). Of course, I would be remiss if here in New Delhi I would not mention the political determination and the important investments on SAF production. ICAO commends India for its proactive approach in this endeavour.

The third priority for the development of air transport is to capture the best opportunities offered by innovation and new technologies. Just last week the 14th ICAO Air Navigation Conference was successfully concluded outlining how innovation and new technologies can improve safety and air navigation performances.

Future of air navigation includes unmanned aircraft systems and commercial space operations. They create exciting possibilities for aviation and we are eager to explore these new frontiers.

Additionally, this week ICAO is holding in Montreal the first ever Advanced Air Mobility Symposium with an exposition of many vehicles or projects which are ready to operate with passengers on board. This is one of the new frontiers which is becoming reality.

As we celebrate ICAO's 80th anniversary, eighty years from the signing of the Chicago Convention on 7 December 1944, these priorities take on special significance. They represent ICAO's vision for the future of aviation—a future where safety, efficiency, and sustainability are the hallmarks of the aviation industry.

In this spirit of progress, I would like to congratulate India and Prime Minister Modi for the aggressive aviation plans. Just an example, amongst many, is the upcoming Jewar International Airport that will be operational in 2025, With six-runways, this airport will be the largest in India's history. It exemplifies the visionary aviation infrastructure that will support the growing demand for air travel in this region.

Projects like Jewar International Airport showcase the immense potential of aviation to drive economic growth and social progress.

As we prepare to adopt the Delhi Declaration, let us embrace these principles of innovation and progress. This declaration will guide the implementation of ICAO global plans in the APAC region, focusing on Aviation Safety, Air Navigation Services, Environmental sustainability, Security and Facilitation. It represents a major milestone in the development of civil aviation in this region. I am confident that together, we will fulfill the declaration's ambitious goals.

Your dedication to fostering innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness sets an inspiring example for the global aviation community.

Honourable Prime Minister, Distinguished Ministers, our decisions today will have impact far beyond this conference room. They will contribute to shape the future of aviation not just in this region, but globally. And, as we adopt the Delhi Declaration and celebrate ICAO's 80th anniversary, let us reaffirm our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and progress.

Our collective efforts are not just about connecting people and driving commerce - they're about creating a global air transport system that embodies our shared commitment to support social and economic development of our world.