

IATA/NACC Aviation Day Canada
Opening Remarks by
Peter Cerda, IATA Regional Vice President The Americas
Ottawa, 08 October 2026

- Good morning, everyone.
- Before we begin today's discussions on connectivity, growth, and the future of aviation,
 - I'd like to reflect on an example of what our industry represents at its very best.
- Last month marked the 25th anniversary of September 11, one of the darkest days in aviation history.
- When North American airspace suddenly closed, thousands of passengers found themselves stranded far from home.
- In the small community of Gander, nearly 7,000 travelers arrived unexpectedly aboard 38 diverted aircraft.
- In a moment defined by fear and uncertainty, the people of Gander opened their homes, schools, and community centers to strangers.
- They showed us something extraordinary: that when faced with adversity, people can choose collaboration over division, compassion over fear, and humanity over self-interest.
- Today, as we navigate geopolitical uncertainty, economic pressures, and growing polarization around the world, that lesson remains as relevant as ever.
- Canada understands the value of connectivity.
- In a country as vast as this one, aviation is not simply transportation.
- It is an economic enabler, a social connector, and for many communities, an essential service.

- It links remote communities to healthcare, education, and opportunity.
- It allows businesses to reach global markets. It supports tourism, trade, and investment.
 - And it connects Canada to itself and to the world.
- The latest IATA Value of Air Transport report highlights aviation's contribution to Canada:
 - The aviation sector supports more than 830,000 jobs and generates approximately CAD\$137 billion in economic output.
- These are impressive figures.
- But behind every statistic is a human story: a family reunited, a student pursuing an education, a business reaching new customers, or a community receiving vital supplies.
- That is the real value of aviation.
- And it is why gatherings like Aviation Day Canada are so important.
- Today, more than 300 leaders from across the aviation ecosystem are joining us.
- The breadth of expertise in this room reminds us that no organization can address the opportunities and challenges facing our industry alone.
- Progress happens when we work together and there are important issues before us.
- How do we strengthen Canada's competitiveness in an increasingly challenging global environment?
- How do we maintain affordable air travel while investing in the infrastructure required for future growth?
- How do we improve the passenger experience while ensuring accountability throughout the travel journey?

- How do we advance sustainability while remaining economically realistic?
- And how do we ensure that rural, remote, and northern communities remain connected?
- These are complex questions. But they all share a common answer: collaboration.
- We have already seen examples of what collaboration can achieve.
- Earlier this year, the Sustainable Aviation Task Force released its Sustainable Aviation Fuel Blueprint,
 - providing an important roadmap for the development of a Canadian SAF industry.
- Success will require government, fuel producers, airports, manufacturers, and airlines working together toward a shared objective.
- The same applies to supply chain challenges.
- Across the industry, shortages of aircraft parts, engines, and maintenance capacity continue to constrain growth and drive higher costs.
- Efforts to create greater competition and flexibility across aviation supply chains are important steps forward
 - because a stronger and more efficient ecosystem benefits everyone.
- The same principle applies to infrastructure.
- Canada is entering a significant period of airport modernization and investment. These investments are necessary and welcome.
- But they must be guided by three principles: they should be demand-driven, cost-efficient, and developed in close partnership with those who ultimately pay for them, passengers and airlines.
 - Affordability matters.

- Competitiveness matters.
 - And maintaining Canada's position as a globally connected nation requires balancing future ambitions with economic realities.
- This conversation naturally extends to airport governance and regulation.
- There can be healthy debate about ownership models and funding mechanisms.
- But regardless of the model pursued, the objective should remain the same:
 - delivering value to passengers, supporting economic growth, enhancing infrastructure, and maintaining competitiveness.
- The focus should not be ownership. The focus should be on outcomes.
- Success should be measured by whether Canadians are better connected, whether passengers receive better service,
 - whether airlines can compete effectively, and whether Canada's economy continues to grow.
- We welcome the Government's commitment to improving the affordability of air travel.
- For many years, IATA has highlighted that taxes, fees, and costs have contributed to making Canada one of the world's more expensive aviation markets.
- As discussions continue regarding the future of airport governance and long-term concession models,
 - we encourage a clear distinction between commercial agreements and public policy objectives.
- Protecting consumers, ensuring accountability, and shaping the strategic direction of the sector should remain matters of legislation and public oversight,
 - supported by strong and independent regulation.

- That approach provides clarity, transparency, and greater confidence for all stakeholders.
- IATA stands ready to contribute its global experience and expertise throughout that process.
- Ultimately, every topic we will discuss today, whether infrastructure, sustainability, passenger rights, or connectivity, comes back to one fundamental principle.
 - Collaboration. Collaboration between airlines and airports.
 - Between industry and government.
 - Between regulators and operators.
 - Between public policy and private investment.
- And most importantly, between people.
- Because aviation has always been about connecting people.
- I hope today's discussions are constructive, ambitious, and forward-looking
- to strengthen Canadian aviation.
- And if there is one lesson we can take from Gander, it is this:
- When people come together with a shared purpose, extraordinary things can happen.
- Thank you for your commitment to Canadian aviation, thank you for being here today, and thank you for helping keep Canada connected.
- To conclude, I am pleased to share a short video highlighting the value aviation creates for Canada and communities around the world.
- Have a wonderful conference.