



ICAO WELCOMES ITU FREQUENCY ALLOCATION DECISION

MONTRÉAL, 13 NOVEMBER 2015 – The Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Dr. Fang Liu, today welcomed the positive outcome on ICAO frequency allocation position for global flight tracking at the International Telecommunication Union’s (ITU’s) 15th World Radiocommunication Conference in Geneva (WRC-15).

“Safety is aviation’s number one priority,” stressed Dr. Liu, “and ICAO is therefore very much encouraged by the positive support our global tracking position has received at WRC-15. The allocation of frequencies enabling satellite-based ADS-B provides a very important piece in the global flight tracking solution which ICAO and the aviation community have been working toward, and will now help it to become a practical and cost-effective reality over remote and high seas airspace.”

ADS-B, or automatic dependent surveillance – broadcast, is an ICAO-standardized technology whereby aircraft can broadcast position reports on the 1090 MHz frequency. ADS-B, in principle, provides all the information required for global flight tracking. A significant limitation, however, was that its broadcasts could only be received by ground stations within line of sight of an aircraft. With a new satellite constellation currently being deployed capable of capturing ADS-B reports from aircraft located in polar, oceanic and other remote areas, and then re-broadcasting them to GFT ground systems, the global air transport community saw an opportunity to leverage and complement existing ADS-B aircraft capabilities for global tracking without requiring aircraft retrofits.

The ITU’s positive decision clears the hurdle related to an earth-to-space aeronautical mobile satellite (route) service (AMS(R)S) allocation and opens the way for new capabilities and a new approach to the tracking of global flights.

“Our Organization, since its inception, has worked very closely with the ITU to ensure that civil aviation frequency spectrum requirements are met through appropriate allocations, and this latest ITU decision will now greatly assist our plans to introduce a comprehensive Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System,” remarked Dr. Liu. “This proactive support from the radio regulatory community will only improve the ability of the global aviation community, States, and operators to protect the lives of aircraft passengers and crew.”