



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu**

**to the United Nations summit
for the adoption of the
post-2015 development agenda**

(New York, 25–27 September 2015)

*Secretary-General, Co-Chairs,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,*

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a tremendous honour for me to be here in New York, and to address this plenary as the newly-appointed Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
2. ICAO welcomes the significant progress made to adopt the United Nations' Post-2015 Development Agenda. I am certain that, once agreed by this distinguished body, it will contribute greatly to our common goals supporting the eradication of poverty in all its forms.
3. As a United Nations' Specialized Agency established 70 years ago, ICAO has been mandated to promote the development of a safe, secure and sustainable global civil aviation system.
4. ICAO's current Strategic Objectives are strongly linked to 13 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating our full commitment to their implementation. In this regard, I wish to bring to the plenary's attention the important role of aviation as a powerful engine for economic and social development throughout the world.
5. Air transport has grown significantly. It began with a flight of just 34 kilometres, but today world aircraft travel well over ten million times this distance in a single year — this is equivalent to travelling from Earth to Venus. Today, aviation is by far the world's safest and most efficient mode of mass transportation.
6. Aviation currently moves over half of the 1.1 billion tourists who travel across international borders each year – a figure which rises to over 80 per cent in various small island states. It also transports some 35 per cent of world trade by value.
7. Moreover, aviation directly contributed to the creation of 8.5 million jobs and to around 700 billion dollars to global gross domestic product (GDP). Because of its cross-cutting nature and multiple links

to other economic sectors, the total economic impact of aviation reaches some 3.5 per cent of world GDP, equivalent to 2.4 trillion dollars, with the creation of 58.1 million jobs.

8. More importantly, aviation can transform lives and societies by connecting the world, allowing access to new technologies and opening global markets for rural producers. Aircraft are also well-appreciated for their role in carrying lifesaving medicines to communities in need, urgent supplies for disaster relief, and in reducing poverty through all of the economic factors I have already outlined.
9. For Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) especially, aviation represents an essential lifeline to enhance connectivity, which in turn promotes greater tourism, trade and other vital business activities. We may recall that the economic damage caused by the disruption of air connectivity after the 25 April earthquake in Nepal has been estimated to 1 million dollars per day. One day shutdown of air transport worldwide would cost approximately 660 million dollars.
10. Going forward, ICAO has been proactively working with the international community to address the challenges of rapidly-expanding air traffic, which is now projected to double by 2030. To foster this projected growth in a sustainable manner and produce inclusive and productive employment, aviation must have coherent policies with tourism, trade and other transport sectors to further improve connectivity and modernize infrastructure. These measures alone could nearly double aviation's share of GDP to 5.8 trillion dollars in the next 15 years. Upgrading air traffic systems, for example, would contribute to the global economy an estimated 300 billion dollars per year.
11. In this regard, I would like to congratulate all States on the ground-breaking *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, and ICAO will continue its support to the new initiatives, in particular the establishment of a Global Infrastructure Forum. ICAO has launched a *No Country Left Behind* campaign to better identify and coordinate assistance to needful States so that they may foster sustainable local and regional prosperity and fully benefit from the improvement of their air connectivity.
12. In addition to our strong and ongoing commitment, ICAO, as an official observer on the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, have proposed global indicators under SDG Goals 8 and 9.
13. Ladies and gentlemen, in close cooperation with States and international partners and consistent with the visions of the SDGs and ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* goals, our Organization continues to lead the development and implementation of a coherent and harmonized global regulatory framework for a safe and secure air transport operation.
14. The ability of the world air transport network to safely manage 100,000 daily flights to every corner of the world has always relied upon how successfully States could cooperate to their common benefit. ICAO is privileged to be able to cooperate with States and all of your organizations on the adoption and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.
15. Thank you.