



**Address by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization,
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Opening Ceremonies of the
Third ICAO Africa and Indian Ocean (AFI) Aviation Week**

(Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 27 June - 1 July 2016)

*The Honourable Minister for Civil Aviation of Equatorial Guinea, General Fausto Abeso Fuma,
other Honourable Ministers here present,
The Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority and all other Dignitaries of the Republic of
Equatorial Guinea;
The Secretary General of AFCAC, Ms. Iyabo Sosina;
Directors General of civil of African States
Representatives of States to ICAO and ICAO Council
Representatives of Donor States, Regional and International Organizations, and Industry
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is indeed an honour for me to be here for the opening of the Third ICAO Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) Aviation Week.
2. I would like to begin by expressing ICAO's sincere gratitude to the Government of Equatorial Guinea, which has provided us with invaluable hosting support and these lovely and very much appreciated facilities.
3. Honourable Minister for Civil Aviation, General Fausto Abeso Fuma, please convey our greetings and deep gratitude to His Excellency President Obiang Nguema, and through him to the people of your beautiful Republic.
4. I would also like to thank ICAO's partners in Africa who have contributed so importantly towards this 2016 edition of AFI Aviation Week. In supporting African States to meet the obligations under the Chicago Convention, the African Union Commission and its specialized agency the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), as well as Africa's essential Regional Economic Communities, are sparing no effort as we continue to jointly assist local governments in meeting global and regional targets in line with ICAO's Strategic Objectives.
5. ICAO has been working very hard to foster this type of cooperation in every world region, and we are tremendously grateful that these comprehensive AFI Week gatherings have now established themselves as an essential instrument for Africa-wide civil aviation progress.
6. The presence of so many high level State representatives here today clearly reflects the widening African commitment to ensure that aviation development, and the effective implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), remain important priorities toward the realization of truly prosperous and sustainable African communities.

7. I am also pleased to see the strong participation of those international and regional organizations which have so dependably and effectively supported our joint efforts towards the enhancement of civil aviation in the AFI Region.
8. Those of you whom I have had the pleasure of sitting down know that I am a firm believer in partnerships, and Africa is one of aviation's greatest examples today of what cooperation and commitment can deliver in terms of concrete civil aviation progress.
9. And we must also stay focused on the fact that the entire UN system is now partnering together toward *Agenda 2030*, and for the realization of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This is the current common language of the international community.
10. Ever since I took office, I have been promoting ICAO to serve as an advocate for aviation by raising awareness among Member States, the UN system, the donor community and all relevant stakeholders about aviation's contributions to sustainable development and the attainment of SDGs.
11. It is my firm belief that effectively resourced and administered civil aviation systems in States are essential to establishing air transport's global connectivity, which in turn serves as a key catalyst for sustainable economic and social development.
12. Safe and secure civil aviation operations provide access for citizens and businesses to global markets and trade flows, enhance tourism, and ensure more resilient local tax bases to permit more sustainable planning and investment.
13. Taken together, these benefits serve to establish how aviation's current global economic impact is estimated at 2.7 trillion dollars, or roughly 3.5 per cent of world GDP, and how it supports some 63.5 million jobs worldwide.
14. Besides these significant macro-economic impacts, aviation is also critical to local search and rescue coordination, emergency aid delivery, peacekeeping, air ambulance provision, and many other under-appreciated benefits to local societies.
15. It is our hope that aviation be given greater importance in the context of development at the country level and that ICAO can facilitate the mobilization of resources in cooperation with development banks, funds and other financial institutions.
16. At the same time, it is well understood that the benefits enabled by air transport can be materialized if States have a safe, and secure air transport system. A strong foundation for civil aviation Safety and Security in your States will also be a major step toward the securing of additional funding for subsequent priorities.
17. It is heartening to note the significant progress being made by African States to improve the civil aviation capacities in the areas of Safety, Security, and Human Resources Development, which will be the main focus of our meetings over the coming days. But we must also ask ourselves: *What more can be done to better ensure that our global and regional objectives are fully and effectively achieved?*
18. In the first place we must seek to realize concrete outcomes that will add momentum to our common programs and objectives supporting the ICAO "No Country Left Behind" initiative.
19. In the Aviation Safety domain, I have been very pleased to note the ongoing and very strong commitment of many African States towards the improvement of their safety oversight capacities.

20. This is now being realized through the systematic and effective implementation of associated ICAO Plans of Action, and related progress is fully aligned with the Abuja Safety Targets and the outcomes of our Second ICAO Safety Symposium, which was held last May in Maputo, Mozambique.
21. At this stage, with the scope of the AFI Plan being extended to Accident Investigations, Air Navigation Services and Aerodromes and Ground Aids, more than 30 African states are implementing and benefiting from our assistance through ICAO Plans of Action. These represent very positive Safety results due to the intensified cooperation and efforts being undertaken between ICAO, its partners and local governments.
22. We are also seeing an increasing number of States with ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Effective Implementation (EI) rates over 60 percent, and a diminishing number of outstanding Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs).
23. These are indeed very positive trends, but they must continue to be improved upon. During this event we will hear about further Safety challenges and success stories, and these will be very helpful to identifying new and concrete proposals for consideration by the upcoming 17th meeting of the AFI Plan Steering Committee.
24. In the area of Aviation Security, the outcomes we realize here will also need to align with and bolster the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa, or AFI SECFAL Plan, which as many of you are aware was launched at the last AFI week in Maputo, Mozambique.
25. We must also acknowledge the new Declaration on African Security and Facilitation targets adopted this past April at the first Ministerial Conference on Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa, held in Windhoek, Namibia. Its focus on addressing threats of unlawful interference, including terrorist acts, is of critical importance to both African aviation and tourism today.
26. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all States and partners to support the implementation of these important Security targets and the Action Plan which is to be developed in due course.
27. Importantly, these shall be endorsed in due course by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Governments, in order to achieve the continent-wide commitments they require to be truly effective.

28. I can certainly assure you of the continued commitment and support of ICAO to help you meet all associated challenges in this regard.
29. The successful implementation of all of these Safety and Security priorities are directly linked to States having the necessary human resources at their disposal, inclusive of the required qualifications, competencies and experience to address their responsibilities.
30. For many States in Africa, there is a foundational need for human resources development which must be addressed in order to achieve the desired progress in civil aviation and air transport. This, in addition to the projected shortages of qualified aviation professionals in the decades to come, poses further challenges to effective workforce planning.
31. These issues are particularly crucial for African countries which are now experiencing significant traffic growth, whether due to increased international or domestic operations.
32. Recognizing these challenges, you will recall that ICAO established the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) in 2014, at the request of AFCAC and pursuant to the 2014 Malabo Declaration agreed by the African Union Ministers of Transport.
33. It is very fitting that today, two years after this historic Declaration was realized, that we are gathered here again in Malabo to further define how Africa can plan for and benefit from a more sustainable and skilled civil aviation workforce.
34. You will learn more this week about a number of new HRDF developments, including the establishment and launching by ICAO, in collaboration with AFCAC, of a new secondment programme.
35. This will provide opportunities for African civil aviation professionals to serve with ICAO and contribute to our 'No Country Left Behind initiatives, thus delivering direct impacts in terms of both individual and State-level capacity-building.
36. We must acknowledge, however, that the success of the HRDF, as well as the scope of its impact, is strongly dependent on the voluntary contributions to it we receive from donors.
37. States, industry partners, and other interested parties are therefore strongly encouraged to take this under consideration in order to ensure the Fund's continued success and sustainability.
38. To those States and donors which have already contributed, and I would highlight in this regard Sudan, Turkey, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria, as well as recent confirmed pledges from Seychelles and ASECNA, please let me extend to you ICAO's heartfelt thanks and appreciation for how you have championed the Fund and are leading by example.
39. It is because of your contributions that it has been possible to launch the secondment programme under the HRDF mechanism. You are our early "Champions" for HRDF and inspiring other African States and donors to support HRDF as a community.

40. In addition to our main topics and meetings this week, we will also be highlighting some new projects and agreements, conducting many consultations, and releasing the newly published Second Edition of the Annual African Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI) Aviation Safety Report.
41. In closing, all in all, let's work together to make this AFI Week a very successful and informative event.

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