



**Opening Address
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu to the Grand Opening of
to the 4TH ICAO AFI Aviation Week**

(Gaborone, Botswana, 22-25 May 2017)

*Honourable Minister of Transport of Botswana,
Representative of the African Union Commission (AUC),
President (or Secretary General) of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC),
Directors General of Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs),
Representatives of International and Regional Organizations,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. DUMELA!
2. It is indeed an honour for me to join you for the opening ceremony of the Fourth ICAO AFI Aviation Week.
3. I wish to take this opportunity to express ICAO's deepest thanks to the Government of Botswana for partnering with ICAO in hosting your coming meetings, and for the tremendous support and excellent facilities it has provided.
4. This week in Gaborone, you'll be undertaking a series of important events on Aviation Safety, Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, and for the Security and Facilitation of air transport here in the ICAO Africa and Indian Ocean Region (AFI).
5. I am particularly pleased today to see such extensive participation by key representatives from local States, as well as from recognized organizations from both within and outside the region. This is a clear reflection of the importance being allocated to civil aviation objectives in Africa, and of the need for all of us to be working more closely together to advance our strategic priorities in this region.

6. The series of meetings over the next four days will provide ICAO, its Member States and partner organizations with an excellent opportunity to advance aviation safety and security priorities in the AFI region, and most especially the main goal of ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-19 on the *No Country Left Behind* initiative.
7. Its aim is to help ensure that the Effective Implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices is better harmonized globally, so that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe and reliable air transport, with due consideration to local needs and expectations.
8. Through these annual ICAO AFI Aviation events, we are presented with a unique opportunity to jointly assess your Region's challenges, and to harness applicable opportunities as we continue to pursue our global and regional goals in the coming years.
9. Learning from past experience, this Fourth AFI Aviation Week will focus on specific issues which deserve particular attention from States and aviation stakeholders.
10. In the past 12 months, our global sector has benefitted from the progress made at a wide range of major events, such as,
 - the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly,
 - the Second ICAO World Aviation Forum,
 - the Sixth Meeting of Africa-Indian Ocean Directors-General of Civil Aviation (Brazzaville, Congo, November 2016),
 - the ICAO/EASA Forum on Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs),
 - the Second ICAO Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa,
 - the High Level Conference for the Improvement of Search and Rescue in Africa (Lome, Togo, April 2017),
 - and more recently, the Global Aviation Training and TRAINAIR Plus Symposium (Addis Ababa, April 2017),
 - and the African Air Navigation Services Providers Meeting (Freetown, earlier this month).
11. And as we gather here for this Fourth AFI Week, we should also keep in mind some important upcoming events, such as,
 - the Second ICAO Meeting on Air Cargo Development in Africa in Addis Ababa in June,
 - the Global Forum on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in Abuja in July,
 - and the very first ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF) conducted regionally, which is now scheduled for November in Abuja in collaboration with the African Union.

12. Looking at the Safety area, I have noted, with satisfaction, the continued commitment by African States towards the implementation of the accepted ICAO Plans of Action, and your collective agreement to attain identified continental targets.
13. Since the Third AFI Aviation Week, an increasing number of States have accepted ICAO Plans of Action, the implementation of which has resulted in an increase in the number of States that have attained and improved upon the 60 per cent minimum Effective Implementation target in ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP).
14. The objective of the Fourth Aviation Safety Symposium to be held today is to review the status of implementation of the various ICAO safety initiatives for Africa, share success stories and challenges, and agree on relevant strategies to further enhance safety in the region.
15. It is very encouraging to note that five African States in 2016: Botswana, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali and Niger; and three others in 2017: Egypt, Togo, and Zambia, have been awarded ICAO Council President Certificates in recognition of their commitments and progress towards the implementation of ICAO SARPs under the Universal Safety Oversight Programme.
16. The Nineteenth AFI Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held tomorrow, and I am pleased to report that the AFI Plan Work Programme for 2017 is being effectively implemented. Its primary focus is on providing assistance to African States to improve their Effective Implementation of aviation safety oversight, resolving Significant Safety Concerns and supporting the establishment and strengthening of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations.
17. I would like to recall that attainment of 60 per cent Effective Implementation by at least 80 per cent of States, certification of 45 per cent of international aerodromes, and resolution of all outstanding SSCs are the key safety goals for the AFI Region in 2017.
18. In this regard, I am pleased to note that some 30 per cent of States have registered appreciable increases in their levels of Effective Implementation, and it was determined in April this year that Angola has now successfully resolved its SSC, leaving three further African States outstanding in this regard.

19. As of the beginning of May, tailored ICAO Plans of Action have been accepted by a total of 34 African States, and their implementation has already started to show positive and encouraging results. Further details on this progress will be presented during the AFI Plan SC Meeting tomorrow.
20. It is to be expected, in light of the ICAO *No Country Left Behind* initiative, and given that safety improvement is a continuous process, that all AFI States will in the very near future have a State-specific ICAO Plan of Action.
21. On the third day of this AFI Aviation Week, the Second Symposium on Aviation Security and Facilitation will, in addition to considering relevant updates from the outcomes of recent major events, focus on issues related to countering terrorism in Africa through efficient aviation security and facilitation. These discussions will focus on the secure development of air transport in Africa, border security, new technologies to improve border processing and facilitation, and emerging threats.
22. The AFI SECFAL Plan work programme calls for, among other targets, the attainment of a minimum 65 per cent Effective Implementation of security oversight systems by 50 per cent of AFI States by the end of 2017.
23. I am pleased to note that there has been progressive increase in the average AVSEC Effective Implementation level from 53 per cent in 2015 to almost 57 per cent currently. It is also very encouraging that last week, Sao Tome and Principe was determined to have resolved all three Significant Security Concerns, leaving only one outstanding SSeC in one African State that still needs to be resolved.
24. I wish to call upon AFI States and donor and development partners to support the implementation of the AFI SECFAL Plan through voluntary contributions, in order to consolidate the significant achievements recorded since its inception two years ago. It is anticipated that the endorsement of the Windhoek Declaration and targets by the next AU Summit of Heads of State will greatly boost the political will and government commitments towards aviation security and facilitation in Africa.
25. The Fifth AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committee, on the fourth day of this week, will review progress made in the implementation of the its work programme since the last meeting.

26. It will discuss funding proposals for AFI SECFAL Plan projects, the activities of the Regional Aviation Security and Facilitation Group, capacity building initiatives, the implementation of MRTDs and e-Passports in Africa, implementation of A39 resolutions, emerging security issues, and coordination of aviation security projects in Africa.
27. The overall objective of the AFI SECFAL Plan is to enhance the Effective Implementation of critical elements of a State aviation security oversight system, and to assist in addressing the prevailing terrorism threats while supporting sustainable economic growth in Africa.
28. This requires effective coordination of efforts by various stakeholders and partners, and for us to draw upon the expertise available in African States, ICAO, and partnering States and organizations.
29. This Fourth AFI Aviation Week will also provide an opportunity for us to review together and discuss the progress made in implementing the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) for Africa.
30. This is a very important capacity-building initiative for your continent's civil aviation sector, established at the request of the African Union of Transport Ministers and as a joint collaboration between ICAO and AFCAC.
31. Under the HRDF, voluntary contributions are being used to assist in building the human capital required for operational efficiency and continuous implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices and other programme activities in the civil aviation sector.
32. A secondment programme has already been established under the HRDF mechanism for serving African civil aviation officers, and plans are also underway to establish a professional development programme for young professionals which will assist African States in attracting young women and men to the aviation sector while assisting States in meeting emerging needs.
33. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for these generous contributions to the AFI Plan, AFI SECFAL Plan and HRDF, and in the same vein, encourage similar support from States, industry partners and other interested parties.
34. Whereas these contributions and collaborative efforts are yielding recognizable progress, the region is still facing important challenges that continue to require attention and need to be addressed. To cite a few, such challenges include:

- a) the rate of achievement of regional safety and security targets (EI improvement and resolution of SSCs and SSeCs);
- b) meeting timelines in ICAO Plans of Action and AVSEC State Improvement Plans;
- c) hiring or training and retaining qualified and experienced staff;
- d) effective utilization of RSOOs to complement CAA resources;
- e) increasing awareness and commitment of States to environmental issues;
- f) improving air connectivity.

35. These are the challenges that I wish to draw to your attention and I hope together through our discussions this week, we can approach feasible and sustainable solutions.

36. In conclusion, let me once again thank the Government and people of Botswana for hosting this Fourth AFI Aviation Week, and may I wish you all very fruitful deliberations.

37. Thank you