



**Keynote Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Seventh Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean
Directors General of Civil Aviation (NACC/DGCA/7)**

(Washington, D. C., 19 September 2017)

1. It is my great pleasure to join you here for this Seventh Meeting of the North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors General of Civil Aviation (NACC/DCA/7).
2. I would like to begin by reiterating our most sincere thanks to the government of United States, Mr. Michael Huerta, FAA Administrator, and Mr. Dan Elwell, FAA Deputy Administrator and his team for the organization, very warm welcome and lovely facilities we've been provided with for our meeting here today.
3. I would also like to highlight, from the outset of these remarks, the incredible appreciation which ICAO has for the many States and regional international organizations we work so closely with in the North American and Caribbean Regions.
4. Many of you have come from areas which have suffered terrible devastation in recent weeks. No one has been spared the impacts of these awful natural disasters.
5. The role of aviation in assuring rapid humanitarian assistance has been important to the response thus far, and I am sure you may count on the partnership and generosity of everyone in this room as you work to rebuild and reinvigorate the aviation and tourism services which are so essential to your economic vitality.
6. Commercial aircraft carried more than 80% of the tourists who visited the Small Island States in your territories over 2016, and it is presently forecast that air transport and tourism will support no less than 9.7 million jobs and \$430 billion dollars in regional GDP by 2034.

7. These represent tremendous increases even compared to the very significant tourism activity enjoyed today, but as recent events have shown us, we will also now need to ensure more robust infrastructure and facilities are rebuilt so that these important economic benefits are less exposed to future risks.
8. This provides an opportunity to increase local aviation connectivity in the long-term which can lead to further re-investment in our sector, something which is greatly needed today to accommodate future growth.
9. But in the end these investments are more benefit than cost to growing societies, as they generate a very healthy cycle of air transport development and economic benefits.
10. The level of participation evident at this Meeting reflects the strong and active commitment which the States of this region have established to work together through ICAO.
11. This is especially the case with respect to the priorities for assistance and capacity-building established under our No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, and in this your second year of NCLB implementation I would congratulate both you and ICAO's Regional Office leadership and staff on the results achieved.
12. This leads us to the main goals for this 7th NACC DGCA meeting, which focus directly on aviation development and the regional collaboration so essential to its success. But in addition we must also focus on how private investment will be playing a bigger and bigger role in that process.
13. For governments, the most important point to keep in mind is that investors, both private and public, will be more eager to work with States which have a stable regulatory framework, and on projects where their return on investment is clearly outlined.
14. These qualities above all will help you to ensure a more reliable flow of capital for your aviation development objectives.
15. Your cooperative work under the NCLB strategy has also helped to identify a number of regional challenges and needs, one of the most important being the lack of well-trained and qualified aviation professionals to guide your network through the coming decades.

16. Fortunately, this is not a challenge you must face alone.
17. ICAO is hard at work assisting you today through our Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme and Global Aviation Training (GAT) Office, and we continue to seek greater support for these initiatives.
18. Simply stated, air transport growth is more a risk than a benefit to our network if we do not ensure sufficient numbers of skilled professionals to continuously assess and manage our projected growth. This is why programmes such as our NACC Office's '*60 Opportunities*' initiative is so helpful to our NGAP and particularly our sector-wide gender equality goals.
19. The role of new young professionals will be critical to our performance under all of ICAO's Strategic Objectives for international aviation, and it will be my pleasure to briefly review some current priorities under each of these.
20. Beginning with aviation safety, we can be proud that 2016 was the safest year ever for international air transport, with only 2.1 accidents registered for every million departures.
21. It is also worthwhile to highlight that ICAO, through its Regional Offices, has taken a much more proactive stance on assisting States in resolving their Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs).
22. As global safety performance continues to improve, aided importantly by our cooperative efforts under the *ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP), we have begun to focus greater attention on some specific challenges such as addressing operational risk under the SMS/SSP framework, the effectiveness of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), and many other priority targets.
23. One of these is to address the operational risk under the SMS/SSP framework described by the newly amended Annex 19, and I was encouraged to see that you will soon be discussing a regional strategic approach.
24. Another challenge involves the effectiveness of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), which as you know are established to optimize collective oversight capacities of groups of States.

25. Together with EASA, ICAO has been reviewing strategies to empower and strengthen existing regional mechanisms, while at the same time working toward the establishment of a new Global Aviation Safety Oversight System, or 'GASOS' and an RSOO Collaborative Platform.
26. Your shared regional focus on strengthening RSOOs such as CASSOS and COCESNA, in addition to other regional organizations like the GRIAA and the Caribbean RAIIO, are much appreciated.
27. We must also remain conscious, where both Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency are concerned, that continuous increases in traffic volumes are making our goal of ensuring maximized operations increasingly complex.
28. Runways have traditionally been the main bottlenecks at airports, but we are also becoming more sensitive to capacity choke points which can arise at aircraft parking stands, baggage sorting and transfer facilities, aprons, and passenger security screening points.
29. These and many other forward-looking topics will be discussed at ICAO's back-to-back GANIS and SANIS events this December, as well as at our 13th Air Navigation Conference in 2018.
30. Key topics to be addressed through these events will be related mainly to the *ICAO Global Plans*, and include refinements to our ASBU framework and new Block 4 proposals, new business case templates for implementation and development projects, and consideration of airspace management above flight level 600.
31. In terms of our shared environmental challenges, we should be quite proud of the significant developments which have recently been achieved.
32. This includes the new Aircraft CO₂ Standard which the ICAO Council adopted this past March, and the historic Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or *CORSIA*, which was adopted at our Assembly last October.
33. I am tremendously encouraged that countries representing almost 90 per cent of international flight operations have already committed to participate in the *CORSIA* from its earliest pilot phase. This has certainly exceeded all expectations.

34. At the next meeting of ICAO's Committee for Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), we will be considering the CORSIA Implementation package and in particular the SARPs for its Monitoring, Reporting and Verification regime.
35. 2017 has also been a very big year for Sustainable Alternative Fuels at ICAO. We convened an important seminar in February and its results will be presented to the upcoming ICAO High-level Conference on Aviation Alternative Fuels this October, in Mexico City.
36. With respect to aviation security, I have a number of updates to bring to your attention today.
37. In July I attended a Special Meeting of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), where it was agreed that the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) would continue to explore new means of addressing the terrorist threat in coordination with various ICAO Traveller Identification Programme or 'TRIP' strategy elements.
38. Along with enhanced screening and security checks, the airlines' role in tracking the movement of higher risk passengers through advance passenger information (API) was also highlighted at these UN CTC meetings.
39. API benefits rely on the use of machine-readable passports, and as of today 143 of ICAO's 191 Member States are fully compliant in this regard.
40. A further important priority in aviation security concerns the development of ICAO's new Global Aviation Security Plan, or 'GASeP'. Its Roadmap for implementation will be carried out over the next three years, and your regional input and cooperation is critical to the success of this process.
41. This new strategic document provides an ambitious framework for the enhancement of international aviation security over the coming years. It also incorporates key themes from UN Security Council Resolution 2309 which I mentioned a moment ago, on *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts via aviation security*.

42. On the regulatory front, provisions to Annex 17 have now been strengthened. Amendment 15 includes more detailed provisions on risk assessments, cybersecurity, landside security, and other priorities, and we have also started working on Amendment 16 which enhances our standards for security risk assessments and data sharing, incident reporting, screening methods, the air cargo supply chain, and cyber preparedness.
43. Portable Electronic Devices are another area requiring ICAO's attention, and our Task Force on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Multidisciplinary Cargo Safety Group (CSG/2) have brought forward a number of related recommendations to be reviewed by the ICAO Council at its next Session.
44. Emerging issues which ICAO is taking into account today mainly concern the increasing use of unmanned aircraft systems and drones, in addition to the integration of sub-orbital and commercial space flights.
45. With respect to unmanned aircraft, aviation today is undergoing a fundamental change in light of their widespread introduction.
46. During our 39th Assembly last October, our States requested us to expand the scope of our work and develop a baseline for global harmonization of all types of unmanned aircraft operations, including in domestic airspace.
47. By engaging this work, beginning with our *DroneEnable* event in just a few days' time, ICAO will be bringing value to States through improved regulatory guidance, and value to manufacturers through new common baselines.
48. On the commercial and sub-orbital flight side, ICAO and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) have worked over the past two years with an expert group to identify several pressing issues.
49. Our present goal is to establish a timeline for the development of related provisions in the 2019 revisions of the GASP and the GANP.

50. Moving now to Economic Development, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to assist our Member States in optimizing the significant socio-economic benefits of aviation.
51. We are working at every turn today to ensure that you have the tools and capacities you need to assure the first and most fundamental requirement in this regard: namely effective compliance with ICAO's global standards.
52. With a view to advocating for sustainable aviation development within States, ICAO has now invited a wide range of UN and industry agencies to join us in our Aviation Partnerships for Sustainable Development (APSD) initiative.
53. Jointly we can better advocate for States' Official Development Assistance (ODA) contributions, and a related APSD goal is to see countries including aviation development objectives in their overall national development plans.
54. Later this year, in November, all of these topics will be on the table when we conduct our third ICAO World Aviation Forum – the very first to be taking place in an ICAO Region.
55. It will be held this year in Abuja, Nigeria, and we greatly encourage your high-level participation as the discussions will relate to all ICAO States and regions.
56. As you can see, ladies and gentlemen, we have many important priorities and challenges before us, whether with respect to the performance or sustainability of global civil aviation.
57. As one last point regarding ICAO compliance, I would further encourage your States to continue strengthening the resources available to your civil aviation authorities (CAAs).
58. It is essential that these agencies have appropriate financial and management autonomy, as well as the ability to attract, recruit and retain qualified technical personnel.
59. In closing now, please let me remind you that regional meetings such as this one, and the others that ICAO convenes, are critical our shared progress and success.

60. Your active participation remains essential to their results and sustainability, and for our part ICAO has been making great strides in becoming more focused and efficient in our service to you.
61. On that note, please let me conclude now by wishing you all a very productive meeting.
62. Thank You.