



**Keynote Address by
the Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Fang Liu,
to the 2017 ICAO Global Aviation Cooperation Symposium**

(Athens, Greece, 11 October 2017)

Honourable Minister,

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I wish to begin by extending ICAO's deepest appreciation to Greece's Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, the Honourable Christos Spirtzis, for the very warm welcome and lovely facilities which have been provided for this 2017 ICAO Global Aviation Cooperation Symposium.
2. I also wish to thank Mr. Konstatinos Lintzerakos, Governor of the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority, and both Dr. Dimitrios Dimitriou, Chairman of the Board and Mr. Yiannis Paraschis, Chief Executive Officer, from the Athens International Airport, for their further assistance in helping us to host you here in this lovely setting.
3. ICAO's hope over the coming days is to raise awareness on the many aviation-related challenges faced by States and industry operators today.
4. We will also seek to highlight for you some of the key programmes, initiatives and tools we can place at your disposal to effectively address them.
5. Your presence here, and commitment to this process, is the first and most important steps along that journey.
6. In 2014, the inaugural edition of this Symposium held in ICAO headquarters in Montreal, attracted over 400 attendees from some 85 ICAO Member States.

7. As we embark on this year's event, we must remind ourselves of the many mechanisms by which ICAO assists aviation authorities to effectively implement our global Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).
8. We must also remain keenly aware of the enormous transformational power of aviation to improve the lives of people everywhere.
9. The aviation system has evolved over the decades to become an irreplaceable global network connecting the world's cultures and economies.
10. It brings together families and friends, and businesses and their customers, to the tune of 10 million passengers daily on over 100,000 flights.
11. Our sector today supports 63.5 million jobs globally, fully one third of world trade by value, and contributes more than 2.7 trillion dollars annually to global GDP.
12. It also carries over half of the 1.4 billion tourists who travel across international borders each year, something I'm sure our Greek hosts are very familiar with given the significance of the tourism sector to its local economy.
13. A very important point for us to keep in mind as we consider these sizeable socio-economic impacts is that they are forecast to grow: both rapidly and significantly.
14. Indeed by the early 2030s, ICAO projects that today's flight and passenger volumes will double.
15. This growth presents challenges to States and industry in terms of how to manage the expansion of their local capacity to optimize air transport's socio-economic benefits. This helps explain why **Goal number one of this Symposium is on 'managing change'**.
16. And while doing so, they must also respect aviation's long-standing culture of continuous performance improvement.
17. To put this more bluntly, sectoral growth cannot be permitted to negatively impact our key strategic performance targets.

18. Existing levels of aviation safety, security, efficiency, passenger facilitation, and environmental protection must also improve even as we expand.
19. If we cannot guarantee this, together, air transport will no longer be sustainable, but fortunately both ICAO and our sector at large have become very adept at optimizing these growth cycles.
20. A related challenge each time these cycles occur is that the laws of geometric progression dictate for us that each doubling of flights and passengers will be much larger, and therefore more impactful on operations and resources, than the one which preceded it.
21. This amplifies as well the degree of standardization, preparedness and planning ICAO must ensure is set out, and also the level of technical assistance we are capable of assuring.
22. **Goal number 2 of the Symposium on ‘determining unique solutions’ speaks to these challenges,** and also to the critical role which is played by ICAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme as overseen by Director Galan and his team.
23. For those of you who may not be well familiarized with the history of air transport, the ‘cooperation’ component of our technical cooperation work is essentially the lifeblood of everything we do in international aviation.
24. It was built into the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* as a core, foundational principle; most likely in recognition of the fact that States must share the common and single sky - which connects us all - to effectively broaden their socio-economic horizons.
25. Cooperation has therefore been essential to the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation since the earliest days of flight, and it remains to this day a true hallmark of our most enduring progress and achievements.
26. The vision of our Technical Cooperation Programme is fully aligned with this tradition.
27. It seeks to enable States to attain the highest possible standards of effective ICAO compliance, whether through new infrastructure deployment, human resources development, or other aviation development priorities.

28. This dynamic must begin with States' commitments and suitable demonstrations of political will.
29. Ultimately it leads to the physical, human and regulatory resources being put in place which permit States to expand their route networks, improve foreign market and supply chain access for local suppliers, and in the end bring wide-ranging and sustainable prosperity benefits to their local populations.
30. This process therefore plays a very important role in how successful States will be as they seek to achieve the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals being worked toward under the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
31. I cannot underscore strongly enough how fundamental this ICAO compliant air connectivity is to States' long-term socio-economic ambitions.
32. And nor can I emphasize strongly enough how well our Organization understands the hopes and challenges of the developing world, and that we have all the experience needed to assist States in overcoming their problems and realizing their goals.
33. This helps explain why a **third goal of this Symposium is to promote these capabilities further to States, so that they can better appreciate and take due advantage of them.**
34. With over six decades of experience, and drawing upon all of the technical expertise and knowledge available within ICAO, its mission is to provide unrivalled technological assistance to States with their aviation projects.
35. This entails a very significant volume of work, and sees our Technical Cooperation Programme assisting more than 100 States and organizations annually with various aviation projects.
36. These include capacity building and infrastructure development objectives, human resources training programmes, the recruitment of expert consultants, and the procurement of civil aviation equipment and services.
37. One recent accomplishment I would highlight in this context involves ICAO's support to Argentina.

38. In the past few years, through technical cooperation projects with ICAO, Argentina has created a new Civil Aviation Authority.
39. It has also disassociated its Air Navigation Services Provider from its military, and established an independent accident investigation entity.
40. In addition, Argentina has made use of all of ICAO's Technical Cooperation services, including procurement for its air navigation equipment, the deployment of international experts, and the recruitment of national professionals.
41. Another great example is the work which ICAO is undertaking with Somalia on the management of its Flight Information Region (FIR).
42. This project includes the recruitment of experts, the deployment of many nationals, and the procurement of ACC equipment to transfer the control of the FIR to Mogadishu.
43. In the Asia Pacific region, I would like to highlight the long-term support ICAO has been providing to Indonesia, with projects in Training, Safety oversight, and Environmental Protection.
44. Regarding the latter, there is a relevant article in the latest ICAO *Technical Cooperation Review*, which is available to all participants of the GACS.
45. I would also like to mention the on-going support ICAO is providing to Saudi Arabia, a project which has now seen dozens of experts assisting the Kingdom in a variety of civil aviation capacities over the past 20 years.
46. Finally, in the ICAO EUR/NAT region, I would draw your attention to the successful capacity-building ICAO undertook in Kazakhstan to help the State effectively and promptly address a Significant Safety Concern.
47. In the course of this work, ICAO helps ensure that new technologies and innovations are introduced in ways which benefits governments, operators and citizens.
48. We verify that installed capacity meets the performance criteria set by ICAO, and that globally-harmonized solutions remain consistent with national development frameworks.

49. Partnership is another very important enabler of our success in any assistance initiative. This is true for our Technical Cooperation Programme, our *No Country Left Behind* initiative, and for anything else we embark upon in aid of our States or our sector.
50. Our **4th and final goal for this Symposium, on ‘strengthening institutional and cross-industry partnerships’**, directly supports these objectives.
51. ICAO brings further value to this process by bringing many diverse partners together at our annual ICAO World Aviation Forums, the next of which will be held this November in Abuja, Nigeria.
52. These events also focus on how to effectively structure aviation projects with clearly defined returns on investment, whether for new technologies, new facilities, or a suitably skilled workforce.
53. Every dollar invested in aviation creates positive returns in other areas of an economy, just as every job it creates directly leads to further employment growth in other sectors.
54. And it is in all of our best interests to ensure that these and other air transport benefits are shared by all nations and all societies.
55. Part of our goal with this event is to make it clear to our Member States that we are their partners on this journey.
56. As you will learn from the different sessions and panels of this Symposium, ICAO and our Technical Cooperation Bureau are available to support you in all of these important endeavours.
57. Through our safety and security oversight programs, we are seeing some troubling variation in the levels of State-by-State effective implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.
58. This has highlighted to us that all States were not as well-prepared as others to take advantage of the prosperity benefits of aviation development.
59. My key message to you today, which I stand behind fully as ICAO’s Secretary General, is that our Organization is ready and able to support all of our Member States with the tools and assistance they need.

60. ICAO understands the hopes and challenges of our sector and community, and I call on you today to join us in establishing an effective global network and strong partnerships for aviation development.
61. We must recognize that if we choose to cooperate towards the common goal of fostering effective and accountable technical cooperation and assistance initiatives, the sustainable future of air transport which results will be mirrored by the future of your more sustainable and prosperous societies.
62. Accordingly, we have focused your coming panel sessions on some important areas of aviation capacity-building today, namely airport development, traveller security and facilitation, effective safety oversight, and air navigation capacity and efficiency.
63. Four additional panels will cover regional concerns, the importance of training capacity, and the full spectrum of our current project funding and resource mobilization support activities.
64. We greatly appreciate you joining us here in Athens for this important event, one which will help make us more effective and efficient in everything we do in the areas of assistance, cooperation and capacity-building.
65. I wish you all very engaging and very productive discussions over the next three days, and will look forward to reviewing your outcomes.
66. Thank you.