



**Opening remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
To the ICAO ATFM Global Symposium**

(Singapore, 20 November 2017)

1. I would like to begin today by extending ICAO's deep appreciation to the Government of Singapore, and to its Civil Aviation Authority, for the superb facilities and gracious hospitality they've provided us in support of this 2017 ICAO Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) Global Symposium.
2. And let me please offer my personal thanks to Mr. Kevin Shum, Singapore's Director General of Civil Aviation, for his kind invitation to join you here today and help set the stage for the work you have ahead of you.
3. We would also do well to recognize the many contributions of Singapore, and perhaps most especially its Aviation Academy, to the evolution of safe, secure and reliable air transport in the ICAO Asia Pacific Region, and indeed around the world.
4. In the areas of training, assistance and international cooperation especially, Singapore is an excellent example of the commitment upon which so much of civil aviation's progress relies.
5. I would also like to draw your attention to the invaluable assistance provided on this occasion to ICAO by our close partners from Eurocontrol, the U.S. FAA, CANSO, and IATA.
6. Lastly I would take a moment to appreciate the presence here today of Mr. Roberto Kobeh Gonzales, Director General of the Mexican air navigation service provider, SENEAM, and Lifetime Goodwill Ambassador of ICAO.

7. SENEAM has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to the advancement of ATFM, and we should acknowledge Mr. Kobeh's presence here today as a further testament to how important effective flow management implementation will be to every ICAO Region.
8. The speed and efficiency by which modern commercial aircraft can move passengers and cargo globally is the core value offering of international air transport.
9. Aviation's further Strategic Objectives for aviation safety and security complement this basic rapid transit attribute, establishing an overall foundation of speed, confidence and dependability which no other form of transport can match.
10. ICAO also places focus on the sustainability of our sector through our additional Strategic Objectives for the economic development and environmental performance of civil aviation, but our industry's key service offering for citizens and businesses everywhere will always be dependent on how quickly and reliably aircraft connect the world.
11. As we are all by now aware, the capacity and efficiency of our network is presently threatened by the speed at which it expands.
12. The air transport system has doubled in flight and passenger volumes roughly once every fifteen years since this data began being tracked in the 1970s, and this exponential growth means that each new doubling in traffic also dramatically increases the challenges we face in managing it effectively.
13. What we know for certain is that in many mature air transport markets we no longer have the luxury of simply adding new airports and slots to accommodate further traffic growth.
14. Competition for airspace is also accelerating, with new unmanned and commercial space-related services seeking to carve out their own niches for the expanding operations occurring and forecast in those areas.
15. All of these factors point us to the realization that to manage future growth we must become better at what we already do, and in the finite airspace we already control.

16. Some of these solutions are being driven by ICAO today in the form of Performance-based Navigation (PBN) and new or refined approaches to flight tracking and aircraft separation, but in addition to these, Air Traffic Flow Management, or 'ATFM', holds out further and tremendous promise for the future of safe and efficient air traffic management (ATM).
17. ATFM, built on Collaborative Decision Making (CDM), optimizes the existing capacities of the air traffic management system.
18. This is usually achieved through the more precise coordination of take-off and landing by flight planners and ATM professionals at the departure and destination airports, and through the dynamic routing of flights around constrained airspaces.
19. This advance and real-time coordination helps to avoid aircraft reaching their destinations and being placed into costly holding patterns, as well as permitting ATM professionals in general to be much more responsive when dealing with unexpected weather or other events.
20. Flow management structures, such as the ones now being envisaged and designed here in the APAC region, importantly require a more open attitude toward flight data sharing.
21. For some States this will involve sovereignty concerns, as all partners involved in an ATFM framework must be willing to fully commit to and support a more open and collaborative international flight information environment.
22. Fortunately, finding solutions to these to these types of issues has been the hallmark of international civil aviation since our Convention was first drafted, and ICAO was essentially designed from the outset to help States determine them.
23. I referenced earlier how the air transport network continues to expand daily at the service of passengers and businesses everywhere, and it's important that we acknowledge how that growth impacts modern societies and economies.
24. The aviation system today connects 10 million passengers daily on over 100,000 flights.

25. Our sector 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.
26. It also carries over half of the 1.4 billion tourists who travel across international borders each year, a contribution which establishes air transport as a veritable economic lifeline for many cities, States and Regions.
27. Capacity challenges, and the continuous increases in traffic volumes I referenced earlier are making the goal of ensuring maximum operational capacity and efficiency increasingly complex.
28. This helps us to understand why it is of utmost importance that airlines, air navigation service providers, and airport operators collaborate more intensively and remain collectively diligent in managing airspace capacities and traffic demand.
29. Sectoral growth cannot be permitted to negatively impact our key strategic performance targets, and existing levels of aviation safety, efficiency, and environmental protection must continue to improve, even as we expand.
30. These principles have been well-recognized here in the Asia Pacific region, which accounts for 33 percent of global traffic today while achieving a staggering 10.2 percent growth rate in 2016.
31. A significant point in this regard is that this growth has impacted both domestic and international traffic, with China and India experiencing domestic passenger growth of respectively 11.8 and 23.4 percent.
32. And while your Region is already confronted by capacity shortages, the current forecast indicates that traffic growth here will only continue.
33. The Asia-Pacific therefore needs ATFM, and it needs it urgently.
34. Your current and projected flight volumes are putting the entire regional network under stress, and these challenges do not respect national limits.

35. Borders offer no protection against increasing air traffic, and nor should they given that increased international routes and flights equate with increased local prosperity.
36. The objective of ICAO symposiums such as this one is to draw upon the global and collective expertise of States and stakeholders worldwide, and to place it at the service of specific States and Regions.
37. We have gathered here today to foster ATFM collaboration, information exchange, and ultimately to ensure the collaborative Asia-Pacific implementation of effective flow management solutions.
38. The various sessions we've organized for you will outline how to accommodate ever-increasing traffic numbers, while providing increased predictability to airspace users.
39. They will also speak to how flow management can be instrumental in handling contingency and emergency situations.
40. They will reference airport operations, and the necessary improvements that have to be made to link airport operations and flow management.
41. And lastly they will address information exchange models, systems, and performance management.
42. I cannot emphasize enough, however, that none of this is relevant without your corresponding commitments to be more open and collaborative.
43. You will find that this is one of the major points to take away from today's event: every element of effective ATFM is predicated upon the establishment of more comprehensive international collaboration mechanisms.
44. Before concluding today, ladies and gentlemen, I would lastly like to draw your attention to the topic of innovation.

45. It is the role of ICAO to help ensure that new technologies and innovations are introduced in ways that benefit States and operators, and much of what is on the drawing board today will be changing how we manage air traffic in the years ahead.
46. I call on you then not only to be more open and cooperative, but also more imaginative, responsive and flexible when considering the topics ahead of you.
47. Only on the basis of these qualities will we be able to ensure that upcoming ATM innovations are integrated to the benefit of ATFM, and to APAC air transport more generally.
48. We greatly appreciate you joining us here in Singapore for this important event, one which will help make us more effective and efficient together in responding to your Regions traffic management needs.
49. It will also leave your countries better equipped to optimize air transport's benefits for Asia-Pacific States.
50. I wish you all very engaging and very productive discussions over the next three days, and will look forward to following up on the outcome of this meeting at both the regional and global levels.
51. Thank you.