



ICAO

**Introductory Remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization
Dr. Fang Liu
to the ICAO Seminar on Green Airports**

(ICAO HQ, 29-30 November 2017)

Distinguished Representatives of the ICAO Council,

Honoured guests and ICAO colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to this 2017 ICAO Seminar on Green Airports.
2. International aviation today is pursuing wide-ranging targets and initiatives to further contribute to global sustainable development to mitigate our global carbon emissions, as well as to improve local air quality around airports and limit the noise levels respective of aircraft operations.
3. ICAO and its Member States pursue these improvements using a basket of measures focused on new technologies and airframe innovations, streamlined operational procedures, sustainable aviation alternative fuels, and the Carbon Offsetting Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or 'CORSIA'.
4. This Seminar has been convened specifically to help address the desire of many ICAO Member States to ensure that a high level of environmental integrity is meaningfully integrated into their current and future airport masterplans.
5. It's fortunate in this regard that airport operators are already well-advanced in identifying related best practices. Over the next two days, I'm sure that many of you will be inspired by the State and industry presentations on how to optimize the environmental sustainability of modern airport facilities.
6. There are presently close to 400 airports worldwide which are either under construction, undergoing major expansions, or are at advanced planning stages for related objectives. This represents a 25 per cent increase compared to 2016 and this growth trend is being driven by an ever-increasing demand for air travel.

7. Some of these new airport projects are designed to handle record numbers of passengers, for instance as many as 150 million per year at the Istanbul New Airport, upon completion of its final phase in 2028.
8. And whereas many major world airports operating today manage flight capacity using three or four runways, the new Beijing Daxing International Airport is designed to be served by no less than seven, upon full project completion.
9. In terms of the massive capital expenditures associated with new or expanding airport facilities, I would point to Mexico City's New International Airport which will require no less than a 13 billion dollar investment.
10. These three examples I've just highlighted not only share an impressive sense of scope and scale, but also the application of innovative designs, state-of-the-art engineering, and a prioritized consideration of environmental impacts straight from the outset.
11. Indeed each new airport infrastructure project is in and of itself a new opportunity to surpass compliance with the latest sustainability standards, minimize the impact of airport activities on the environment, and reduce the effect of climate change on related infrastructure and operations.
12. Importantly, this healthy dynamic of expansion and innovation is by no means expected to slow down.
13. The aviation system today connects 10 million passengers daily, on over 100,000 flights.
14. Our sector further 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.
15. 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 lifeline for many cities, States and Regions, and most especially for landlocked and small island developing nations.
16. Most importantly of all, these traffic volumes are projected to double in just 15 years' time, which means that aviation's ability to increase tourism and trade, and to foster many other sustainable socio-economic benefits for populations globally, will also be doubling in magnitude in the coming decades.

17. But so too will its emissions if they are not effectively mitigated.
18. This underscores why it is so important today that we make sure future increases in air transport capacity are managed by airports which are built or modernized on the basis of the most effective environmental policies and capabilities available.
19. In order to cope with ever-growing traffic, industry estimates point to some two trillion dollars being needed for new airport infrastructure by 2030.
20. But the rules of the airport investment game have also changed dramatically as our environmental consciousness has deepened in recent years.
21. Effective investment paradigms have always called for a clearly-detailed and positive business case, featuring concrete and quantifiable returns, but over and above this the financing community has now also become adamant that environmental compliance must be a clear pre-requisite for their future involvement in major infrastructure projects.
22. In the area of energy as well, economic and environmental considerations are now proceeding hand-in-hand.
23. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has noted that 2016 was a record year for the installation of renewable energy capacity worldwide, and in parallel, the cost of solar photovoltaics have decreased by 80 per cent, and the cost of wind energy by 30 per cent in just the past five years.
24. This points to this being a historic turning point in our efforts to design and realize sustainable airports.
25. ICAO, for its part, has been conducting intensive capacity-building and assistance projects in aid of this airport clean energy revolution.
26. These projects have showcased for example that the installation of photovoltaics at airport gates are not only environmentally beneficial, but economically as well.

27. And our related partnerships, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) on the one hand, and with the European Union on the other, have been instrumental in laying the groundwork for a profound transformation of energy systems at airports.
28. A key challenge for airport planners and operators going forward will be to reconcile the challenging task of providing a pleasant and convenient terminal experience for passengers, while at the same time assuring a minimized environmental footprint.
29. And this requirement is even more pressing for those destinations where the effects of climate change are being felt more acutely today. The need to preserve biodiversity and to manage natural resources in a responsible manner only adds to the related imperatives being prioritized by States and airport managers.
30. The main objective of this seminar is to bring together best practice examples and experts on all aspects of environmental management at airports, and doing so, to respond to the needs expressed by ICAO Member States.
31. Thus, I am looking forward to stimulating discussions on green airports, environmental certification schemes, the use of clean energy, the sustainable mobility initiatives, climate adaptation and resilience, and also community engagement and financing of environmental projects, and so on.
32. I trust that today's and tomorrow's presentations will be thought-provoking, and they should encourage us all to question business-as-usual practices.
33. No matter what the objective or the requirement, we must make sure that every green option is considered respective of every choice needing to be made for the airports of today and tomorrow.
34. On that note, may I please wish you all very engaging exchanges and productive discussions ahead, and let us all remember in the course of our work that every green air travel experience must begin and end at a green airport.
35. Thank you.