



**Opening remarks  
by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Dr. Fang Liu,  
to the 2018 FIDAE Aviation Leaders Forum  
and Civil Aviation Conference**

*(Santiago, Chile, 4-5 April 2018)*

*Excellencies,*

*Aviation leaders,*

*Dear friends and colleagues,*

1. It is truly an honour to join you here in Santiago today, and to help set the stage for this 2018 *FIDAE Aviation Leaders Forum and Civil Aviation Conference*.
2. Today's event forms part of the wide-ranging series of activities which together comprise one of the most important aerospace, defense and security exhibitions in Latin America.
3. My presence here, in conjunction with ICAO's Technical Cooperation Bureau Director and South American Regional Director, and the rest of our ICAO contingent, is representative of our very strong commitment to the FIDAE forum as a venue for continued cooperative engagement on Latin America's most pressing civil aviation priorities.
4. I am pleased to see that such a prominent group of participants has joined us here to help Latin American aviation address its future needs.
5. Air Transport is now firmly recognized as the safest mode of transport and a key driver of socio economic development all over the world.

6. Through the collective efforts of ICAO, its Member States and the many industry groups we work closely with, 2017 set a record for safety even as air transport carried a record 4.1 billion passengers on 37 million flights.
7. Air carriers in Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the strongest passenger growth of any ICAO Region in 2017, at 10.0 per cent, and aviation continued to be a major economic driver here supporting 5.2 million jobs and generating 167 billion dollars in regional GDP.
8. Air transport here has lately witnessed the liberalization of several domestic and regional markets, combined with a consolidation of airlines.
9. Regional air transport liberalization initiatives have resulted in the adoption of agreements by the Andean Community (CAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).
10. I have to be frank to point out that there is great concern that taxes on the sale or use of air transport are increasingly being imposed by Latin American and Caribbean States.
11. There are now 130 different ticket taxes and fees in place across the region, many of which are not intended to cover costs of aviation-related services and infrastructure.
12. While from an overall standpoint aviation's impacts on mobility and economic development are nothing short of profound, they are also expected to double along with our network's passenger and traffic volumes in the next 15 years.
13. These facts underscore the rather incredible and truly transformational power of aviation to improve the lives of people everywhere, and how the local availability of safe, secure and ICAO-compliant aviation operations is being increasingly recognized today as a key catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development.
14. The responsibility to ensure it continues to do so rests squarely on our shoulders as global aviation leaders.

15. The near-term challenges posed by this continuing growth include the need for new and modernized infrastructure and associated capital investments.
16. These commitments will facilitate the adoption by States and operators of new techniques and procedures to improve still further our global network's safety and efficiency by exploiting the full potential of the latest aircraft surveillance and flow management technologies.
17. Infrastructure deficiencies have long been an issue in this region, and at the moment some major airports in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru face significant growth and capacity constraints.
18. One important priority in this regard is to ensure suitable strengthening and involvement of State regulators in the airport development process.
19. Private airport owners may prefer the higher profits of facilities which operate at over-capacity, but it is counter-productive when these are achieved at the expense of more broad-based economic prosperity and also overall system safety and efficiency.
20. There is also a wide variance State-to-State here in terms of the overall quality and modernization of air transport infrastructure, and the governments concerned must be especially wary of the economic constraints these will pose if not quickly addressed.
21. One way that ICAO has been seeking to help States meet these challenges is through our recently revised Global Plans for Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency.
22. We also continue to conduct our World Aviation Forum events each year, which help governments to structure their aviation development projects and make new links to the donor and development stakeholders who can help make them happen.
23. Much of our focus in this regard is on facilitating the steps States need to take to implement their projects as per our Global Plans' objectives, and to achieve their targets.

24. The Fourth ICAO World Aviation Forum will be held in your region later this year, and we will hope to see many of your related Ministers and aviation development planners in attendance when we convene it Fortaleza, Brazil, from 17 to 19 September.
25. Some important additional and continuing challenges for air transport today include the safe integration of unmanned and remotely-piloted aircraft operations, as well as the new commercial space flights we expect to become more frequent in the years ahead.
26. And with the increasing use of drones in urban areas, let me also highlight here that this evolution may well require your national civil aviation administrations to prepare much sooner than later to support these burgeoning operations.
27. This will require new regulatory services and competencies, and every ICAO Member State should be preparing themselves to adjust to this new and non-traditional airspace environment.
28. Some related topics will be explored in much greater detail this coming 13-14 September, when ICAO convenes its second DRONE ENABLE event in Chengdu, China.
29. Other new technologies, including for example machine-based learning and other forms of artificial intelligence, should also be playing bigger and bigger roles in terms of our consistent goals of improving aggregate network safety and efficiency.
30. This brings to mind many additional concerns, with the need for robust cybersafety and cybersecurity measures to safeguard these new systems being one of the more important.
31. ICAO's newly-endorsed Global Aviation Security Plan has already begun to set out related targets and recommendations, but ultimately a truly effective cyber stance for global aviation will only be achieved through closer partnerships with private sector innovators, and constant re-assessment of related risks and mitigation measures.
32. With regard to your local priorities for aviation security oversight, I have been very encouraged that the average implementation status in South America presently stands at just over 71 per cent.

33. This reflects the fact that your governments have established strong primary aviation security legislation, regulations, and programmes, and that relevant authorities have been suitably resourced and empowered.
34. Some local governments do still have more to undertake locally in this regard, but please rest assured that ICAO is ready and able to assist you.
35. I mentioned our newly-adopted Global Aviation Security Plan a moment ago, and I would like to remind you today that ICAO is presently convening regional GAsEP conferences which provide a unique opportunity for participants to share information and learn from one another in aligning national plans and strategies with the GAsEP's global targets.
36. We are also scheduling during the second quarter of this year a Latin American regional GAsEP conference. Let me also please add that all of these regional events will be culminating in ICAO's Second High-level Conference on Aviation Security this coming November, preceded by a related Symposium.
37. With respect to aviation Environmental Protection priorities, aviation's progress over the years has been truly remarkable.
38. Through the cooperative efforts of States and industry, modern commercial aircraft have become 80 per cent more fuel efficient and 75 per cent quieter than the first commercial jets.
39. The ICAO Council's historic adoption of the first-ever global CO<sub>2</sub> certification standard for aircraft, in addition to the world's first carbon offsetting and reduction system for any major global industry sector, are clear testaments to the fact that aviation is continuing to lead the world's major industry sectors in setting out responsible and effective measures to limit its emissions.
40. International air transport may be contributing only two per cent of annual man made greenhouse gas emissions today, but with the growth now being forecast and the related aspirational goals already determined by the ICAO Assembly, we must remain strongly proactive and fully engaged in limiting aviation's contributions to climate change.

41. In addition to the streamlined and more efficient operational procedures we are now helping States and operators to implement, good progress is also being made in the area of sustainable alternative fuels.
42. Some 40,000 flights already having made use of these to some extent, a number which could grow significantly in the coming years with suitable government support.
43. Returning for a moment to ICAO's recently-adopted CORSIA offsetting framework, I am pleased to advise you that the new *Volume IV* of Annex 16 to the Chicago Convention is expected to be adopted by the ICAO Council during its June Session this year, and will include the CORSIA implementation provisions.
44. It's my hope that many of your States were in attendance at our related Regional Seminar in Guatemala two weeks ago, where good progress was made in bringing local States up-to-speed on their responsibilities respective of CORSIA's implementation.
45. Many of the developments I have just summarized stipulate the need for new tools, techniques and technologies in order to be successful. This highlights the need for a range of new professional skills being available to air transport professionals to optimize their benefits.
46. It would be a shame for instance to work so hard together toward the achievement and management of the safest and most efficient air transport network the world has ever seen, only to find that we don't have enough skilled professional managers and technicians to operate it sustainably for future generations.
47. Today, at the same time as our sector is growing, its workforce is contracting due to the inevitable demographics of aging populations, lowering birth rates, and other attrition factors.
48. Airlines in this Region for example will be needing to train an average of 6,250 pilots per year until 2030, while current training capacity produces less than a third of this figure.

49. These challenges to air transport workforce planning are further aggravated by the increasing number of high-tech careers in other industry sectors which compete with aviation for up-and-coming talent.
50. This dynamic is playing out not only here but all over the world, and has forced our community to recognize that aviation has to do a much better job of both attracting and retaining the skilled workers and managers it requires, in particular girls and young women, in order to promote and improve gender equality of our aviation sector.
51. The story is quite similar with respect to the future air traffic controllers, maintenance personnel, and other technicians needed, but we should recall that these are just a few of literally hundreds of direct and indirect aviation-related career categories which will be impacted by attrition and related trends.
52. What this makes clear is that we will need to increase the overall numbers of next generation aviation professionals, and ideally manage their balanced movement between countries and employers.
53. Ladies and gentlemen, with our local Regional Offices in Mexico City and Lima serving as ICAO's front line assistance and capacity-building partners for your States, ICAO remains fully committed to working with your governments toward our shared aviation and economic development objectives.
54. As has been made very clear by my remarks today, Latin American aviation is experiencing healthy growth which can be leveraged for a wide range of socio-economic benefits for your local businesses and citizens.
55. But in order to do so, you must also stay focused on:
  - Enhancing the resources and capabilities of your national civil aviation authorities;
  - Working more closely and more efficiently with your partners in ICAO's Regional Offices and our Technical Cooperation Bureau;
  - And ultimately achieving improved levels of ICAO compliance so that your air transport networks are fully prepared for the growth and opportunities which lie ahead.

56. We have made major strides in all of these areas in recent years, and ICAO looks forward to making good use of future FIDAE Leaders Forums to continue driving greater collaboration and strategic focus in all that we embark upon together.
57. Thank you.