



ICAO

**Closing remarks by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Dr. Fang Liu,  
to the fourth ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF/4)**

*(Fortaleza, Brazil, 19 September, 2018)*

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished Ministers,*

*Panelists and honoured guests,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

1. It has been my great honour to be able to participate with you at this fourth edition of ICAO's World Aviation Forum (IWAF).
2. We greatly appreciate the time and thoughtful viewpoints you have shared with us in the last three days.
3. The significant contribution of aviation to global sustainable development is widely recognized. It supports businesses, creates jobs, enables many other industries, such as tourism and trade, and generates numerous socio-economic benefits.
4. Investment in aviation is also an investment in humanity and socio-cultural and economic integration.
5. We must also continue to acknowledge the strong growth of air traffic achieved since 2010, even despite the challenges our sector has faced in terms of global macroeconomic conditions and various security and health concerns in different areas of the world.
6. One key takeaway from this event is that the future outlook for aviation remains very positive. According to ICAO's long-term forecasts, air traffic volumes will double in the next 15 years, characterized by a 4.3 per cent annual growth rate for passenger traffic and a 3.9 per cent growth rate for freight traffic.

7. We have also been helped to understand that rapidly-expanding air traffic and enhanced air connectivity worldwide can only be sustained with continued development in aviation infrastructure, capacity and technology, supported by a globally harmonized regulatory framework.
8. Our top priority must be to ensure that air traffic growth is managed safely, securely and efficiently, with due respect for our sector's concrete environmental commitments, and in a manner which fully optimizes all related social and economic benefits.
9. A key challenge we still face is how to generate sufficient levels of investment in support of the aviation development objectives which will ultimately support and generate these benefits.
10. This is why ICAO has worked to ensure that this year's IWAF would serve as an invaluable opportunity for States, industries, investors and other stakeholders to come together, understand their distinct needs and priorities, and together discover new and win-win solutions.
11. This Forum has stimulated engagement and forward-looking dialogue, helped us to understand each other's needs in terms of practical business cases and clearly defined returns, and ultimately it has fostered new and important partnerships among the governments, private investors, donors and financing entities who were present here with us.
12. We have heard for example how growth in a State's economy allows States to invest in further aviation development, commitments which then reinvigorate the cycle of increased air transport connectivity and mutually inclusive growth.
13. We have also heard further views on how increased aviation connectivity often leads to additional re-investment in aviation.
14. This brings to mind that the current level of 2.6 per cent annual global development investment earmarked for aviation is grossly insufficient given our sector's many and diverse impacts on the wider economy.
15. And we must also recognize that the mobilization of long-term financial resources remains difficult for many States, especially given the strain on public finances faced by many developing countries.

16. But given that we must ensure that aviation remains a safe, secure, efficient and reliable driver for sustainable prosperity, wherever aircraft fly, a number of important actions are expected from ICAO's Member States.
17. First they need to structurally formalize their aviation development priorities in their national development plans, and with an appropriately-balanced set of development targets respective of all related multi-modal transport and urban planning initiatives.
18. These planning adjustments also to be harmonized with relevant international economic and financial frameworks, and supported by international economic cooperation and assistance where appropriate.
19. Secondly, States need to analyze current capacities, conduct gap-analyses, and define strategic aviation development targets which are fully aligned with ICAO's Global Plans, even as they pursue their specific national and regional needs.
20. Programmes and plans for aviation development must therefore be developed in close coordination with international and regional organizations, industry and donors, as well as multilateral development banks and other financial partners.
21. Recalling that ICAO has been designated a custodial agency responsible for collating data in support of the global indicator for UN SDG 9.1, covering sustainable and resilient infrastructure, let me please reassure you that we are doubling our efforts to enhance and develop tools, analyses, and services to assist States in identifying their aviation and infrastructure gaps.
22. These results in turn will help States to take a data-driven approach to their effective planning, as well as to better monitor and evaluate the implementation progress being achieved.
23. The third important point which States must pay heed to is the need to target their capacity building with a focus on investment in 'soft infrastructure' as well as in technology and innovation.
24. National planners must keep one eye very clearly focused on the need for adequate numbers of skilled professionals to be on hand to operate their new facilities and technology, meaning that human resources planning and development must therefore be pursued hand-in-hand in order to optimize returns on all related investments.

25. To encourage investment and manage their complex project financing requirements, States must also take pragmatic measures toward realizing a transparent, stable and predictable local investment climate.
26. This can be achieved by engaging more effectively with stakeholders and available mechanisms for financing, and by diversifying funding sources and elevating the role of the private sector.
27. Private investment, business reform, private finance initiatives, public-private partnerships (PPP), and various incentive schemes, can all play a part in this dynamic.
28. And we should also not lose sight of the role to be played here by international private capital flows, particularly foreign direct investment, along with a stable international financial system. All of these provide vital complements to domestic resources, whether public or private.
29. ICAO, for its part, will continue its crucial role in foresting effective partnerships between donors, investors, and States.
30. We will strengthen our common understanding and response in the face of new business imperatives, and work to increase all forms of international public finance and assistance for development, including official development assistance (ODA) and South-South cooperation.
31. Some of the discussions we have enjoyed here this week addressed air transport growth challenges in the Latin American and Caribbean region.
32. This part of the world holds tremendous potential for aviation growth, but we must work harder together to fully translate this into real world results in terms of economic output and job creation, among other indicators.
33. We therefore addressed how political commitments, liberalization efforts, safety improvements, and other factors can greatly and quite positively impact future development here, and learned a great deal more regarding best practices on aviation projects in the region, including on how to overcome some specific economic, financial and political challenges.

34. In this regard I have been greatly encouraged by the new **Latin American Declaration** you have adopted today, and the commitment made by local States to support and pursue its objectives and targets in a coordinated manner.
35. If past experience regarding other declarations in this Region is any indicator, we can be very confident of the success you will achieve.
36. ICAO is committed to providing whatever assistance we can in this regard, and to do more to assist our Member States under the *No Country Left Behind* initiative.
37. We will also assist you through the mobilization of resources, and by leveraging our data to help identify those States in need and coordinate and provide the required assistance.
38. *Ladies and gentlemen...*
39. Since the inauguration of the first IWAF, which took place the same year as the SDGs were adopted under the UN's Agenda 2030, ICAO has been proud to continuously promote the benefits of aviation, as well as its fundamental importance to the SDGs' attainment.
40. Our Organization has been greatly encouraged by the level of enthusiasm which States, international organizations, financial institutions, industry and other aviation stakeholders have shown in partnering with us in these efforts, and equally pleased to help support the assistance and coordination needed to improve global air connectivity and sustainable development all over the world.
41. Going forward we will work to build upon the initiatives and consensus which have been incorporated into the IWAF *Concluding Communiqué*, where we jointly and agreed that a higher priority must be placed on current aviation development needs.
42. In concluding now, I would like to once again thank the Government of the Federal Republic of Brazil, its National Civil Aviation Agency, and the local organizing committee for their tremendous support in making this event such a great success.
43. And a very big thank you goes out to all of you too, of course, for your participation, enthusiasm, and most of all for your partnership on ICAO's many global priorities.

44. I look forward to seeing you at the next IWAF in Montreal next September, a uniquely special occasion hosted on the occasion of our 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly, and the 75th Anniversary of ICAO.
  
45. Thank you all again, and safe travels home.