



**Opening remarks by the
Secretary General of ICAO
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Fifth Meeting of
Directors General of Civil Aviation
for the ICAO Middle East Region (DGCA-MID/5)**

(Kuwait, 4 November 2019)

Excellencies

Distinguished friends and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my great pleasure to join you here in the lovely city Kuwait for this fifth Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the ICAO Middle East Region.
2. Please let me begin by expressing ICAO's sincere thanks to the government of Kuwait, and to H.E. Sheikh Salman and his team for the organization, very warm welcome, and excellent facilities we've been provided.
3. I would also like to highlight the incredible appreciation which ICAO has for the many States we work so closely with in the MID Region, and how honoured I am to be here with you to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of ICAO this year.
4. The ICAO Middle East Region has been one of the fastest growing in the world for passenger and cargo traffic since 2011.
5. Aviation activities continue to deliver important direct and indirect benefits here in terms of local and regional economic growth, and this is backed up by the fact that MID air carriers are continuing to record steady and robust growth rates of between four and five per cent annually for passenger and freight traffic.
6. ICAO is also encouraged that 2018 saw a 10% increase in tourist arrivals by air to MID destinations, a figure which represented some 64 million new tourists in 2018 alone.

7. While all of your States have had a role to play in this success, and notably as a result of your steadily increasing levels of ICAO compliance, it's also my pleasure to congratulate Kuwait with respect to the inauguration of its new Terminal 4 and the capacity it now provides for an additional 4.5 million passengers annually in your region. It was also a great pleasure for me yesterday to visit the new Terminal 2 at Kuwait international airport and to see the ambitious blueprint in realization.
8. This reminds us as well that more than half of all international tourism and nearly a third of global trade by value are dependent on air transport connectivity, and that through these and other factors aviation presently supports more than 2.4 million jobs and contributes USD130 billion to GDP in MID Region GDP.
9. We should recall here that each of your States has the primary responsibility to ensure that sufficient infrastructure, human resources, training, and other capacities are in place to accommodate and manage forecast traffic growth.
10. This reminds us of the important role of having national development plans which meaningfully incorporate aviation development priorities, an area which ICAO has been seeing tremendous success in.
11. ICAO promotes the benefits of aviation toward the UN's *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
12. ICAO makes clear to national governments how the international connectivity established through civil aviation operations provides fundamental capabilities which supports 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under Agenda 2030.
13. Local and national aviation planning must furthermore be aligned with ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), and structured on the basis of the targets and frameworks established in our Global Plans for Aviation Safety (GASP), Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency (GANP), and Aviation Security (GASeP).
14. Talking about MID Region, in the safety domain it is my pleasure today to commend the MID Region in particular on the aviation safety performance being achieved – even as your traffic figures continue to rise.

15. I am pleased to see that the MID Accident rate of 2.3 accidents per million departures is still better than the Global Rate, and that Regional EI has increased from 70.5 to 75.23 per cent recently – a significant improvement compared to other regions.
16. Aerodrome Certification has also increased, from 54 per cent in 2017 to 67 per cent in 2019, which demonstrates the strong commitment on behalf of your States to enhance the effective implementation of ICAO SARPs.
17. And lastly under safety, I have been greatly encouraged that the MID Region has no SSCs at present, an accomplishment you can all take some pride in.
18. Where both Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency are concerned, continuous increases in traffic growth are making our goal of maximized operations increasingly complex.
19. In this regard please let me take a moment to commend the spirit of cooperation and respect for safety prioritization exemplified by the rapid addressing of several ATM operational challenges through the MID Contingency Coordination Teams (CCTs) and ATM Contingency Plan.
20. The establishment of the MID Flight Procedures Programme (MID FPP) will further support States in meeting their obligations relating to flight procedure design. The MID Office has secured sizeable local contributions to help launch the programme, and we will now be looking forward to your States' signing of the project document and establishing the needed steering committee.
21. Moving to the Security of the MID Region, I would like to congratulate you on the establishment of your Middle East Regional Aviation Security and Facilitation Group (MID-RASFG), the development of a MID SECFAL Plan in line with the GASeP. Here also I would like to thank Kuwait for hosting the very first meeting of this group.
22. I was also pleased to note that more than 23 States from inside and outside the MID Region were hand in hand last month in Jordan to discuss Cyber security policy, strategy and legislation, as well as operations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. This year was the year of the 40th Session of the Assembly of ICAO. I wish to thank all MID States for your contributions to the Assembly and I wish to congratulate the MID Region and in particular the State of Kuwait for electing H.E. Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah as the First-Vice President of the ICAO Assembly.
24. During the Assembly a lot of important issues has been endorsed by the member States. In the areas of Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency at A40, States endorsed new revisions to ICAO's GASP and GANP Global Plans which will be instrumental to managing the adoption and integration of new 21st Century aircraft and operations alongside traditional aircraft operations.
25. ICAO also welcomed States agreement at A40 that we should pursue a new global target of zero aviation fatalities by 2030, a target which will be supported by the new Global Aviation Safety Oversight System (GASOS) which was also adopted there. This will help to augment safety cooperation, and assist many States in terms of their aviation safety oversight, safety management, and accident investigation capabilities.
26. In the area of Aviation Security, ICAO further welcomed States' commitment to forge global partnerships supporting the implementation and evolution of the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP), as well as their calls for ICAO's continuing TRIP Strategy work in support of passport and border control modernization, identity management infrastructure, and the ICAO Public Key Directory.
27. With respect to ICAO's important global role in system-wide UN efforts to combat global terrorism, States expressed their clear agreement that ICAO should increase its outreach on the accelerated implementation of an Advance Passenger Information (API) system.
28. They also endorsed the prioritization of United Nations Security Council resolution 2396 (2017), urging that a new ICAO Standard be adopted relevant to Passenger Name Record (PNR) data.
29. States also supported the idea of establishing 2020 as the 'Year of Security Culture', and endorsed ICAO's continued focus on insider threats; the achievement of the national targets reflected in the GASeP; and other security priorities.
30. ICAO's 40th Assembly also endorsed the ICAO Cybersecurity strategy for civil aviation and called for its implementation through an action plan.

31. They also strongly called for the establishment of a renewed governance structure to further the work on Cybersecurity initiated by the Secretariat Study Group.
32. This will feature important goals relating to information sharing, improved coordination among all partnering government and enforcement entities, and timely and aligned responses to related risks and events.
33. The A40 Delegates reconfirmed their commitments in support of the CORSIA global offsetting solution and the ICAO basket of measures.
34. States also acknowledged the excellent recent progress achieved through ICAO on the first aeroplane CO₂ emissions standard and the non-volatile Particulate Matter standard for aircraft engines. States also agreed that ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) should prioritize an exploratory study on environmental impacts of new supersonic aircraft being developed.
35. The successful adoption of the new fourth volume to Annex 16, and the ICAO-driven development and implementation of 116 State Action Plans to reduce aviation-related CO₂ emissions. The need for further elaboration of 2050 ICAO Vision on Sustainable Aviation Fuel, were also acknowledged.
36. We should also appreciate in this context the excellent insights we heard at ICAO during the innovation-focused World Aviation Forum and Fair events which we conducted on the eve of the Assembly.
37. The A40 delegates also supported the need to assess national taxation objectives in accordance with ICAO's policies, and subsequent to appropriate cost-benefit analyses, while continuing their support for the ICAO *Long-term Vision for International Air Transport Liberalization*.
38. Regarding ICAO's work to develop robust aviation data, monitoring and analyses, States at A40 endorsed new objectives in the areas of air transport statistics, big data analytics, forecasting and economic analysis, including with respect to the development of an aviation satellite account methodological framework.
39. In terms of global air transport consumer protection, they encouraged that all Member States should apply the ICAO Core Principles, as well as pursue the signing and ratification of the Montreal Convention of 1999.

40. And lastly in this area, I wish to welcome the release during this Assembly of the new edition of the Industry High-level Group's Aviation Benefits report, to which ICAO is a key contributor.
41. In addition to these developments relating to ICAO's Strategic Objectives, I was pleased to see States' endorsement at A40 that ICAO should provide fresh impetus to its Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme through a new, ambitious and holistic strategy.
42. And in a similar vein, we welcomed States' clear acknowledgement of the scope and value inherent in ICAO's assistance and capacity-building prioritization under our *No Country Left Behind* Initiative.
43. Governments at A40 also appreciated the invaluable assistance to Member States toward achieving and maintaining the highest competencies of aviation personnel through ICAO's aviation training programmes.
44. With respect to capacity-building, it has been greatly encouraging to take note of how closely your States have been working with the ICAO MID Office under *No Country Left Behind*, ensuring that the significant growth you're experiencing is supported by effective assistance activities.
45. In this regard, I would like to congratulate here both MID States and ICAO's Regional Director Mr. Rahma and his team on the development and implementation of the MID Region NCLB Strategy, and I must also underscore ICAO's deep appreciation for the financial contributions we've received from MID States which play such an important role in helping to elevate overall regional compliance.
46. I look forward to reviewing the newly-updated version of the MID NCLB strategy later at this meeting.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues;

47. As we set out on this 5th MID DGCA conference, please let me express my sincere hopes and aspirations for all that can be achieved in the MID Region in this evolving and dynamic environment. I trust that all of us are aiming for a better and prosperous aviation in the future. .
48. While the MID Region being among the world leaders in traffic growth, this poses many serious issues which must be confronted, Nevertheless, this also indicates the increased connectivity and prosperity of your societies and economies.

49. In this, the 75th Anniversary year of ICAO, we must remain aware more than ever of all that aviation achievements, and of all that is on our horizons in terms of the incredible innovations, which will revolutionize what we understand today as civil air transport.
50. I would also wish to express in this context our immense gratitude to the many MID States that have undertaken commemorative activities to celebrate ICAO's 75th anniversary this year.
51. ICAO, as always, remains extremely grateful for the commitments and achievements of our Member States, and please accept my steadfast assurance that we will be a partner you can rely on in all civil aviation matters in the exciting decades ahead.
52. Thank you.