



**Opening Remarks
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization,
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the 20th Anniversary celebration of the Yamoussoukro Decision
at the AFCAC Golden (50th Anniversary) Jubilee**

(Dakar, Senegal – 14 Nov 2019)

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my great honour to join you here in Dakar to help celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), and more specifically today the 20th Anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision.
2. I would like to highlight from the outset ICAO's deep and very sincere appreciation for the Republic of Senegal which is hosting us this week, but also of course for its longstanding and very generous support for our ICAO Regional Office for Western and Central Africa here in Dakar.
3. And let me also please express ICAO's thanks and appreciation to the other regional organizations besides AFCAC which we work so closely with in Africa, and in particular the African Union Commission, Africa's Regional Economic Communities, and the African Development Bank.
4. It is now well recognized that international air connectivity is a crucial driver of economic, social and cultural development, and an indispensable contributor to local tourism growth and job creation.
5. Globally, aviation today transports some 4.3 billion passengers and 58 million tonnes of freight each year, on more than 38 million flights, more than 100,000 flights transporting over ten million passengers, each and every day.
6. These operations permit aviation to transcend oceans and borders, and ultimately to connect peoples and businesses all over the world.

7. This is clearly attested to by the fact that over half of the world's 1.4 billion international tourists reach their destination by air today, and we should appreciate together that all of this combined activity contributes tremendously to global peace, prosperity, and sustainable socio-economic development.
8. This point is very clearly backed up by the fact that air transport directly and indirectly supports over 2.7 trillion dollars in global GDP, while providing sustainable jobs and careers to more than 65 million people all over the world.
9. And in addition to all of these very impressive metrics, our sector remains seriously confronted by the fact that air traffic and passenger volumes are expected to double in just 15 years' time.
10. According to the African Development Bank, Africa is home to over 1.2 billion people. This represents over 15 per cent of the world population, but at the same time this continent accounts for just three-to-four per cent of the global air services market.
11. In addition, intra-African international traffic only represents about 23 per cent of the overall international flight movements here.
12. What these metrics clearly indicate for us is that one of the primary challenges for African aviation today is its intra-African connectivity.
13. They also help us understand why the African aviation market still has the most potential for growth than any other in the world.
14. But notwithstanding its contributions and rapid growth, we must also acknowledge that aviation still faces regulatory barriers, constraints, economic fragmentation, and uncertainties.
15. All of these factors continue to impede the efficiency and benefits of international connectivity on the continent.
16. Harnessing and maximizing the benefits of air transport requires enabling regulatory environments and quality infrastructure, commensurate with forecast levels of traffic growth.
17. Efforts in this respect must focus on the liberalization of market access, but also the establishment of robust regulatory frameworks and governance for air transport.

18. Related practices and priorities refer to air transport modernization, harmonization, and the convergence of regulatory approaches and regimes in States, in addition to the promotion of connectivity, competition, and transparency, to the benefit of our consumer base.
19. As part of AFCAC's historic Golden Jubilee, today we will be focusing on and celebrating a key development representing one of the most important collective decisions on air transport liberalization ever adopted by African States.
20. I am speaking of course of the 20th Anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999.
21. A key consideration for the African Ministers who adopted the Yamoussoukro Decision was that the strict regulatory protections sustaining national carriers at that time were having significantly detrimental effects in terms of aviation safety, affordability, and, not surprisingly in light of these factors, poor air traffic growth in Africa.
22. To address these negative factors, the Decision called for:
 - Full liberalization of intra-African air transport services in terms of access, capacity, frequency, and tariffs;
 - Free exercise of first, second, third, fourth and fifth freedom rights for passenger and freight air services by eligible airlines, or in other words the enabling of non-national carriers to land in a state and take-on traffic coming from, or destined for, a third state;
 - Liberalized tariffs and fair competition;
 - And lastly but very importantly, compliance with established ICAO safety standards and recommended practices.
24. We cannot ignore the fact that the Yamoussoukro Decision was a follow-on development to the original Yamoussoukro Declaration of 1988.
25. This renewal in general was due to the reluctance on behalf of certain States to adhere to these instruments over the years, or else insufficient efforts on behalf of its adhering States with respect to the effective implementation of the Yamoussoukro requirements.
26. It remains imperative, however, that African States continue to make progress on their liberalization objectives, especially in light of the benefits which arise as a result of said efforts.

27. In addition to improvements in the quality and pricing of air services, countries which adopt liberalized policies also have the greater latitude to redirect state subsidies, previously earmarked to support legacy carriers, toward investments that have much more positive impacts on economic development.
28. Additionally, the lower transport costs achieved through enhanced competition also help to mitigate a significant trade barrier for African countries, while also improving prospects for increased tourism.
29. As an earlier World Bank study on this topic has highlighted, some 20 per cent of Africa's tourism-related jobs are supported by visitors arriving by air, compared with only four percent of tourism jobs in North America, by comparison.
30. And experience with liberalized air services elsewhere has also clearly revealed that they result in increased regional and intercontinental trade.
31. Competitive air carriers with more frequent flights and lower fares can also open new doors to trade in perishables and high-tech manufactured goods.
32. It's therefore encouraging at this juncture that the Prioritized 2019-2020 Action Plan for the establishment and operationalization of the Single Africa Air Transport Market relies on a comprehensive six-pillar architecture to address such issues as: increased advocacy; a fine-tuned regulatory framework; support for modernized aviation infrastructure; safety and security enhancements; and new approaches to financing for aviation in Africa.
33. With respect to the advocacy objective, I'm pleased to report that the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly in September endorsed that our Organization should continue to promote the important socio-economic benefits of air transport and related objectives for new infrastructure.
34. ICAO will therefore continue to raise global awareness on the important links between air connectivity and sustainable socio-economic development, a mission which the Council President and I have already been pursuing quite vigorously throughout our terms of office.
35. With respect to the Regulatory Framework, the Assembly encouraged States to apply the *ICAO Core Principles* on consumer protection in their regulatory practices, and urged them to sign and ratify the Montreal Convention of 1999.
36. It was also agreed that ICAO should facilitate an exchange of views and good practices regarding the application of the *ICAO Core Principles*.

37. The 40th Session of the Assembly also endorsed a range of items supporting the ICAO *Long-term Vision for International Air Transport Liberalization*.
38. Specific work items in this area include forging a more detailed understanding of the benefits of liberalization, and the barriers to open market access, both in terms of passenger and cargo services.
39. The Assembly also called for the continuation of ICAO's work to develop a *Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines*.
40. A further Assembly endorsement called for ICAO to provide technical expertise and support for the implementation of the *Ministerial Declaration and Framework for a Plan of Action for Air Transport and Tourism Development in Africa*, and that we should establish a new Global Aviation Competitiveness Index.
41. Concerning the taxation of international air transport, the Assembly agreed to urge States to assess any related national objectives in accordance with ICAO's policies, and to conduct appropriate cost-benefit analyses before the introduction of taxes on air transport.
42. To help address these priorities further here in Africa, and to accelerate momentum on the ongoing adoption and implementation of liberalized approaches here, I am pleased to announce that next year we will be conducting our next Air Transport Symposium in Africa.
43. The Symposium's primary objective will be to promote ICAO policies and guidance on the economic regulation of international air transport, and to provide an opportunity for your States to share experiences and agree on new and concrete measures toward a more favourable regulatory environment continent-wide.
44. It will also be seeking to accelerate local efforts towards a transparent, stable, and predictable investment climate relevant to future air transport mega projects in Africa.
45. With respect to the operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market, ICAO's work will include new objectives in the areas of statistics, big data analytics, forecasting and economic analysis, and the development of an aviation satellite account methodology.
46. Aviation Infrastructure financing and modernization objectives are already being supported by Declaration and Framework for a Plan of Action for Development of Aviation Infrastructure in Africa, which was adopted at the IWAF/3 in Abuja two years ago.

47. As part of its activities, the ICAO Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa, which we all know simply as the ‘AFI Plan’, has conducted a new gap analysis this year covering airports, air navigation services, and aircraft fleet capacity and equipage.
48. The results of this gap analysis have been important to refining our understanding of the current status of implementation of aviation infrastructure in Africa based on global, regional and national requirements, and taking into account current regional traffic levels, demand forecasts, and capacity projections.
49. These gap analysis outcomes will now provide helpful metrics relevant to the preparation of regional and national aviation Master Plans, while ensuring as well that the ongoing development of aviation infrastructure in Africa fully complies with applicable ICAO SARPs.
50. One of its key recommendations also concerns the need for a further gap analysis, and one which is based on 25-year projections of traffic growth, operational and capacity regulatory requirements, and the forecast demand for next generation aviation professionals.
51. It will also seek to determine the funding required to bridge the long term infrastructure gaps, and identify appropriate financing mechanisms at the State and Regional levels.
52. During today’s Sessions we will discuss the wider socio-economic benefits of liberalized air transport market policies.
53. I’m confident this will be extremely worthwhile for everyone, and especially with respect to the transformational experiences and benefits that States and regional blocks have been benefiting from since they adopted open skies policies.
54. In concluding now, let me please express ICAO’s deep appreciation once again to the AU Commission and AFCAC, both of which have been longstanding and committed partners of ICAO, and also to thank all local aviation organizations and stakeholders for their continued support to ICAO’s programmes and policies supporting African civil aviation.
55. Thank You.