



**Opening remarks  
by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Dr. Fang Liu  
to the Aviation Youth event**

*(Bucharest, Romania, 8 May 2018)*

1. Good morning everyone!
2. It's so encouraging to see you all here today to learn more about the air transport sector, and the incredible opportunities it will have in the coming years for young people willing to take on the challenges of a skilled career.
3. For those of you who are not familiar with ICAO, we are a Specialized Agency of the United Nations and we work to help world governments cooperate to share their skies to their mutual benefit.
4. They do so more formally in their capacities as signatories to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, the agreement which prescribes how they cooperate and to what ends, as well as through the thousands of aviation Standards they've agreed to through ICAO which serve to align their national air transport regulations.
5. This cooperation is what helps us to realize a truly global air transport network, and it explains how everyone today can get on a flight and travel to just about any other location in the world.
6. ICAO also works very closely with the other agencies in the overall UN system, mainly as air transport is so fundamental to the work and goals which they pursue as well. Indeed of the 17 *Agenda 2030* Sustainable development Goals adopted by the UN, 14 of them have been shown to be directly dependent on the local availability of safe and efficient aviation connectivity.
7. It is a very exciting time in the history of aviation now, and a just-as-exciting moment for those of us now assuring that a dedicated and competent next generation of aviation professionals will be on hand to manage its future.

8. With the doubling of air traffic now being forecast by 2030, air transport has much to do in order to keep our system as safe, efficient and sustainable as modern travellers and businesses have come to rely on.
9. During that decade we expect to see as many people travelling by air in a single year as currently occupy the entire planet. Close to 8 billion people...
10. They will move to-and-from their global destinations on some 200,000 commercial flights a day, spreading their cultures, their commerce, and fostering greater peace and prosperity wherever aircraft take them.
11. But in order to continue spreading economic growth and cultural diversity all over the world, the aircraft of the future will need hundreds of thousands of new pilots to fly them, hundreds of thousands of air traffic controllers to guide them, and just as many skilled maintenance technicians to keep them safe, fast and reliable day-in and day-out.
12. The air transport sector also needs to ensure it has invested in both expanded and modernized airport and air navigation infrastructure invested in before we reach 2030, so that we can safely and efficiently manage more and more aircraft in the finite amount of airspace available to us.
13. One of the most important prerequisites for this modernization and development to succeed is the new skilled personnel who will make it happen.
14. I'm sure you're all quite familiar with the professions I just mentioned, but in addition to these we'll need others such as:
  - information technology and cybersecurity specialists;
  - cabin crew and flight check-in agents;
  - screening, immigration and customs officers;
  - specialists in unmanned aircraft systems and drones;
  - baggage management specialists;
  - airport managers and directors;
  - administrative, financial, and legal staff;and many other excited and engaged new professionals to keep our global system running.

15. We know you want inspiring, challenging and rewarding careers, and we know that aviation has more work to do, in unison with universities, technical institutes, and others, in providing affordable education and training.
16. One of the key motivations behind organizing this aviation youth event with the Romanian Civil Aviation Authority and Military Technical College was to share ideas with you on how to attract, educate, train and retain the next generation of aviation professionals.
17. We think it's critical to have the views of young people such as yourselves to inform our discussions and policy-making, and for a number of years now we have been encouraging that through our Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme.
18. It helps us to raise awareness on these issues among young professionals, university students, and trade school participants, but also among high school and younger students, and especially young girls.
19. There's simply no way we can fill all of the positions we have unless women and girls pursue the STEM resources available to them and work to join aviation's ranks. This explains why a big part of our NGAP work is to drive greater interest and access for girls to STEM careers.
20. More generally, aviation understands that it needs to facilitate access to aviation training and education programmes which lead to dependable recruitment opportunities, but we also recognize your need to advance in your careers and be acknowledged and rewarded for your contributions.
21. It's our hope that this event lights a spark in each of you regarding the amazing and challenging future which aviation holds in store, and on that note may I wish you all an engaging and productive event.
22. Thank you.