



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu
to the Eighth Meeting of Directors General
of Civil Aviation of the AFI Region (AFI-DGCA/8)**

(Virtual event, 16 July 2021)

1. The aviation sector worldwide, and in particular here in Africa, has been severely impacted by COVID-19.
 2. However, the significant role it has played to ensure the delivery of essential medical and air cargo services, humanitarian operations, and the repatriation of global citizens, has also clearly underscored air transport's continuing vital role as a driver of Africa-wide economic, social, and cultural development.
 3. Even despite the pandemic and its effects, our joint efforts have continued with respect to all safety, capacity, and efficiency targets and goals, notably as contained in the latest editions of ICAO's Global Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Plans (GASP; GANP).
 4. These combined efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the AFI Region average effective implementation (EI) rate for State safety and security oversight systems between 2015 and 2021, as well as further notable progress in safety and other aviation sector management.
 5. The alignment of the AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan programmes with the Abuja targets, Windhoek targets, the GANP, the GASP and the GASeP, has aided your identification of related key priorities at the international, regional, and State levels.
 6. This has resulted in a framework for action in which aviation stakeholders can work together to address shared objectives in support of ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, and to address many other common goals to enhance aviation performance in the AFI Region.
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7. An example of this framework for collaboration driving improved results will be seen shortly, with the formalizing a new Memorandum of Cooperation between the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) and the Interim SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (iSASO).
 8. This MOC directly supports the implementation of the AFI Ministerial Declaration on RSOOs of March 2017, and other safety progress being made in this context. This progress includes the recent marked improvement of AFI RVSM airspace safety.
 9. Additional safety contributions from ICAO which I would like to highlight at this time include the virtual workshops and seminars our AFI Regional Directors conducted on topics such as Targeted Exemptions; implementation of the Global Runway Reporting Format (GRF); Aerodrome Inspections; Contingency planning; NOTAM modernization; an improved air route network; civil/military cooperation; and Search and Rescue.
 10. Aviation Security and Facilitation prioritization has lately led to efforts addressing USAP CMA corrective action plans (CAPs); training in coordination with regional Aviation Security Training Centres (ASTCs); the delivery of Annex 9 FAL courses; the development of FAL iPACKs; and the conducting of API/PNR seminars.
 11. With the support of our Technical Cooperation Bureau and Global Aviation Training (GAT) Office, ICAO has developed further iPACKs to support States in their efforts to recover from the effects of the pandemic, including those relating to Aerodromes, Safety Management Systems, Public Health Corridors, and common AVSEC FAL priorities.
 12. While commending all of these efforts, I would also like to emphasize the need for them to be geared towards the realization of the goals of both AU Agenda 2063, and UN Agenda 2030, for increased and sustainable development, greater prosperity for all, and the accelerated integration of Africa's economies.
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13. I would also encourage you to ensure alignment of your AFI DGCA Priority Implementation Plan, adopted in Brazzaville, in 2016, with ICAO's respective Global Plans and other priorities especially those identified for the next triennium.
 14. Notwithstanding the fact that Air transport growth in Africa was among the fastest in the world pre-pandemic, civil aviation on this continent still faced regulatory barriers, financial constraints, and the continued slow pace in the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) towards full implementation of Yamoussoukro Decision (YD).
 15. This hinders air transport on the continent, and I must continue to stress the critical importance of addressing these fundamental economic barriers to improved connectivity towards economic prosperity of African States.
 16. In closing now, I would like to express my gratitude to the African Union Commission (AUC), AFCAC and to the many other regional and industry partners who have collaborated so extensively with ICAO, and played such an important role in assisting African States with the initiatives, funding, and technical expertise that they've required to realize so much progress here.
 17. Please let me once again express my deep appreciation to you all for your great support during our common journey these past six years, and for the many successes we've recorded along the way.
 18. You are well advanced on your path to achieving strong and sustainable air connectivity in Africa, compliant with ICAO SARPs and targets, but much more needs to be addressed for you to reach your ultimate goals.
 19. Thank you.
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