



**2019 EUR/NAT DGCA remarks  
by the Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Dr. Fang Liu,  
On the 75th Anniversary of ICAO**

*(Paris, France, – 19 March 2019)*

*Good evening everyone.*

1. This occasion has been set aside for me to provide remarks relevant to the 75th Anniversary of ICAO, and it will be my pleasure this evening to discuss highlights of both the past and the future of our organization, as well as the sector it serves.
2. The history of ICAO takes us back to the end of the Second World War. A vast network of military air services had been established during this period, but there were many obstacles, both political and technical, to evolving these facilities and routes to new civilian uses.
3. Subsequent to several studies of this matter initiated by the United States, as well as various consultations it undertook with its major allies, an invitation was eventually extended to 55 States to attend an International Civil Aviation Conference in Chicago, in 1944.
4. These delegates met during a still-violent period of WWII, and travelled to Chicago at great personal risk. Many of the countries they represented were still occupied at the time.
5. Fifty-four of the 55 States invited attended the Chicago Conference, and by its conclusion 52 of them had signed the new *Convention on International Civil Aviation* which had been realized.
6. Known more commonly as the ‘Chicago Convention’, this landmark agreement laid the foundation for the standards and procedures for aviation network we know and appreciate today.

7. It also set out as its prime objective the development of international civil aviation "...in a safe and orderly manner", and such that air services would be established with "equality of opportunity" as a key underlying objective.
8. The Chicago Convention also formalized the expectation that a specialized International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) should be established, in order to organize and support the intensive international cooperation which the fledgling global air transport network would obviously require.
9. ICAO's core mandate, then as today, was to help States work together to achieve the highest possible degree of uniformity in civil aviation regulations, standards, procedures, and organization.
10. The emerging air network at this time, while international in its overall ambitions, first required a localized approach to address some early coordination objectives.
11. To accomplish this, States first worked through ICAO to divide the world into ten air navigation regions. This step took place in late 1945, followed by the establishment of Regional Route Service Organizations.
12. An early priority for the first Regional Air Navigation or 'RAN' planners was the transitioning of former military facilities to support emerging civilian air operations.
13. Because of the great number of such facilities in the North Atlantic and European regions, the very first ICAO RAN Meetings were decided to be held in Dublin and Paris, and in March and April of 1946 respectively.
14. Since those early years and the birth of international civilian flight, let me please appreciate how ICAO's Paris Office leadership and technical staff have been contributing so immensely to the civil aviation harmonization of North Atlantic and European States.
15. It has been instrumental in the establishment of new routes, the development and implementation of Regional Air Navigation Plans, and in fulfilling the key role of all ICAO Regional Offices by providing a common governance mechanism supporting the effective cooperation of EUR/NAT's now 56 accredited States.

16. Some of the other notable developments realized through this office include the technological progression from long range turboprops to the first jet aircraft, and then later the introduction of the first supersonic transports.
17. These are just a few of a much longer list of achievements this office has helped ICAO to achieve, and they certainly give us a sense of how essential this Regional Office's work has been over the years.
18. Switching our perspective to the future of air transport, we can all agree that aviation today is confronted by many new and emerging challenges – but also just as many opportunities.
19. These include the safe integration of unmanned and remotely-piloted aircraft operations, new commercial space flights, next generation super- and hypersonic flights, and many other cutting-edge developments such as the increasing deployment of blockchain and Artificial Intelligence applications for air transport.
20. Throughout our global aviation network, and across all of our ICAO Member States, a tremendous modernization will take place over the years ahead.
21. Clearly we must each embrace these transformations, and prepare for them by realizing new physical and regulatory infrastructure to keep our sector vital, efficient, and fully responsive to the needs and expectations of modern businesses and societies.
22. It is further essential that we proactively seek-out new entrants to the world of aircraft design and operation, so that they can be more meaningfully integrated into our existing regulatory frameworks and processes.
23. And those frameworks and processes themselves must also come under our scrutiny, and become much more responsive than is the case today.
24. ICAO is already fostering the emergence of this collective vision of the future of aviation and air transport regulation, and as noted it is a major theme of our 75th anniversary celebrations this year.

25. Yes, we will likely see many new types of air operations coming into existence which are no longer dependent on a centralized airport for take-offs and landings, but this is no more destabilizing than the fact that we all carry our phones in our pockets today, or that some buildings now generate their own energy rather than relying on a regional grid.
26. As part of our focus on the future, the ICAO Secretariat has been tasked with organizing youth competitions on aviation innovation themes in all ICAO Member States.
27. Our hope with these contests is to excite and inspire the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP).
28. We have also made innovation the key topic for this year's ICAO World Aviation Forum, and will conduct that at our headquarters just before our Assembly gets underway this Fall, on 23 September.
29. This new edition of the IWAF will accordingly be accompanied by a technology and innovation exhibition, taking place from 22-23 September.
30. This IWAF will not only explore new aircraft and operations, but also the related innovation challenges faced by aviation regulators and standards-setters.
31. I would encourage anyone interested to visit our new 75th Anniversary Future Aviation website to learn more, as well as to consult our State Letter of 21 February as mentioned.
32. In closing now, dear friends and colleagues, let me please reiterate that ICAO and the Convention which established it have never been more relevant.
33. This is true not only in terms of global civil aviation safety, security and efficiency, but also worldwide sustainable development and the peace and prosperity of all nations and peoples.
34. I'm sure you all join me in looking forward to the next 75 years of international flight, and to the very promising horizon which our vision and shared cooperation will help us to attain.
35. Thank you.