

China's Actions and Positions on Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from International Civil Aviation

Speech by Dr. Ma Xiangshan
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Respected Moderator, Mr. Christopher Surgenor,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: Good morning!

First, I would like to extend my congratulations to the commencement of ICAO colloquium on aviation and climate change, which I feel greatly honored to attend.

Global climate change has a profound impact on the survival and development of humankind. It is a major challenge facing all countries. Today, all stake holders from governments, airlines, manufacturer, as well as other NGOs are gathered here in this colloquium to evaluate the impact of aviation on global climate change and to discuss various kinds of emission reduction measures. And this will be of great significance for catalyzing stronger actions by the whole industry to meet the global challenge of climate change.

Excitingly, a lot of effective work has been done by ICAO in addressing climate changes. Among its achievements, most

important is the *Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change*, which was later endorsed in *the High Level meeting* in October, 2009. The *Declaration* by HLM reaffirmed the principles and provisions on “Common But Differentiated Responsibilities” and respective capabilities, and with the developed countries taking the lead under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change) and KP (Kyoto Protocol), and proposes the aspirational goal to improve fuel efficiency, while encouraging countries to submit their own policies and action plans.

As one of ICAO Part I Council Members, the second largest country in terms of air traffic volumes and one of the top nine countries concerned in international aviation transport, China has always been taking the climate change issues as one of the significant tasks in its way to achieve and promote the sustainable development of civil aviation industry. We have attended all of the four meetings of the Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC), the high-level meeting as well as the *ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels* held in Brazil at the end of 2009. We have made constructive suggestions for the final formulation of *Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change* as

well as the *Declaration and Recommendations by the High Level Meeting*; meanwhile we have also showed great flexibility.

In addition to the active participation in ICAO's Conferences and negotiation activities on climate change, China is also initiating and conducting its own energy-saving and emission reduction actions throughout the country in a very positive and orderly manner. And next, I would like to introduce to you briefly the situations in my country:

Civil Aviation Administration of China (shortened as CAAC) defines the development of civil aviation industry to be "*a sustainable development*", namely "*the development of civil aviation towards a resource-economical and environment-friendly industry by actively promoting energy saving and emission reduction*". The goal is so clear and ambitious, and it will serve as a guidance while we advancing forward. CAAC mobilizes and implements the measures to the greatest extent in its framework to minimize GHGs from aviation sources, including actions such as setting up its own MRV system for the industry-wide program on energy-saving and emission reduction, boosting the supervision and management system for airlines and airports, enhancing

“flexible use of airspace” mechanism so as to shorten flying distance, promoting “the replacement of APU operations by bridge-containing facilities” to reduce ground carbon emission, and publicizing extensively the energy-saving and emission-reduction program throughout the industry.

As the Chinese saying goes, “*Be true in word and resolute in deed*”. By now remarkable achievements have been gained in China. Here, I would like to cite a few figures: By the opening of "temporary direct routes," a total of 15.8 million kilometers of the flying distance has been shortened in 2009, resulting in a saving of 88,000 tonnes of fuel and a reduction of about 280,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions; By conducting an experimental program of replacing the APU operations by bridge containing facilities in such airports as Beijing Capital International Airport, Shanghai Pudong International Airport, and Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, we have saved fuel by 380,000 tonnes and reduced carbon dioxide emissions by about 121,000 tonnes. Meanwhile, as was promoted by CAAC, airlines in China, one after the other, has adopted and are implementing the operational improvement and carbon offset actions with the theme of “Green Aviation”.

In future, we will continue our efforts to further reduce

carbon emissions by seeking international cooperation on the issue of engaging alternative fuel in aviation industry.

As for the more ambitious aspirational goals and the market-based measures, I would like to reaffirm our position on the **DEVELOPMENT** and **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**: Climate change is an environmental issue, but also, and more importantly, a development issue arising in the course of human development, which we should and can only advance efforts to address in the course of development. Accordingly, ICAO should take **DEVELOPMENT** as the top priority as is authorized in Article 44 of *Chicago Convention*. Meanwhile, developed countries should take up their responsibility and take the lead to reduce emission due to their historic emissions. Full consideration should be given to the fact that developing countries are in their development stage and are facing a great shortage in terms of finance, technology and capability. Developed countries should, therefore, provide developing countries with financial and technological support, without asking them to take on obligations that go beyond their development stage and their respective responsibilities and actual capabilities. In view of this, the fuel efficiency goal will be the most appropriate one since its focuses on both

development and emission control. And some other goals are in fact neither practical nor reasonable if they pose hindrance to the development in a one-sided pursuit of emission reductions.

Among all kinds emission reduction measures, technology and operation will be the best options to cut down the emissions in most direct and effective ways. Innovations and advances in engine technology, biofuel and Air Traffic Management are in fact the best choice to substantially reduce the emission while guarantee the development of the industry. On the threshold of new technology, we can not hold our steps from fear. Rather, we should keep moving and take more positive and ambitious steps towards innovations. China does not object to market-based measures. Our idea is that technological measures are better options and they should be the mainstream. Rather than to spend money for emission allowance, it would be better to minimize emissions in practical ways. While for the possible use of any market-based measures, it is quite necessary to conduct careful pre-studies to their influences on the development, especially the influences on the international civil aviation development for developing countries. Instead of simply standing on pure economics formulae and advocating "prevention of carbon leakage ", it is of paramount importance to bear in mind that

“haste brings no success”.

In conclusion, let me summarize my speech: China is devoted to all associated efforts organized by ICAO on climate change. China has taken and will continue to take determined and practical steps to carry out energy-saving and emission reduction actions throughout the country. Great devotion to technological innovations will be displayed and active cooperation will be sought. China will consistently adhere to the principles of “common but differentiated responsibility” set in *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and *Kyoto Protocol*. China sticks to the UNFCCC framework through ICAO for seeking a solution to the puzzled relationship between the international civil aviation and the climate change.

Climate change respects no national borders, and no country is immune from it. Now I would like to answer Mr. Chairman’s question: if I have the power to make international civil aviation environmentally sustainable, I would initiate a win-win program based on the guarantee of this industry’s development. Firstly, the win-win program advocates that developed countries commit to achieve a Carbon-Neutral Growth goal while developing countries keep making efforts to

achieve improvement in fuel efficiency. Secondly, all countries, both developed and developing, cooperate with each other and make joint efforts to evaluate the influence of such market-based measures as ETS, Carbon Taxes and levies, on the international aviation industry of developing countries. Developed countries take the lead in attempting MBMs among themselves and gather experience for future share. Thirdly, developed countries provide financial and technological support to developing countries to facilitate their dealing with climate change.

There is an old saying in China “*Work More and Talk Less*”. May I take this opportunity to encourage each and every one of us to remember that: Concrete and successful deeds are more significant than empty words on ambitious goals. Thank you!