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ICAO ANNOUNCES MAY 2014 SPECIAL MEETING ON GLOBAL AIRLINE FLIGHT TRACKING

MONTREAL, 7 April 2014 – As the search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH 370 continues, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has announced that it is convening a special meeting of State and industry experts on the global tracking of airline flights.

The Council President of ICAO, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, noted that ICAO will be using the occasion of the 12-13 May 2014 gathering to try and increase current momentum on deliberations over the specific aircraft and satellite-based capabilities needed to permit global implementation of worldwide flight tracking.

"The loss of an aircraft and any loss of life are always of utmost concern to ICAO and to the entire air transport community," President Aliu began. "The unprecedented and unusual circumstances of flight MH 370 have been particularly difficult for civil aviation officials to resolve to this point, and the lack of definitive answers has been much harder still for the victims' families to come to terms with. They, above all, will benefit from a fuller explanation of this accident."

In related areas of its work, ICAO has recently established new guidance on underwater locator beacons (ULBs) which will come into force in 2018. Its Flight Recorder Panel is continuing to review new means of expediting the location of accident sites, including deployable flight recorders and the triggered transmission of flight data, and the UN agency will additionally be reviewing any implications on its work relating to aviation security, travel documents and identity management, as well as the requirements for the transport of lithium batteries.

President Aliu also drew reference to ICAO's new policy on aircraft accident victims and their families, noting its aim of encouraging ICAO Member States to provide all necessary services and information to affected passengers and their relatives. He expressed that ICAO will be providing technical assistance to Malaysia in the course of its ongoing investigation, and that he had been encouraged by the strong levels of international cooperation and contributions of personnel and resources seen in the aftermath of the plane's disappearance.

"No matter how safe or secure we make the air transport network, these types of events remind our entire sector that no effort is ever enough, no solution ever a reason to stop seeking further improvement," Aliu stressed. "Each and every day over 100,000 flights are safely and securely managed by the global air transport system and we accomplish this mainly through steadfast commitment and cooperation. I'm confident that by continuing to work together in this manner we may eventually help find closure for the affected families and bring greater certainty to the question of how and why this aircraft was lost."

Resources for editors:

The ICAO 2013 State of Global Aviation Safety Report: <http://www.icao.int/safety/State%20of%20Global%20Aviation%20Safety/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

The ICAO 2013 Global Air Navigation Plan: http://www.icao.int/publications/Documents/9750_4ed_en.pdf

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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