



ICAO Secretary General highlights continued progress on compliance as key to Africa's aviation development

For immediate release

Montréal and Niamey, 31 July 2018 – ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu concluded the UN aviation agency's 2018 'AFI Week' series of events last week, reaffirming that the continent has now established the necessary partnership and policy foundations to help African States realize the full socio-economic potential of future air transport growth.

"Aviation is recognized as crucial to the achievement of the United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It supports almost seven million jobs and generates more than 72 billion dollars in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Africa," the ICAO Secretary General declared.

ICAO's Fifth AFI Aviation Week was opened on 16 July by the Prime Minister of Niger, Mr. Brigi Rafini. It was attended by over 200 participants from 41 States and 20 international and regional organizations, and this year comprised the Fifth AFI Aviation Safety Symposium, the Third Aviation Security and Facilitation Symposium, the Seventh Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation in the AFI Region (AFI DGCA), and meetings of the steering committees responsible for the implementation of the regional plans for aviation safety, security and facilitation.

Dr. Liu set the tone for progress in her opening remarks at the AFI Week Grand Opening ceremony, stressing that air connectivity is a unique and indispensable catalyst for socio-economic growth that links remote areas to cities, cities with the world, and goods and services with the global market place.

Highlighting recent landmark achievements towards amplifying these contributions, Dr. Liu applauded the official launch of the Single African Air Transport Market earlier this year, which will offer the opportunity to unlock increased connectivity and the value it delivers, as well as significant progress on compliance with ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs), notably through the implementation of the UN aviation agency's global plans and AFI Regional Plans.

"The number of AFI States with significant safety concerns (SSCs) has been reduced to two, compared to the four we had itemized in 2016" she underscored. While recognizing this remarkable progress, Dr. Liu highlighted that "the average effective implementation (EI) rate in the AFI Region stands at 52%, which is lower than the global average of 66.5% and below ICAO's current minimum target of 60%." She encouraged AFI States to continue to work together to strengthen and make use of cooperative mechanisms such as Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), given the significant challenges that remain ahead.

Dr. Liu urged participants to focus their efforts during the week on issues related to supporting States that have challenges and needs identified in implementing Annex 17 Standards and the security-related provisions of Annex 9 Facilitation. She encouraged the establishment of mechanisms to enhance the involvement of African experts in resolving deficiencies such as those identified during ICAO aviation security audits.

At the same time, Dr. Liu updated the AFI States on the UN High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies held at the end of June where it was recognized that aviation remains a key target for terrorists. Aviation security, notably in the context of ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP), can thus play a very critical role in limiting terrorist mobility and threats.

Regarding the need for African States to increase capacity in order to safely and efficiently manage forecast growth in flights and passengers, Dr. Liu noted that the adoption of the *Declaration and Framework for a Plan of Action for Development of Aviation Infrastructure in Africa* at last year's third ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF/3) provided significant momentum toward related progress.

"This Declaration has since been instrumental in helping AFI Member States to ensure the inclusion of more well-defined aviation projects in the 2020-2030 cycle of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa's (PIDA's) Priority Action Plan," she said, adding that ICAO will continue to provide technical expertise and support the implementation of the action plan in close cooperation with the African Union (AU) Commission, the Planning and Coordination Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Acknowledging that the progress achieved to date has been enabled by the tremendous cooperation among ICAO Member States, the generosity of donor States, and the crucial participation of a wide variety of industry and intergovernmental stakeholders, the Secretary General confirmed that "I am quite positive that with these concerted and aligned efforts, the African continent will be able to establish the quality aviation infrastructure which is so urgently needed today to support the operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market, and ultimately the successful realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063."

While in Niger, Dr. Liu discussed all of these themes in greater local detail during a one-on-one meeting with the President and Head of State of Niger, H. E. Isouffou Mahamadou. She also met with the President of Niger's Parliament, Hon. Tinni Ousseini, and presented a plaque of gratitude to Niger's Minister of Transport, Mr. Mahamadou Karidio, for hosting AFI Week 2018. Additional bilaterals were conducted in Niger with representatives of various States, organizations and aviation partners who were present in Niamey for the week's events.

During her audience with the President, Dr. Liu congratulated the State on the significant progress achieved and efforts being made to improve and modernize airport infrastructure. She also thanked the State for hosting the 5th Edition of the AFI Aviation Week.

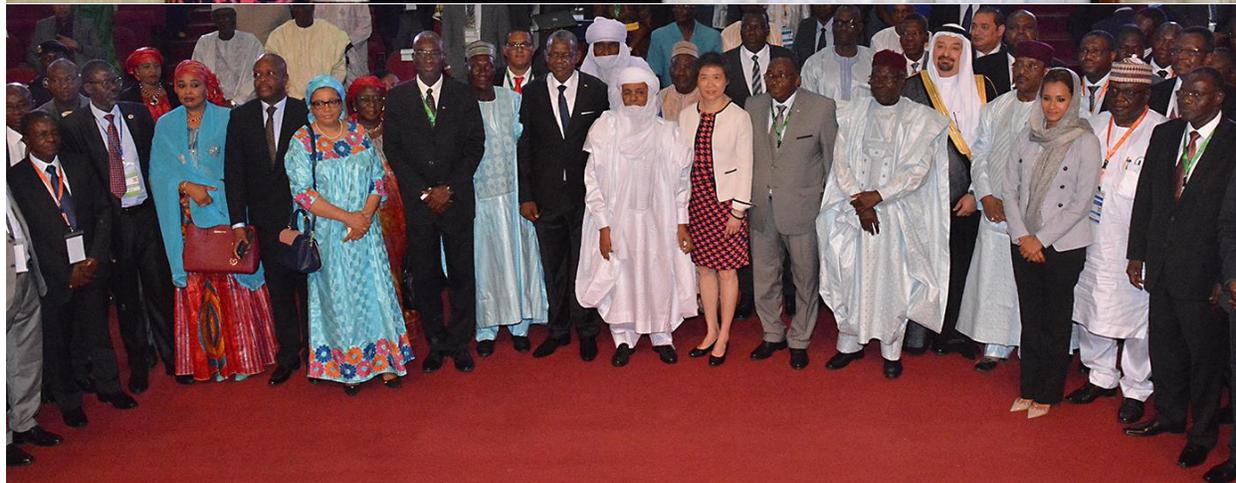
While stressing the need for Government's strong support for the aviation sector, and continuous compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as a means of improving connectivity, an important consideration for a land-locked country such as Niger in terms of accessing the benefits of aviation as a catalyst for economic development, Dr. Liu expressed satisfaction with the cooperation between ICAO and Niger.

The Head of State agreed to continue to make aviation a priority in a multi-modal context in both bilateral and other cooperation partnerships and to seek ICAO's assistance in conducting Air Transport Economic analysis and development of a national aviation Master Plan.

Dr. Liu held further bilateral discussions on state-specific issues with the Directors General of Civil Aviation of the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Guinea (Conakry), South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, encouraging the States to increase their commitment and cooperation to further improve the level of aviation safety and security .

On the final day of AFI Week, the Seventh Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation in the AFI Region (AFI DGCA) was convened. The Directors General of Civil Aviation of AFI States reviewed policy matters and the outcomes of recent global and regional events to ensure coordinated and harmonized implementation of international standards and recommended practices. Progress on the implementation of the Regional targets including the revised Abuja Safety Targets incorporating Air Navigation and Windhoek security targets was also reviewed.

The AFI Aviation Week setting also provided ICAO with an opportunity to congratulate representatives of several States present, for their improved level of compliance with ICAO SARPs through increased levels of Effective Implementation, and resolution of Significant Safety and Security Concerns. The occasion was also used to release the Fourth Edition of the Annual Safety Report of the AFI Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI).



Top: During her mission to Niamey, the Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Fang Liu, undertook a bilateral meeting with the President and Head of State of Niger, H. E. Isouffou Mahamadou. Their discussions focused on the strategic importance of aviation development and investment in consideration of the sector's unique ability to act as a catalyst for sustainable development.

Bottom: ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu poses with the Prime Minister of Niger Mr. Brigi Rafini, and with other ICAO and Niger senior officials during the Grand Opening ceremonies for ICAO's Fifth AFI Aviation Week in Niamey. Dr. Liu concluded the UN aviation agency's 2018 'AFI Week' series of events by reaffirming that the continent has now established the necessary partnership and policy foundations to help African States realize the full socio-economic potential of future air transport growth.

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About ICAO

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 192 Member States.

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