



## Progress towards liberalized and harmonized regulatory frameworks key to unlocking full benefits of air connectivity

For immediate release

**Montréal and Aqaba, Jordan, 6 December 2019** – At the Twelfth ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event taking place in Aqaba, Jordan this week, ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu encouraged progress towards liberalized and harmonized regulatory frameworks for air transport, and highlighted the importance of air connectivity for sustainable development, particularly for the Middle East.

“Besides the fact that air connectivity generates over 2.4 million jobs in this Region, and \$130 billion dollars in Middle East Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it’s important to note as well that just over half of this significant economic impact is generated exclusively by foreign tourists who are arriving by air,” Dr Aliu declared. “With an impressive annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent being forecast for Regional traffic through 2045, I think it’s clear to all concerned that the continued optimization of local and international air connectivity remains critical to the future economic vitality of MID States and businesses.”

The event was attended by the Honourable Minister of Transport, Dr. Khalid Walid Saif, who represented His Excellency, Dr. Omar Al-Razzaz, the Prime Minister of Jordan, as well as aviation regulators and negotiators representing 61 countries.

The ICAN series of events was created to address the fact that air transport operates today on the basis of a complex and difficult-to-navigate patchwork of more than 4,500 bilateral agreements, which present significant constraints in terms of uncertainty and economic fragmentation. ICAO is therefore encouraging Member States to develop new global policies to reduce regulatory barriers.

“It will be by virtue of the modernization and convergence of regulatory frameworks that industry will ultimately be provided with a more favourable and open operating environment leading to new and expanded air transport markets,” Dr. Aliu said.

The Council President highlighted the development of a Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines as being particularly important in this regard. “This Convention will aim to liberalize air carrier ownership and control on a multilateral basis, in line with the ICAO Long-term Vision for International Air Transport Liberalization, and through its development we’ll be able to formalize a truly multilateral approach to the liberalization of market access,” he noted. “Continued and enhanced dialogue between ICAO and its Member States on all aspects of liberalized air transport will be critical to the development and effective refinement of this new legal instrument, and it was in recognition of the importance of us working together toward common goals that the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly encouraged States to continue to make use of and benefit from the ICAN approach.”

In addition to the 61 States representing all world regions, 7 international organizations are participating in the negotiations which closed today. ICAN 2019 resulted in negotiators agreeing 400 new air service agreements, opening the door for the expansion of connectivity to the global civil aviation network.

While in Jordan for the 2019 ICAN event, President Aliu met with the Jordanian Honourable Minister of Transport, Dr. Khalid Walid Saif. The Minister thanked ICAO for its *No Country Left Behind initiative* and reassured the President of the commitment of the government to a safe, secure and

environmentally friendly aviation industry in Jordan. The President thanked the Minister and affirmed that ICAO will continue to work with its member States for the growth of the industry.



The President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, opened the Twelfth ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event taking place in Aqaba, Jordan this week.

## Resources for Editors

### 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 193 Member States.

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