



**Welcome address by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization
Dr. Fang Liu
to the Inaugural Meeting of European and North Atlantic
Directors General of Civil Aviation**

(ICAO EURNAT HQ, Paris, France, 5 May 2017)

Good morning everyone.

1. It is my great pleasure to address this distinguished gathering of European and North Atlantic (EURNAT) Region Directors General of Civil Aviation today, and to express my appreciation to Director Almeida and his team for their initiative and foresight in organizing this inaugural meeting with you.
2. I would also like to take a moment to express ICAO's gratitude to our host State of France, for its generous and longstanding support of our Paris Office.
3. DGCA meetings of this nature provide us with an excellent opportunity to review and exchange information together on latest matters of interest in civil aviation, and to enhance the coordination of our related activities in order to realize pertinent efficiencies of scale while avoiding duplication of effort.
4. They will also provide you with an invaluable occasion to assess and guide the work of important Regional coordination, monitoring, and planning bodies such as:
 - The European Air Navigation Planning Group (EANPG);
 - The North Atlantic Systems Planning Group (NAT-SPG);
 - The European Aviation Safety Group (RASG-EUR);
 - And the EUR/NAT AVSEC Group (ENAVSECG).
5. Another important aspect of these meetings is that they offer the chance for you to gain a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of ICAO's EUR/NAT Regional Office, whether with respect to our ongoing *No Country Left Behind* assistance and capacity-building initiative, coordinating the harmonized EUR/NAT implementation of ICAO Assembly and Council Resolutions, or achieving the targets and objectives set out in ICAO's strategic Global Plans.

6. In a just a moment Director Fonseca will be filling in some important details for you in this regard. I am also encouraged that this inaugural meeting will be seeking to reconfirm your respective commitments to the EUR/NAT 2017-2019 Work Programme, and to better adjust the current ICAO Regional Aviation Safety Group and Planning and Implementation Region Group models to better meet the needs of the unique EUR/NAT context.
7. These, in addition to the further development of the EUR/NAT Regional Capacity Building Programme supporting our No Country Left Behind objectives, are key priorities for your Region at the moment.
8. No Country Left Behind is of course central to ICAO's mission and role today. It's emphasis on ensuring that all States and Regions can optimize the significant socio-economic benefits of global air transport connectivity touches upon our related efforts to:
 - Foster investment and other strategic partnerships under our World Aviation Forums;
 - Provide practical leadership and targets through our ICAO Global Plans.
 - And to foster greater awareness and political will on the important need to align aviation development and national development planning in the *Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development* era, including with respect to air transport infrastructure development.
9. No Country Left Behind is an especially important initiative here in the EUR/NAT Region, where we seek to manage and harmonize the needs of many ICAO Member States characterized by significantly varying degrees of civil aviation capability.
10. There are no fewer than nine Technical Assistance projects ongoing at present under our EURNAT Office's leadership, focused not only on issues identified under our Safety and Security oversight audits, but also relating to the efficiency and environmental aspects of these States' operations.
11. Arranging these projects is resource-intensive, and all of ICAO's Regional Offices have been going above and beyond to arrange the necessary partnerships and ensure these projects deliver on their intended results.
12. This accountability is fundamental to our shared successes with No Country Left Behind, and it is just one more aspect of the changing and more challenging environment we must all grow accustomed to as our sector continues to grow, while many public sector budgets and resource pools continue to shrink.
13. Then again, adapting to these types of changes is also nothing new for us in aviation, given how dynamic our sector has been throughout its history. Your coming discussions on the EUR/NAT RASG and PIRG restructurings are yet another reflection of this trend, and of our need to continuously embrace change and steer it toward positive benefits for your States and our sector.

14. With our current civil aviation environment so characterized as it is today by leading-edge and often cross-cutting issues concerning cybersecurity threats, aircraft tracking and satellite-based surveillance, the increasing proliferation of new unmanned and space-based operations, I think we can all agree that our collaborative future will be characterized by many more technological and institutional changes.
15. For instance while ICAO has been active for almost a decade now in the safe integration of larger Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) which engage in cross-border operations, we have now been called upon by our Member States to develop a UAS airspace management tool for lower altitudes, along with drone registration and identification solutions.
16. Since these smaller craft do not meet existing aircraft definitions under the Chicago Convention, and operate in a manner generally not pertinent to existing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices, this work will be undertaken via a series of specific Requests for Information aimed at States, industry and academia, and resolved through a more rapid and responsive guidance process.
17. Our goal is to develop an effective air traffic management system for UAS, and to better define the issues involved – whether technical, operational or legal – while ensuring safety remains the underlying priority. The sooner this framework is agreed upon globally, the sooner industry will be able to launch their UAS businesses within a more harmonized UTM environment globally.
18. Cybersecurity too poses many challenges for international aviation and air transport more generally. It seems that, almost daily, new and more sophisticated digital technologies and processes are coming online, and impacting as they do the function of our network, its relationships with customers and stakeholders, and even the way that air transport professionals connect and cooperate with one another.
19. Whether we are talking the hardware and software supply chain, the up-loading of flight or entertainment data and software to aircraft, reservations networks which can disrupt scheduling, or Air Traffic Management systems and communications, we must be fully conscious of the fact that many of our legacy technologies and related procedures have not benefitted from more modern, security-by-design architecture.
20. This points to the need for near-term prioritization of suitable back-up systems and procedures, cyber resilience steps, and security overlays. But as we pay heed to these risks, we must be cautious as well given that the increasing integration of such systems, due to cost or other factors, can also lead to single points of failure being established which can increase, rather than mitigate aviation's overall cyber vulnerability.

21. ICAO held its very first cross-cutting Cyber Safety and Security Summit in Dubai earlier this year. This event was an important first step toward a more enhanced, collaborative approach to cyber coordination and cyber response, and produced a Declaration regarding our shared expectations and the important collaborative commitments now needed to ensure robust civil aviation cybersecurity preparedness, well into the future.
22. ICAO and the EUR/NAT office greatly appreciate and will continue to depend upon your efforts to continuously improve aviation security across the entirety of the EUR/NAT region.
23. This applies to emerging cyber and landside threats as well as to traditional AVSEC topics, such as airport and cargo security and our shared current need to ensure an effective and coordinated balance with respect to security restrictions and established safety best practices as related to personal electronic devices and the carriage of lithium batteries.
24. Ladies and gentlemen, the EUR/NAT region has a history of leading on positive changes for air transport, whether in terms of more efficient longitudinal and lateral separation minima, data link implementation, civil military cooperation, or many other innovations.
We'll be looking forward for much of the same in the months and years ahead as you continue to demonstrate this leadership, as well as for your help in generating the political will in your States for the important investments and commitments and inter-regional co-ordination our continued success will require.
25. ICAO will be grateful for your continued support and assistance on the many priorities we're pursuing together in Europe today, including implementation of State Safety Programmes and Safety Management Systems for Service providers; and safety enhancement initiatives to further reduce accidents, with focus on runway safety and loss-of-control in flight (LOC-I) events.
26. These varied challenges highlight for us the importance of your continued support for the implementation of the harmonized global standards and targets reflected in the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan, our Global Air Navigation Plan, and our soon-to-be finalized Global Aviation Security Plan.
27. Before concluding today, I'd also like to report to you that ICAO is presently finalizing new agreements with China which relate to its 'One Belt One Road' trade initiative, and which should help to foster a greater role for air transport as related trade and capacity-building projects begin to take hold.
28. This is a very exciting time for air transport, here in the EUR/NAT Region and all over the world, and the inputs and partnership of Directors General of Civil Aviation such as yourselves will only be of growing importance as we seek to meet our new challenges, together.
29. Thank you all again for your commitments and your partnership, and I wish you all a very productive inaugural EUR/NAT DGCA.