



**Remarks by the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the 70th Anniversary Commemoration of
ICAO's South American (SAM) Regional Office**

(Lima, Peru – 7th December 2018)

Good afternoon/morning everyone.

1. It's my tremendous honour to join you here today for the celebration of the establishment of one of ICAO's most important and longstanding Regional facilities.
2. I'd like to begin today by providing some historical perspective on the establishment of this office, mainly to help underscore how the fundamental mission and role of ICAO and its Regional representatives has remained so consistent throughout the decades.
3. This history takes us back to the early days following the end of the Second World War, when States were becoming increasingly linked by privatized air transport.
4. The emerging air network at that time prompted officials with the still-*Provisional* International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO) to take a more localized approach to solving the range of problems facing worldwide civil aviation.
5. To accomplish this, States worked through ICAO to divide the world into 10 air navigation regions.
6. This took place in late 1945, followed by the establishment of Regional Route Service Organizations, or 'RRSOs', comprised of technical experts and State representatives.
7. Then pursuant to this groundwork being undertaken, the first ICAO South American Regional Air Navigation Meeting was convened here in Lima in June, 1947.

8. It was attended by delegates from twelve voting states at that time, and six observer states, as well as representatives from four international organizations which included among them both ICAO and IATA.
9. It was determined at this first meeting in South America that a Regional Office should be established, one from which a dedicated ICAO Representative could promptly respond to the needs of this Region.
10. Mr. Federico Hilbeck, Delegate for Peru, stated that his Government would propose Lima as the location of the Regional Office, and in 1948 it accepted his recommendation and the Lima office was officially established.
11. Since that momentous occasion 70 years ago, this office and its leadership and technical staff have been contributing immensely to the civil aviation harmonization of South American States, in line with ICAO's global Standards and objectives.
12. It has been instrumental in the establishment of new routes, the development and implementation of Regional Air Navigation Plans, and in fulfilling the key role of all ICAO Regional Offices by providing a common governance mechanism supporting the concerted cooperation of South American governments toward Regional, and global, aviation goals.
13. It has also led the CAR/SAM Regional Planning Group (GREPECAS) for many years, and was instrumental in the establishment of the pioneering Pan-American Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-PA).
14. This latter entity has since become a model of safety coordination among States and industry worldwide, and the 'gold standard' in this respect which all ICAO Regions have subsequently emulated.
15. Practical and results-driven integration of this nature has been the true hallmark of the cooperation and progress being forged in the South American Region.
16. And I would also point to your coordination bodies such as the SRVSOP and REDDIG as being further and quite excellent examples of how much SAM States have achieved together.

17. These bodies, in addition to the strong State-by-State commitments which complement their cooperative goals, go a long way toward illustrating for us why South America currently has one of the highest rates of implementation of ICAO Safety Oversight standards in the world.
18. We should also appreciate that this Office administers a top notch telecommunication network at the service of its Accredited States, and that it has recently forged an important Declaration on the values of enhanced air transport connectivity between States at the 4th ICAO World Aviation Forum in Fortaleza.
19. Taken together, all of these historic and current accomplishments paint a clear picture for us of everything which ICAO was established to undertake on behalf of nation States, and they also help us to appropriately value how this SAM Regional Office has been such an example to the world in terms of effective international cooperation.
20. Ladies and gentlemen,
21. Air transport today is confronted by many new and emerging challenges, including the safe integration of unmanned and remotely-piloted aircraft operations and the new commercial space flights we expect to become more frequent in the years ahead.
22. Super- and hypersonic flights will also open interesting opportunities for better connections between South America and long distance destinations, something that merits further analysis especially in light of contemporary goals for your connectivity to develop a more comprehensive East-West profile to complement the North-South routes already being optimized.
23. And in addition, the increasing use of drones and other unmanned aircraft in urban areas will require civil aviation administrations to prepare much sooner than later to support these burgeoning operations.
24. This will require new regulatory services and competencies, and new approaches to air traffic management designed for densely-populated and obstacle-intensive urban environments.
25. Every ICAO Member State should be preparing themselves today to adjust to this new and non-traditional airspace environment.

26. Other new technologies, including for example machine-based learning and other forms of artificial intelligence, should also be playing bigger and bigger roles in terms of our consistent goals of improving aggregate network safety and efficiency.
27. This brings to mind many additional concerns, for example the need for robust cybersafety and cybersecurity measures to safeguard these new systems.
28. It's important therefore to appreciate the strong foundation established by the storied history of this SAM Regional Office, and to take advantage of it once again as you confront these future aviation challenges.
29. Besides what new technologies and innovation have in store for us, we must also recall that future aviation growth will entail a doubling of traffic volumes, and this poses serious challenges of its own in terms of infrastructure and sufficient numbers of skilled technical personnel, or even the basic safety, efficiency and security of daily operations.
30. Of course emissions can also not be permitted to double as traffic volumes double, and this highlights how important our world-first ICAO CORSIA offsetting scheme will be to keeping aviation at the forefront of environmental sustainability among other global industry sectors.
31. Speaking of sustainability targets, as some of you will be aware, the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, adopted under *Agenda 2030* in 2015, began an important process: one which has seen the world's governments re-orient and re-prioritize themselves toward new and visionary socio-economic planning and projects.
32. At the same time, the air transport sector today directly and indirectly supports the employment of more than 65 million people worldwide, contributes 2.7 trillion US dollars in global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and modern aircraft today are moving over 4.1 billion people and over a third of world freight by value on 37 million flights each year.

33. These significant socio-economic impacts are now clearly understood to be very important to States' objectives to attain their *Agenda 2030* goals, and as Secretary General of ICAO it is beholden upon me to sensitize government decision-makers on this point.
34. But it is also beholden on South American States today to identify and address the current capacity bottlenecks on this content to ensure the route is cleared for this progress to occur.
35. Persisting over-saturation of airport and airspace infrastructure poses sever risks to the continued growth of air traffic, and the continuing economic growth and development of South America and its many peoples.
36. Given how important tourism growth will be to many States' future revenue streams, as well as the fact that aviation connectivity serves as a veritable lifeline to foreign markets and suppliers for businesses all over the world, the importance and urgency of this work becomes very clear.
37. In concluding now, I would like to highlight that throughout its successful history on behalf of Civil Aviation for South American States, ICAO has always been able to count on the very generous and enthusiastic support of the Government of Peru.
38. We consider this State to be a key partner of this Regional Office, and I can fully assure you that the steady flow of meeting visitors ICAO invites to this lovely country have consistently appreciated the warmth and hospitality of the Peruvian people, the excellent cuisine it features, and incredible natural and historical beauty to be appreciated here.
39. Let me please therefore re-stress ICAO's deep appreciation to the Government and the people of Peru, and to all of the South American and Latin American partners we work so closely with in this part of the world.
40. As we celebrate this Regional Office's 70th Anniversary, I also wish to draw your attention to the fact that ICAO itself will be celebrating 75 years of connecting the world next year, in 2019.
41. We are very hopeful that our Member States will find ways to help us celebrate and highlight this landmark achievement, and I will look forward to hearing about your suggestions and activities after our State Letter on this topic goes out very shortly.

42. In concluding now, I will join all of you in looking forward to a next 70 years which will build on the excellent foundation ICAO has established here in Lima, and to an incredibly exciting and dynamic new century for international civil aviation.

43. Thank you.