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Representatives of regional integration organizations, international observers, participants, national and international press, all of you have the best of days.

I would like to extend a fraternal greetings on behalf of the aeronautical community and the region, in my capacity as Director of the General Directorate of Civil Aviation in my country and Vice-President of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC).

I am grateful for the presence of each of you and of course to the authorities of the State of Antigua and Barbuda, the ICAO Regional Office for the levels of coordination undertaken to carry out this important seminar on the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme, which make us to converge today in this beautiful point of the Antilles in the Caribbean.

As we all know, ICAO is an agency of the United Nations, created in 1944 by the Convention on International Civil Aviation to study the problems of international civil aviation and to promote regulations and standards that governing the air sector.

The Convention prior to the establishment of an International Civil Aviation Organization was prepared by the International Civil Aviation Conference, held in Chicago in 1944. During that conference, technical annexes to the Convention were drafted. Some are normative and are the obligatory minimums for all the signatory States, others are articulated as recommendations acceptable to a greater or lesser extent by the countries.

The ICAO annexes cover all aspects of air transport and address key technical issues for standardization and regulation.

In this context, Annex 9 specifically refers to Facilitation, which is an important issue for the efficient and safe operation of the international air sector.

Facilitation refers to a wide variety of activities, as well as standards related to the requirements and protocols for the admission of aircraft, people and goods. Therefore the Facilitation seeks to improve and optimize the flow of aircraft, crews, passengers, cargo, luggage, mail and containers through airports, while ensuring compliance with applicable national and international legislation. Day by day we observe that the demands of the different users of the airports of the world grow and in many occasions, these demands exceed the capacities of physical space, airspace and of real time, what returns the management of entrance and exit of passengers, crews, aircraft, luggage, cargo and mail, a slow process, annoying and not very agile.

That is why today we open the door to the conscious and direct study of the challenges and opportunities of facilitation, seeking substantial and substantive solutions. Simplifying the processes for both entry and exit of passengers, crews, aircraft, luggage, cargo and mail in order to facilitate the mobility of people and goods in an increasingly globalized world.

It is important to consider that facilitation goes hand in hand with safety, because both issues are mutually dependent and necessary for the functionality, efficiency and effectiveness of air transport.

Faced with this relationship of dependence, they should be simplified and strengthened in both entry and exit controls, supporting on technological elements that allow speed and facilitation of these controls.

The coordinated work between security and facilitation is reflected in the Regional Group on Aviation Security and Facilitation (AVSEC/FAL/RG) which integrates the States of the NAM/CAR/SAM Regions and international organizations related to this issue; to work jointly on harmonization of regulations, establishment of regional mechanisms for the implementation of standards contained in Annexes 9 and 17, strengthening mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and exchange of information, experiences, procedures and best practices in security of aviation and facilitation among States, among others.

Specifically in the Latin American Region through the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission, significant efforts have been made to harmonize and integrate regulations on facilitation, so to date there are several resolutions and recommendations in that issue, but I would like to emphasize the content of Recommendation A22-04, approved at the last LACAC Ordinary Assembly, which contains the technical information of the course "General awareness and identification of responsibilities on the facilitation of air transport", as a reflection of the need for training In this field.

Also given the importance of this in the strategic plan approved for the biennium 2017 - 2018, in the Macro-task on AVSEC/FAL, actions have been incorporated to develop in the themes on the Traveller Identification Programme, as well as to develop training material in Facilitation, so this seminar will be very beneficial for our regional work.

That is why I welcome the realization of this seminar, which deals with issues of vital importance to Facilitation such as the rules on mechanical reading travel documents

(MRTD); specifications and best practices; issuance of secure travel documents; reliable evidence of identity processes; and information exchange technologies highly relevant to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2309 (2016) on combating the threat posed by foreign terrorist combatants, with particular emphasis on the effective management of border control.

The framework of this seminar reminds us of the direct proportionality between facilitation and security in the operation of international civil aviation in a world in which the air transport sector is a vital element in the economy, employing about 5.5 million people with direct jobs and more than 32 million people indirectly. It is estimated that it carries 2.2 billion people a year, about 40% of international tourism, producing around 7.5% of the annual global GDP and mobilizes an estimated 44 million tons a year in goods with a value of 35% International level.

However, this growth has brought with it one of the challenges of aviation and humanity in general, the phenomenon of Climate Change, how can industry continue to grow economically sustainable but also environmentally sustainable?

Although the current contribution of aviation is estimated to be no more than 3% of the global anthropogenic total of CO₂ emissions, it is undeniable that humanity is at a critical moment in its history: climate change on the planet strikes us without distinction. The Caribbean and Central America continue to be clear and strong evidence of the negative effects of this variability, we must take comprehensive measures as states to better adapt to this global phenomenon without this inhibiting the much needed economic growth of our countries.

In this regard, Guatemala, together with the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States of America (FAA) and the Spanish State Air Safety Agency of the Government of Spain (AESA) presented at the 39th ICAO Assembly the Alliance for a Sustainable Aviation -ALAS- Initiative for a sustainable, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable air sector with an approach based on progressive development with low emissions, an initiative that I hope your States can adhere to, since by walking together we can go further In the noble purpose of making our world a better place.

Serve this intervention to acknowledge the hard work of ICAO, as well as its regional offices that promote various initiatives to contribute to global efforts to ensure safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable air transport.

Thank you very much.