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At left, ICAO's Council President Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu (centre) with U.S. Representative to ICAO Ambassador Michael Lawson (right) and ICAO Air Navigation Bureau Director Nancy Graham (left) at the NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center. To the right is the complete ICAO technical group with assisting FAA, U.S. Department of Defense and NASA officials.

## COUNCIL PRESIDENT ALIU LEADS ICAO 2014 SUB-ORBITAL SPACE AND REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM FACT-FINDING MISSION

**MONTRÉAL, 16 December 2014** – The Council President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, led a special high-level and technically-oriented ICAO fact-finding mission to the United States last week at the invitation of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), seeking to ensure that ICAO remains proactive on regulatory developments relating to remotely-piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) and the emerging realm of sub-orbital space flight.

Joining President Aliu on the U.S. mission were the U.S. Representative to ICAO, Ambassador Michael Lawson, the Director of ICAO's Air Navigation Bureau, Nancy Graham, as well as Leslie Cary and Yuri Fattah, ICAO's technical experts in RPAS and sub-orbital space flight respectively.

ICAO is already well-advanced on its RPAS guidance material thanks to the ongoing work of its RPAS Panel, a technical body comprised of almost 100 international State and industry experts in the field. During the RPAS leg of their visit, the ICAO officials were invited to the NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base, where they were provided with updates from NASA, FAA and Department of Defense experts on how the United States is now integrating civilian and military remotely-piloted missions with commercial and general aviation operations.

NASA officials also provided up-close tours of their Ikhana and Global Hawk remotely-piloted research unmanned aircraft, which are presently engaged in an exciting variety of scientific and atmospheric research missions – including the Ikhana's recent first-ever real-time tracking of a NASA spacecraft upon re-entry in the earth's atmosphere.

On the sub-orbital space leg of their visit, the ICAO officials were given a tour of the Mojave Spaceport, including FAA briefings on how sub-orbital test flights are now being managed, an inspirational brief from Spaceport CEO Stuart Witt, and regulatory discussions and hangar tours from the ground-breaking teams from XCOR and Virgin Galactic. All of the host experts responded positively when invited by President Aliu to speak at the upcoming ICAO/UNOOSA AeroSpace Symposium (March 18-20 2015).

“These emerging areas of aerospace operations will be evolving and likely expanding dramatically over the coming century,” stressed President Aliu. “And in light of this ICAO will be seeking to anticipate rather than react to the regulatory developments which will be needed, while effectively supporting the exciting innovations now occurring in these areas.

We are very grateful to the FAA for its assistance last week, and for the important perspectives we received from the many experts we met with during our short visit. ICAO will now look forward to continued dialogue with these communities to ensure that our associated international Standards and guidance accommodate their priorities while continuing to safeguard the safety and efficiency of international civil aviation in line with our mission and role.”

Resources for editors:

[ICAO/UNOOSA March 2015 Aerospace Symposium](#) ; [ICAO March 2015 RPAS Symposium](#) ;  
[XCOR website](#) ; [Virgin Galactic website](#) ;  
[Ikhana/Predator B Fact Sheet](#) ; [NASA GlobalHawk Fact Sheet](#)

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Contact:

[communications@icao.int](mailto:communications@icao.int)

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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 191 Member States.

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