



## Middle East Directors General of Civil Aviation reach significant agreements on aviation safety, security and cooperation

For immediate release

**Montréal and Muscat, 20 October 2017** – Pointing to the 2.4 million jobs and 157 billion dollars in GDP that aviation has created in the region, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu welcomed the endorsement of the ICAO Middle East (MID) *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) Strategy by delegates at the Fourth Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation for the ICAO Middle East Region (DGCA-MID/4), which concluded yesterday in Muscat, Oman.

Their endorsement was formalized through their signing of the Muscat Declaration on the NCLB Strategy. The effective implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) is key to accessing the international civil aviation network and accessing the tremendous socio-economic benefits it offers. This strategy defines approaches to drive the necessary political and financial momentum to achieve ICAO compliance through the satisfaction of regional infrastructure, human resource and regulatory needs. It comes at a crucial juncture in the development of air transport in the region and contributes to the significant cooperative momentum on air transport issues that has developed.

On this point, DGCA-MID/4 delegates, representing 17 countries and 6 international and regional organizations, also reached agreement on the establishment of a Middle East Implementation Plan to Support Regional Safety and Air Navigation Initiatives (MIDIP) and an Aviation Security and Facilitation Regional Group (AVSEC/FAL/RG), and they endorsed new regional air navigation projects, including a Flight Procedure Programme (MID FPP). These developments were equally hailed by ICAO's Secretary General.

"The ICAO Middle East (MID) region has been the fastest growing region for passenger and cargo traffic since 2011, and airlines here have posted double-digit passenger flight growth every year since 2012. In 2016, these carriers recorded 11.2% growth in revenue passenger-kilometres (RPKs), the highest among all ICAO regions," Dr. Liu remarked in her address to the meeting.

"These types of results underscore the importance of the strong and active commitment which the States of this region have established to work together through ICAO, and especially with respect to the priorities for assistance and capacity-building established under our *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative."

Dr. Liu underscored the tremendous progress accomplished by the aviation community at the global level, noting in particular that 2016 being the safest year on record and that a number of emerging security threats were being addressed, and stressed that the sustainability of these accomplishments will continue to require concerted efforts, particularly within a context of significant growth. She reminded delegates that this challenge was not specific to their region, and that ICAO, particularly through its MID Regional Office in Cairo, remained deeply committed to providing all necessary assistance. She also pointed to a number of regional mechanisms and initiatives that are providing the foundations, means and objectives to structure progress on these issues.

"We have begun to focus greater attention on some specific challenges such as addressing operational risk under the State Safety Programme (SSP) and Safety management System (SMS) framework, the effectiveness of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), and many other priority targets," Dr. Liu explained. "The MID Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-MID) has identified priorities which have helped all stakeholders to work towards the agreed safety targets

contained in the MID Region Safety Strategy and Doha Declaration. The Region is also expected to establish the MENA RSOO, hosted by Saudi Arabia, in order to assist its member States in their SSP development and implementation, as well as to provide assistance to improve States' safety oversight capabilities."

Turning to security, the Secretary General reviewed ICAO's work to address emerging issues, such as cybersecurity and landside airport threats. She congratulated delegates for their progress on enhancing security at the regional level, notably through the establishment of the Middle East Regional Aviation Security and Facilitation Group (MID-RASFG) and the development of a Draft Arab Civil Aviation Commission/MID Security and Facilitation (ACAC/MID SECFAL) Plan, in response to the priorities outlined in the [Riyadh Declaration of 2016](#). She also welcomed the newly-endorsed Africa and Middle East Aviation Security Roadmap, and thanked Egypt and Saudi Arabia for their leadership on these initiatives. Furthermore, she noted progress on these issues at the regional level is facilitating the development and implementation of ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP).

Finally, the Secretary General reiterated that the translation of these efforts into outcomes will require adequate financial and human resourcing, including through the prioritization of aviation within national economic development strategies and States' Official Development Assistance (ODA) contributions. She encouraged delegates to pursue discussions at the upcoming ICAO World Aviation Forum, which will be taking place in Nigeria in November.

The DGCA-MID/4 meeting was also attended by the Directors of ICAO's Air Transport Bureau, Mr. Boubacar Djibo, and Air Navigation Bureau, Mr. Stephen Creamer, and ICAO's Middle East Regional Director, Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma.



From left to right, the Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Fang Liu, the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation of Oman, Mr. Mohammed Nasser Al Azaabi, and ICAO's Regional Director for the Middle East, Mr. Mohamed

Khalifa Rahma, at the occasion of the Fourth Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation for the ICAO Middle East Region (DGCA-MID/4). The Meeting resulted in the adoption of significant regional agreements on aviation safety, security and cooperation.

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## 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 191 Member States.

[ICAO's Middle East Regional Office](#)  
[ICAO's No Country Left Behind initiative](#)

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