



ICAO Secretary General: Investment and commitment key to sustainability of North/Central American and Caribbean air transport

For immediate release

Montréal, 10 August 2018 – Speaking to an audience of Directors General of Civil Aviation in the UN Agency’s North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Region, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu emphasized that concrete financial and political commitments are urgently needed to safeguard the important contributions of tourism and aviation growth to their States’ sustainable development.

The meeting, which took place in Ottawa from 31 July to 2 August 2018, was opened by Dr. Liu and Ms. Thao Pham, Canada’s Associate Deputy Minister of Transport.

Dr. Liu’s remarks were part of a wider address on the near-term requirements to ensure a healthy future for the region’s air transport systems. Additional points she covered stressed the prioritized implementation of ICAO’s global safety and security plans, the importance of capacity-building and investment in aviation infrastructure, and investor and donor expectations for stable, dependable regulatory frameworks.

“It is presently forecast that air transport and tourism will support no less than 9.7 million jobs and \$430 billion dollars in Caribbean GDP alone by 2034,” the Secretary General declared, noting as well that the achievement of these targets would be economically transformative for local States.

ICAO’s NACC region comprises 21 ICAO Member States in total, from Canada in the North to Panama in the South, and includes 19 Caribbean territories of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Dr. Liu also reiterated ICAO’s commitment to provide critical support to the Region’s States through its NACC Regional Office, and through its “*No Country Left Behind*” (NCLB) capacity-building initiative, calling on the NACC States to continue building on the tremendous achievements they have realized over recent years.

Aviation safety was highlighted as an area of exemplary regional achievement, especially in regards to the mitigation of operational risk through Safety Management System and State Safety Programme (SMS/SSP) implementations, the development of a Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) platform to optimize safety oversight capacities, and efforts toward the development of Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations.

“As global safety performance continues to improve, aided importantly by our cooperative efforts under the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), ICAO has begun to focus greater attention on some specific challenges. One of these is to address the operational risk under the SMS/SSP framework described by the newly amended Annex 19,” the Secretary General explained, thanking the Corporación Centroamericana de Servicios de Navegación Aérea (COCESNA) for the active role it has played in the development of the region’s RSOO collaborative platform.

The Secretary General further encouraged the region’s States to enhance the capacities of their Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA), remarking that “It is essential that your authorities have the financial and management autonomy to do their work properly, as well as the ability to attract, recruit and retain qualified technical personnel to regulate our ever-expanding global system.”

She pledged ICAO’s commitment to enhance local personnel skills through its Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme, and Global Aviation Training (GAT) office, and highlighted the importance of the upcoming ICAO World Aviation Forum (IWAF) to help foster new strategic partnerships for aviation development.

Taken together, these efforts are expected to enhance the stability of the aviation regulatory framework, and open the door to greater private investment which is ultimately key to guaranteeing the sustainability of air transport in the region.

“Investors will be more comfortable working with States which have a stable regulatory framework, and on projects where the return on investment is very clearly outlined,” Dr. Liu declared.

During the meeting in Ottawa, Dr. Liu held bilateral discussions with representatives of the Bahamas, Barbados, Canada, Cuba, and the United States. These were:

- Mr. Alvin A. Smith, the High Commissioner of the Bahamas to Canada;
- Mr. Kerrie Symmonds, the Minister of Tourism of Barbados;
- Ms. Pham and Canada’s Director General of Aviation Safety Oversight and Transformation, Mr. François Collins;
- Mr. Armando Daniel López, President of the Institute of Civil Aeronautics of Cuba (IACC), Mrs. Mirta Crespo Frasieri, the Representative of Cuba on the Council of ICAO, and Mr. Orlando Nevot González, Air Navigation Director of the IACC; and
- Mr. Carl Bureson, the United States Federal Aviation Administration Acting Deputy Administrator, and Mr. Thomas L. Carter, the Representative of the United States on the Council of ICAO.

Additional talks that took place involved Directors General of Civil Aviation and attending ICAO Council Representatives, along with the President of the ICAO Air Navigation Commission, Mr. Claude Hurley, and Dr. Pauline D. Yearwood, who represented the CARICOM Secretariat in her capacity as the Deputy Programme Manager for Transportation.



The Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Fang Liu, delivered the keynote address to the 8th Meeting of the North American, Central American, and Caribbean Directors General of Civil Aviation, which took place in Ottawa. She stressed the importance of realizing sufficient financial and political commitments to safeguard the crucial contributions of aviation and tourism growth to the sustainable development of the region.

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 192 Member States.

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