



ICAO President lauds civil aviation progress during Saudi Global Ministerial Aviation Summit

For immediate release

Montréal and Riyadh, 2 April 2019 – Welcoming the fact that civil aviation continues to deliver important direct and indirect benefits to Middle eastern States in terms of local and regional economic growth, ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, while delivering opening remarks to the Global Ministerial Aviation Summit being held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, appreciated how regional tourism figures were up 10% since last year, and that the very significant Central Southwest Asia to Middle East passenger route group was expected to grow at a compound growth rate of 6.5% annually from 2015 to 2045, according to the latest ICAO long-term traffic forecasts.

He also expressed the collective gratitude of the senior officials present to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting the timely Middle east aviation event under His patronage, and highlighted how aviation in Saudi Arabia now supports over 500,000 direct and indirect jobs, while contributing \$34 billion or almost 4.6% in national GDP.

“All of these indicators strengthen our appreciation of the extensive policy guidance which has been developed through ICAO in support of air transport liberalization and harmonization here in the Middle East, covering such critical connectivity priorities as traffic rights, airport and air navigation charges, consumer protection, competition, and air transport taxation,” Dr. Aliu noted.

Focusing on a key topic at the Summit, Dr. Aliu stressed that it was important to recognize that the Region’s increasing reliance on the safety, speed, and economic benefits of air transport also increases its exposure to aviation security risks and the increasingly concerning area of cyber-attacks.

“With respect to cyber threats more specifically, I wish to emphasize that a sweeping transformation is now underway as aviation evolves more rapidly from traditional analogue to digital communications.”

The ICAO President commented that transitions always carry with them a number of risks, opportunities and challenges for aviation and its national regulators, noting that by continuing to drive globally-harmonized solutions for all concerned ICAO could play an important role, notably through the new digital trust framework which the 13th Air Navigation Conference asked ICAO to begin exploring.

“It is important to ensure that all aviation stakeholders can take advantage of cost-effective communication links in the future which are fully secured, and establishing secure identities for all senders and receivers of aviation data is critical to this outcome,” Dr. Aliu emphasized. “Accordingly, ICAO recently signed an MOU with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, better known as ICANN, to help explore if and how ICAO can eventually serve as a single-source ‘digital identity trust-broker’ for global aviation.

The preliminary analysis indicates that this approach could generate significant security and cost-benefits for operators, manufacturers, suppliers, basically anyone wishing to exchange information in our network,” he explained.

President Aliu drew attention to the recent and important *Riyadh Declaration* adopted at The

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's 2016 World Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation, underscoring how it "has been key to the accelerated development of the MID Region Security and Facilitation Plan."

Dr. Aliu added that "ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP), which was approved by the ICAO Council in 2017, has been very influential to these improvements in terms of Regional threats and global solutions."

He concluded by enjoining his high-level audience to take note of ICAO's 2019 Global Aviation Security Symposium (AVSEC2019) and AVSEC Industry Engagement Day being held this September, immediately followed by the UN agency's aviation technology Innovation fair and Exhibition which will be part of its 2019 World Aviation Forum.

All of these events take place just before ICAO's 40th Triennial Assembly this 24 September, when thousands of high-level government and industry officials will be present at its Montréal Headquarters.

Accompanied by several Representatives on the ICAO Council, the Director of ICAO's Air Transport Bureau, Mr. Boubacar Djibo and by the ICAO Regional Director for the Middle East Office in Cairo, Mr. Mohamed Rahma, the President held a series of bilateral meetings with senior government officials, including with the Honourable Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency, Dr. Nabeel M Al-Amudi.



ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu delivers opening remarks earlier today to the Global Ministerial Aviation Summit being held in Riyadh and hosted by Saudi Arabia. He covered some important aviation security updates in his speech, and appreciated how recent aviation indicators in the Middle East "strengthen our appreciation of the extensive policy guidance which has been developed through ICAO in support of air transport liberalization and harmonization here, covering such critical connectivity priorities as traffic rights, airport and air navigation charges, consumer protection, competition, and air transport taxation."

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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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Contacts

Anthony Philbin

Chief, Communications

aphilbin@icao.int

+1 514-954-8220

+1 438-402-8886 (mobile)

Twitter: [@ICAO](#)

William Raillant-Clark

Communications Officer

wraillantclark@icao.int

+1 514-954-6705

+1 514-409-0705 (mobile)

Twitter: [@wraillantclark](#)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/raillantclark/)