



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu
to the Grand Opening ceremonies of the
Sixth ICAO Africa and Indian Ocean (AFI) Aviation Week**

(Kampala, Uganda, 14-17 May 2019)

*Honourable Prime Minister of Uganda,
Honourable Minister of Transport of Uganda,
Honourable Members of the Government and the Parliament of Uganda,
Directors-General of Civil Aviation Authorities,
Representatives of International and Regional Organizations,
ICAO Council Members,
Air Navigation Commission Members
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Habari!*

It's an honour for me to open ICAO's Sixth "AFI Aviation Week", hosted in the beautiful country we all know and appreciate as 'the Pearl of Africa'.

I wish to begin today by expressing ICAO's deepest thanks to the Government and the people of Uganda for the excellent facilities and very warm welcome we've been met with here in beautiful Kampala.

Your State's support for AFI Week this year, and for the AFCAC Extra ordinary Plenary held here yesterday, reaffirms Uganda's serious commitment to the aviation sector, and to the ability of air transport connectivity to foster sustainable socio-economic development in ICAO compliant States.

And with such a comprehensive series of meetings comprising this year's event, I suppose we will be transforming Kampala temporarily from the 'City of Many Hills' to the 'City of Many Conferences, at least until AFI Week concludes here on Friday.

For all of Uganda's related support ICAO is deeply grateful.
The productive agenda ahead of us for this year's AFI Week will include:

The 6th Aviation Safety Symposium, which we'll convene later today;
The 22nd AFI Plan Steering Committee meeting we'll conduct tomorrow;
The 4th AFI Security and Facilitation Symposium to be held on Thursday, the 16th of May.

And lastly the Eighth AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committee meeting, to be held on Friday the 17th, and where the fifth RASG-AFI Aviation Safety Report will be released.
We should appreciate together that these combined AFI Week events provide us with a tremendous opportunity to address key aspects of African aviation, and truly to the benefit of all Africans.

This underscores the important global momentum whereby 21st Century civil aviation is now being more and more recognized as a driver of economic, social and cultural development.

A very useful indicator of this progress ICAO has achieved has been the number of States which have included references to aviation in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) they submit each year to the United Nations' High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

These reviews essentially serve as yearly status updates on the incremental progress being made by States to achieve the *Agenda 2030* SDGs, and from 2016 to 2018 the number of VNRs referencing aviation has more than tripled from 25% to 77%.

Also noteworthy, and indeed a true testament to the success of the ICAO World Aviation Forums we've conducted on this topic is, the number of States referencing aviation in their VNRs has grown from 5 States in 2016 to 62 States in 2019.

I am very encouraged that this gap can be addressed even more effectively if we remain committed to closing it.

We should also not lose sight of the fact that aviation's benefits are first and foremost dependent on a State's effective ICAO compliance, and in the Safety domain today Africa is presently maintaining an ICAO SARP Effective Implementation (EI) rate of just 52.4%.

This African average is lower than the global average of 67.56%, and it also falls short of the 60% EI target shared by the Abuja Declaration and ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan.

A silver lining to these indicators is that Africa is also the world's fastest improving Region in terms of the Effective Implementation of ICAO Safety SARPs, largely as a result of the AFI Plan and your related activities.

Additionally, and very notably in terms of overall safety confidence and performance, the number of AFI States registering significant safety concerns (SSCs) has been reduced from twenty in 2012, to just one in 2018.

This is especially commendable, and I wish to signal ICAO's gratitude and congratulations to all of the States which have worked so hard to achieve these remarkable improvements. We should further acknowledge that this has been a very collaborative process, and that thanks and recognition are also due to the State, industry, Regional and International partners, including this continent's Regional Safety Oversight Organizations and ICAO's HQ East and West Africa Regional Offices, which have all played their parts in this achievement.

Aviation Security and Facilitation is another area requiring further SARP implementation improvement. Africa's EI rate in this area now stands at 59%, this is below the world average of 73% and also falls short of the ICAO GAsEP and Windhoek target of 65%.

Despite the current status and challenges yet before us, we can also appreciate how the establishment of the AFI SECFAL Plan in 2015 has resulted in significant progress, including that the number of AFI States with significant security concerns was reduced to only two during 2018.

And of these two remaining SSCs, further good progress is now being made through a related collaboration among ICAO, AFCAC and the UEMOA under the AFI SECFAL Plan.

The Fourth AFI Week Aviation Security and Facilitation Symposium this week will focus on a number of important topics to help us understand and address regional SECFAL gaps still further, including implementation of the Windhoek Declaration and targets, countering terrorism in Africa, and key emerging issues such as cybersecurity, landside security, and insider threats.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A great deal remains to be done in order to address the targets and objectives I've just mentioned, and I strongly encourage all States to continue to work together in a coordinated and focused manner to maintain the positive momentum you've so far attained in the spirit of "ICAO No Country Left Behind".

Rest assured that ICAO is fully committed to supporting you further in this regard. This includes the development of partnerships with a variety of aviation stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental alike, from within our own sector and beyond – to help ensure that this positive political momentum is appropriately supported by financial resourcing.

It's of paramount importance that the extensive existing framework of Regional and Cooperative Groups which have been established to guide your cooperation are effectively supported and leveraged to your needs.

Africa presently accounts for about four per cent of global air transport services, and what this makes clear for us is that the African air transport market has the highest potential for growth out of all world regions.

This potential has not yet been fully translated into strong and uniform growth, even despite the fact that it is further augmented by your continent's expanding population and other demographic trends.

ICAO long-term traffic forecasts tell us that passenger and freight traffic in African region will respectively grow by 4.3 and 3.8 per cent annually through 2035, but achieving even this modest level of steady growth will require an increase in intra-African tourism, trade and investment, as well your concerted efforts to address the persisting gaps we'll be exploring here together this week.

I also wish to highlight that the outcomes from this 2019 AFI Week will be of significant relevance to the upcoming 40th ICAO Assembly this September, and therefore to urge you to realize concrete and attainable conclusions and recommendations here.

Another very important consideration as we continue to forge progress together concerns the increasing scarcity of aviation professionals globally.

We must work together to determine innovative methods of harnessing and retaining the best and brightest of today's youth to sustain our network and its economic benefits for coming generations.

This priority also underscores why it's important for States to strengthen their advocacy for the implementation of ICAO's Gender Equality Assembly resolution, and its commitment to improve gender representation in aviation in all professional and technical domains by 2030.

In concluding today, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the incredible collaboration and generous contributions from Member States, industry partners, regional and international organizations and stakeholders which are collectively helping us to advance our many priorities for AFI aviation.

We indeed have a lot to celebrate, and on that point I would like to very briefly mention the fact that this year is the 75th anniversary of the Chicago Convention and of course ICAO. I would like to encourage you to take this anniversary year as an opportunity to highlight your

national and regional aviation success stories, and the importance of international cooperation toward their realization.

Speaking of cooperation, I would also like to especially thank the African Union Commission and its specialized agency, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), as well as the various Regional Economic Communities whose support and collaboration are so greatly appreciated by ICAO.

I once again wish to thank the Government and people of Uganda for hosting this Sixth AFI Aviation Week, and I wish you all very productive deliberations and discussions ahead.

Thank you.
