



**Closing remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Fang Liu,
on the occasion of the culmination of the 60th Anniversary
of the ICAO North American, Central American
and Caribbean (NACC) Regional Office**

(Mexico City, Mexico, 1 Dec 2017)

*Distinguished Ministers and Ambassadors,
Attending Directors General of ICAO NACC Member States,
ICAO NACC Regional Director, Mr. Melvin Cintron,
Distinguished friends and colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

1. It is my great honour to help culminate such a great year of celebrations and accomplishments surrounding this historic 60th Anniversary of ICAO's North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Regional Office.
2. It is also my great honour, on behalf of all of ICAO, to express our tremendous appreciation to the Government of Mexico for its generous support for this essential and well-appreciated Regional facility.
3. This Regional Office has driven many substantial achievements throughout its six decades here in Mexico, whether in aid of local emergency response or many other developments supporting ICAO's Strategic Objectives.
4. More recently we have been especially grateful in Headquarters for the NACC's leadership in establishing very practical means of supporting and driving the progress we have sought to achieve under the *No Country Left Behind* initiative.
5. Director Cintron and his team have also responded admirably to our expectations regarding ICAO's strengthened and more accountable Regional presence, and its more efficient delivery of advice and support to our Member States.

6. These coordination and assistance activities also call to mind for us the very challenging year this Region has faced in dealing with a variety of natural disasters and great hardship in many cases.
7. In the aftermath of each, ICAO was very encouraged by the levels of international cooperation and good will demonstrated, as well as by the character of the NACC societies and governments as they responded to these crises.
8. Aviation plays an important role in emergency relief, just as it does in the social and economic prosperity of many citizens all across this lovely region.
9. This brings to mind that our sector moves 10 million passengers globally on over 100,00 daily flights at present, and also that that the NACC Region itself is currently responsible for more than 25% of international traffic.
10. Commercial aircraft carried more than 80% of the tourists who visited the Small Island States in your territories over 2016, and it is presently forecast that air transport and tourism will support no less than 9.7 million jobs and \$430 billion dollars in regional GDP by 2034.
11. This underscores the important role of aviation here, but it also reminds us that passenger and flight volumes will be doubling in just the next 15 years, making the work of ICAO and its NACC Member States more challenging and more essential than ever before.
12. Fortunately you have the structure, the tools and the commitments of all parties to meet those challenges head on, and that encourages me greatly that the NACC is poised to enjoy great success on everything it embarks upon in the coming decades.
13. This is very important in light of State's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established under Agenda 2030, and the critical role of aviation connectivity and ICAO compliant air services in helping governments to realize 15 of the 17 SDGs.
14. This important role of air transport in local and regional sustainable development also helps to explain why ICAO is encouraging your States to strengthen the resources available to your civil aviation authorities (CAAs).

15. It is essential that these agencies have appropriate financial and management autonomy, as well as the ability to attract, recruit and retain qualified technical personnel, in order to assure the ICAO compliance as important foundation for more routes to connect to you and more prosperity for your local populations.
16. ICAO itself has been doing its part by strengthening our Regional Offices and aligning their work more closely with HQ priorities as reflected in our Business plan and operational plans. This in combination with increased accountability and some additional resources are making them much more effective at delivering the assistance our Member States need.
17. Before concluding today, ladies and gentlemen, I also want to recognize this Office's initiative in promoting young women into the aviation sector, in keeping with the best traditions of ICAO and with the United Nations' vision on gender equality.
18. On behalf of ICAO, I wish to once again wish Director Cintron and his team here further great success with their programmes and priorities.
19. And may I thank as well the Mexican Government one further time, for its invaluable support in helping us to better serve our North American, Central American and Caribbean Member States.
20. Thank you.