



**Address by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization
Dr. Fang Liu
to the 2018 ITF Summit Session on
“Protecting the skies with secure and efficient air travel”**

(Leipzig, Germany, 23 May 2018)

1. Good evening everyone, and thank you Ms. Foster for your very kind introduction.
2. It's my honour tonight to be joining such an illustrious cross section of government and air transport sector leaders to discuss this topic, a number of whom I am pleased to count among my closest colleagues in international civil aviation.
3. It's illustrative of the current challenges we face in 'protecting the skies' that the title for this panel emphasizes both the security and the efficiency of modern air travel.
4. Since the 1970s, when commercial aircraft first began to be seen as legitimate and high value targets for terrorist groups, it has been beholden on ICAO to continuously review how world governments and air operators work together to find an effective balance between these two priorities.
5. The speed and efficiency by which modern aircraft can carry us to our global destinations has always been fundamental to the travelling public's perception of air transport value.
6. But since the dawn of State and industry focus on the hijackings, bomb threats, and other acts of violence and unlawful interference targeting aircraft operations, so too has the expectation for robust security measures to protect passengers and shipments from external and rapidly evolving threats.

7. Today we must consider these dual priorities against a backdrop where global dependence on air transportation is growing every year, in every region, and for both passengers and commodities.
8. Aviation today moves no fewer than 10 million passengers and many thousands of tonnes of freight each and every day, so whether we are discussing business, tourism, or trade, any disruptions or delays in aircraft operations can pose serious and often cascading disruptions.
9. This explains why ICAO collaborates with such determination and regularity with our 192 Member States, numerous industry groups, and other international organizations and associations to strengthen the aviation security system.
10. We are constantly exploring new technologies and procedures to enhance security and facilitation processes in order to ensure that disruptions do not occur, while at the same time minimizing any related impacts on the smooth and unimpeded flow of people and goods.
11. And while much of what we accomplish in this domain must be kept confidential, and therefore beyond the view and appreciation of the travellers and shippers we serve, certainly it has led to numerous and quite crucial enhancements which have made air travel more secure and efficient.
12. A good example of some recent progress ICAO has achieved is the Global Aviation Security Plan we developed last year.
13. In response to the perceived need for a high-level coordination tool to guide the efforts and responses of the local, national, and international security providers, this ICAO Global Plan provides precisely that.
14. It's core objective is to reinforce aviation security in every country and territory through the sustainable implementation of preventive measures, and to accomplish this it focuses on:
 - Enhancing risk awareness and response;
 - Establishing a better-defined security culture;
 - Improving technological resources and fostering innovation;
 - Oversight and quality assurance measures;
 - And increasing global and local cooperation and support.

15. This Global Plan also includes a security roadmap for the world's international airports, and it is quite specifically supportive of the counter-terrorism objectives outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2309.
16. ICAO's role in serving as a nexus for cooperation among governments and airline and airport operators has led to us acquiring a unique leadership role where the fine balance between protecting the skies and serving our sector's passengers is concerned.
17. This was evidenced when we led the worldwide evolution to machine-readable passports and other travel documents on the basis of a global 2010 deadline.
18. As we acquired and leveraged more and more technical expertise in the travel document and identity security domains relevant to this challenge, a natural outcome has seen us expanding our travel document standardization and capacity building activities into the broader identity management area.
19. Securing the establishment and administration of citizen identities is quite obviously critical to passports, and therefore to both the speed and security effectiveness of modern border control and customs procedures.
20. All of this work has been managed in ICAO under our *Traveller Identification Programme* or 'TRIP' strategy. It's overall goal is to enable States to uniquely identify a traveller while at the same time addressing threats and risks from counterfeiting, forgery, and the fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents.
21. All of this work is keeping ICAO focused on the future and how to realize even more robust, risk-based, efficient and cost-effective global clearance processes.
22. We recently established a specialized group which is now hard at work exploring the feasibility of standardizing travel credentials through a secure digital format.
23. It's envisioned that this could be stored on smartphones as a temporary or even permanent alternative to a convention passport.

24. In the meantime ePassports, which make use of the latest in secure biometric personal data encryption, has already begun to significantly change the way that air travellers clear checkpoints during the departure and arrival process.
25. The ICAO Public Key Directory is the internationally recognized system to facilitate authentication through shared signed electronic certificates between States.
26. Progress in this area will be key to the protecting the skies in the coming decades, and will require increased international cooperation and alignment with the related initiatives of IATA, ACI, INTERPOL, the WEF, ICAO and others, including various UN Counter Terrorism entities.
27. Together, ICAO, with the UN Security Council and UN bodies and States as well as other partners from the industry, is working to enhance both aviation Security and travel Facilitation in line with the United Nations Security Council resolutions related to the prevention of the movement of Foreign Terrorist Fighters.
28. Another key priority of our TRIP Strategy therefore involves the use of passenger data exchange during inspection at borders, an activity which is essential to the advance determination of passenger risk.
29. ICAO has had Standards in place governing Advance Passenger Information (API) procedures and aims since October 2017, in line with several UN Security Council resolutions.
30. Increased implementation and use of passenger data exchange, whether through API or the analysis of Passenger Name Records and other information sharing, are seen as fundamental today to sustainable air transport development.
31. Through these measures the flow of passengers, both at security checkpoints and border controls, has seen further improvement, however there still exists a high degree of variability in State participation which we must further address.

32. As aviation security measures have become strengthened, related threats have sought to avoid them by migrating away from protected gate and aircraft areas at airports, what we refer to as 'airside' zones, and towards the more public or 'landside' areas.
33. Defending these areas against terrorist or other attacks, especially in the aftermath of the recent Brussels and Istanbul airport attacks, has become a top security priority for ICAO and Airports Council international (ACI), with whom we work most closely to address this very difficult issue.
34. Other ongoing concerns include the concealment of explosives in Portable Electronic Devices, a threat which is being aggressively addressed through new standards.
35. Of the myriad security topics being considered today by international aviation experts, cyber threats are seen as especially serious and potentially disruptive.
36. The insurance sector, for instance, has placed the joint threat posed by cybercrime, IT failure, and database breaches as their number-three global business risk for 2017.
37. In an industry as interconnected as air transport, we cannot lose sight of the fact that a single cyber incident will likely impact multiple companies and stakeholders, to varying degrees and costs.
38. Almost daily, new and more sophisticated digital processes are coming online, ones which impact the efficient management of our network, the ability of airline and airport operators to serve their customers, and even the way that air transport professionals like you and I can connect and cooperate together.
39. Virtually no aspect of aviation, or the way which modern business is conducted, is safe today from unwanted cyber intrusion.
40. Ladies and gentlemen, it has been my great honour to help set the stage for this panel discussion, and it will be an equally great pleasure to conclude these remarks now and join my fellow panel members in exploring these and other topics further.
41. Each of them represent a key component of the global aviation network, and each will therefore bring to our ensuing discussions their own a unique perspective.

42. Thank you.