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**Remarks by the
Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the 2016 Global Sustainable Transport Conference**

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*[Your Excellency ***] [subject to Host protocol]*

United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon

Distinguished Ministers and Delegates

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen

1. It is a great honour to address this opening session of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.
2. Let me please begin by joining my distinguished colleagues in conveying our deep gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan for its very warm welcome and excellent facilities which have been provided.
3. I would also like to thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Wu Hongbo for their kind invitations to join you here.

4. While International Civil Aviation Organization, i.e. ICAO which I am representing, is often recognized as a standard-setting agency and is not generally regarded as a development agency, the global network we have realized is becoming more and more appreciated as a critical engine of local and regional development and sustainable prosperity.
5. This is especially the case in Landlocked and Small Island Developing States, but aviation's role in driving and sustaining economic prosperity, in even the most developed of nations, should not be under-estimated.
6. This in part helps to explain how ICAO's Strategic Objectives and associated work programmes provide essential support to the achievement of 13 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.
7. Aviation today generates 2.8 trillion dollars in global GDP, while providing skilled and high quality employment to 65 million people directly and indirectly.
8. Modern commercial aircraft move 10 million passengers and many thousands of tonnes of freight, not every year but rather every 24 hours, on the 100,000 flights our network manages daily.

9. Recognizing these contributions, as well as the challenges and goals of *Agenda 2030*, the aviation community has begun to ask ourselves how we can be even better attuned to the sustainability challenges of 21st century societies.
10. One of our most pressing challenges is actually our own success.
11. Because of its many benefits, demand for safe and secure air transport connectivity grows exponentially every fifteen years, doubling in flight and passenger volumes despite any related recessions or downturns.
12. Important current priorities are therefore how to enhance airport capacity in increasingly dense urban environments; how to improve the efficiency of air navigation systems so that more aircraft can safely share a finite airspace; and how to mitigate emissions from expanding air traffic so that aviation retains its status as a leading global industry in the fight against climate change.
13. Solutions to these challenges are mainly associated with awareness, political will, partnerships and commitments.

14. States are being strongly encouraged by ICAO to assess their airport and air traffic management infrastructure needs as part of their overall national development planning.
15. As they do, we are encouraging them to recognize air transport's cascading positive impacts for other sectors of their economies.
16. Under ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative, we are also ensuring States have access to the assistance and capacity building needed to effectively implement ICAO's more than 12,000 standards and policies. because ICAO compliance, above all, serves to ensure they will realize aviation's benefits.

As you may know that only 4.2 percent of the annual Official Development Assistance financing is currently earmarked for air transport development, we are also striving to forge strong, long-term partnerships between States, international and regional organizations, financial institutions, the industry and the donor community to to help our Member States to take pragmatic steps toward more transparent, stable and predictable investment climates, and to forge the global partnerships needed for truly sustainable aviation development.

17. Closing infrastructure gaps for States also requires continuous improvement of their **soft infrastructure**, namely the legal, regulatory and governance frameworks applied to international transport.
18. ICAO has many decades of experience in harmonizing diverse regulatory frameworks, and we are eager to share our lessons learned.
19. More **integrated transport system planning** is also essential to balance the needs of multiple transport modes with urban development.
20. ICAO's current pilot project with UN-Habitat on airport and urban development synergies is a very good example of how this can be achieved.
21. Innovation also continues to bring us new technologies to improve the economic and operational efficiency of our transport systems, but we must be prepared to quickly assess and adopt these latest advances to truly optimize their benefits.

22. Ladies and gentlemen, ICAO and the whole air transport sector was clearly evidenced in the recent endorsement, at our 39th Assembly, of the world's historic agreement, the first global market based measure to govern our industry's international emissions.

23. ICAO will continue to provide similar leadership to ensure that aviation growth remains fully sustainable and integrated, and that its many and varied benefits are accessible to all States.

24. We look forward to sharing our experiences and fostering an informed, engaged public as a crucial partner in advancing sustainable transport solutions, working collaboratively with all of you to achieve the *Agenda 2030* SDGs, and to leave no one, and no country, behind.

Thank you.