



**Statement by the  
Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization  
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to the  
Thematic discussion session 1:  
Sustainable transport at the heart  
of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**Global Sustainable Transport Conference**

*(Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 26 November 2016)*

1. Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues, thank you very much for inviting me to discuss the central role of sustainable transport in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Given the time available, I'll be focusing today on just a few of the SDGs, the achievement of which are directly aided by the benefits States realize through ICAO-compliant air transport systems.
3. I will begin with **SDG 8**, which calls on governments to *Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*.
4. Air transport is a major catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development, and an important source of well-paying skilled employment.
5. As I mentioned in my opening Plenary remarks, aviation generates some 63.5 million jobs directly and indirectly while contributing 2.7 trillion US dollars to global GDP.
6. Air transport is also a reliable source of economic and job growth, given the historic trend which has seen our global flight and passenger volumes double every fifteen years – even when other areas of the economy are beset by recessionary downturns.
7. This very dependable economic activity and employment provides governments, whether national, regional or municipal, with a much robust tax base and the confidence to establish and move forward on the long-term planning which truly sustainable development demands.

8. Regarding employment, I would also mention ICAO's continuous efforts towards capacity-building to train the next generations of aviation professionals, which contribute to providing highly qualified jobs to thousands of young professionals.
9. Turning now to **Goal 9**, it is a key priority for ICAO and our Member States today to ***Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation***.
10. An important caveat here, however, is that public finance alone will not be sufficient to meet the total financing needs for aviation infrastructure.
11. A mere 4.2 per cent of annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) financing is currently earmarked for air transport infrastructure, and accordingly ICAO is striving to forge strong, long-term partnerships between States, international and regional organizations, industry, the donor community, and financing institutions.
12. I would also like to mention here that ICAO serves as the lead agency responsible for collecting and sharing data for the global indicator of SDG Target 9.1 – passenger and freight volumes by mode of transport.
13. ***SDG 11*** aims at ***making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable***.
14. ICAO is already working very closely with the United Nations and other international organizations to integrate aviation development into a broader methodological framework, balancing the needs of multiple transport modes with urban development.
15. A good example of our recent outreach and partnership to this end is the joint pilot project we have begun with UN-Habitat to promote synergies between airport and urban development, and we have also extended great efforts toward mitigating aircraft noise and emissions around airports.
16. ICAO has also developed guidance to facilitate transport for persons with disabilities, among the many other contributions air transport delivers in aid of more sustainable and culturally diverse urban settings.
17. ***Urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*** is a key priority for every responsible citizen or organization today, and this brings us to air transport's contributions in aid of **SDG 13**.

18. Among the many achievements of the 39th ICAO Assembly was a landmark agreement on a global market-based measure scheme for international aviation, the first ever such scheme for any industry sector.
19. The Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or 'CORSIA', complements the many other efforts ICAO and its Member States are pursuing to mitigate CO2 emissions, including driving greater innovation in aircraft technologies, more streamlined operational procedures and sustainable alternative fuels.
20. As of today, 66 States representing more than 86.5 per cent of international aviation activity intend to voluntarily participate from the outset in the CORSIA – a clear testament to its design and intent.
21. In closing now, let me conclude by adding that the activities I've just described are only a few of the many programmes and activities by which ICAO is now contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.
22. With the engagement of Member States, and in close cooperation with the aviation industry and other international organizations, ICAO will continue its efforts to make international aviation's critical role in sustainable development better appreciated by all states and Regions.

Thank you.