Introductory remarks
by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Official Launch of the
United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme

''Supporting Member States to Enhance their Detection Capacity to Stem the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters in line with Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017)''

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 7 May 2019)

1. First of all, I would like to express appreciation to UN Secretary General Guterres and Under Secretary-General Voronkov for initiating the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme in a coordinated manner in the UN system.

2. Aviation Security and the facilitation of passenger movements are important and reciprocal priorities in air transport.

3. Together they comprise one of the most important Strategic Objectives of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

4. Our agency's efforts in this area have been guided by consecutive amendments to the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in Annex 9 to the International Civil Aviation Chicago Convention, which focuses directly on facilitating passenger travel.

5. In addition to Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention- *Security* provisions, Annex 9 SARPs serve as important tools in support of improved travel security, and cover critical areas of government responsibility relating to air transport facilitation and security priorities.

6. These priorities are set out in the relevant ICAO annexes to the Chicago Convention , and support the corresponding priorities defined in Security Council resolutions 2178, 2309, 2368, and 2396 in relation to Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs).

7.   This highlights for us how the prevention of FTF movements can greatly benefit from effective border controls and travel document security, as notably defined in ICAO's Machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs) provisions and specifications contained in our Doc 9303 – a key companion publication to Annex 9.

8.   In relation to this priority, and in order to ensure that fraudulent, counterfeit, stolen and lost passports and other travel documents are invalidated and removed from circulation, States are required to report these via INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document database.

9.   We should recall together that UNSC resolution 2178 makes the ICAO provision of Advance Passenger Information (API) <u>mandatory</u> for States.

10.   Others Annex 9 SARPs, for example those related to the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme or 'TRIP' strategy, are directly linked to States' obligations for passenger data exchange as detailed in UNSC resolution 2396.

11.   ICAO has accordingly amended Annex 9 to reflect this requirement as a new ICAO Standard, one which became applicable in February of 2018.

12.   Another impetus for our quick action was the recognition of the fact that API systems greatly streamline border controls for the vast majority of travellers, and that they mitigate threats relating to terrorist movements. It might also therefore be considered for other modes of transport.

13.   ICAO Doc 9303 interoperability specifications are important to this process as they help to permit successful API transmission. For example the verification of ePassports through the ICAO Public Key Directory helps assure the authenticity of API data.

14.   Despite these helpful ICAO resources, however, and the mandatory status for API adherence, we are still confronted today by the fact that just 68 of ICAO's 193 member States have established an API system.

15.   At this point I would like to draw your attention to one of the most pressing topics for the aviation security and facilitation community, and an important priority for today's meeting.

16.   I am referring of course to Passenger Name Record or 'PNR' data.

17. Per UNSC resolution 2396, States are requested to develop capabilities to collect, process and analyze PNR data.

18. They are also required to ensure that PNR data is used by, and shared with, all of their competent national authorities.

19. Although resolution 2396 has placed a legal impetus on all States to develop effective PNR programmes, we must recognize together that only 26 States are currently requesting PNR data.

20. ICAO's work towards an Annex 9 PNR standard got started last September, through our Facilitation Panel.

21. In order to accelerate the PNR standards setting process, a PNR Task Force with wide geographical representation was then established by ICAO and its first report has just been submitted to the ICAO Air Transport Committee. We expect its final report by September of this year.

22. More generally, we should take heart that ICAO Annexes 9 and 17 to the Chicago Convention reflect many standards and recommended practices in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and which are supported by the detailed guidance ICAO develops for States to help assure their effective implementation.

23. From this perspective we can appreciate that ICAO's auditing and monitoring activities for aviation security also provide a helpful view on the status of related UNSC resolutions, and in aid of the assistance and support we may need to tailor for States.

24. Referring more specifically to the resolution 2396 in this regard, ICAO remains committed to contributing appropriate API and PNR institutional system and to actively participate in the implementation of the UN Counter Terrorism Travel Programme.

25. Everyone involved in this effort must remain cognizant, however, that our cooperation will only be effective if its results are supported by our Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

26.   In closing now I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Office of Counter-Terrorism for allocating resources to ICAO to assist with the implementation of this project, and I will look forward to our continued collaboration with UNOCT and CTED on this important programme.

27.   Thank you.