



**Opening address  
by the Secretary General  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Dr. Fang Liu,  
to the Symposium on Implementation  
of the New Global Reporting Format  
for Runway Surface Condition (GRF 2019)**

*(ICAO HQ, Montréal, 26 March 2019)*

*Good morning ladies and gentlemen,*

1. On behalf of ICAO and our co-hosts from Airports Council International (ACI), it's my pleasure to welcome you today to this important Symposium (GRF2019) on implementing the new global reporting format for runway surface conditions.
2. This latest of several GRF events we've conducted together will serve as the official launch of the final phase of a process that started in 2008, and we're deeply honoured to have so many distinguished speakers and participants from across the world to help mark the occasion.
3. As you may be aware, ICAO has been evolving for some time now toward a more project-focused approach to our work.
4. We have also been aiming to build stronger, more cooperative working arrangements with our member states and sectoral partners, and at every stage in its development the GRF for runway surface conditions has been an excellent example of the benefits of this approach.
5. I would highlight for example its intensive development process, including the multi-national, multi-organization, and multi-domain composition of the Friction Task Force of the Aerodrome Design and Operations Panel, as well as the intensive pooling of resources, experiences, and ideas which has brought us to where we are today.

6. And let us not forget to appreciate as well the invaluable support this work has received from additional ICAO panels and working groups.
7. We are taking a project-oriented approach to GRF implementation, in league with our regional offices and key stakeholders.
8. This approach is relatively new for ICAO, but I have every confidence that it will benefit the aviation community.
9. And furthermore its scope and specifics will be greatly aided by the important feedback which you'll be determining here over the next three days.
10. This new reporting format is important for a number of reasons, but in the first place we should appreciate its direct connections to runway safety.
11. This is perhaps easy to appreciate given that runway safety remains a high priority for ICAO, and furthermore that our Global Runway Safety Action Plan cites the elimination of runway excursions as a top priority.
12. This clearly highlights a sector-wide need to be able to quickly and effectively assess the condition of a runway surface, particularly when it may be contaminated such that it could impact an aircraft's ability to brake or accelerate.
13. Equally, we need to be able to quickly transmit that surface information to flight crew, and in a format which they can easily understand and make use of.
14. Without this there is a heightened risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation, and these in turn could lead to a variety of undesirable outcomes such as runway excursions with associated risks to passengers and crew, or additionally a runway closure which results in unnecessary delays, costs, and inconvenience.
15. A second key priority for the GRF regards its implications for runway capacity and efficiency.

16. As traffic volumes continue to grow per aviation's historic exponential trend of doubling every 15–20 years, the need to ensure the continuous availability of one of our most finite resources – *runway capacity* – is increasingly important.
17. While actual capacity will be augmented mainly through new procedures, such as improvements to wake vortex separations, setting-out higher intensity runway operations, and other measures, all of these will be impacted by overall runway resilience.
18. The harmonized implementation of the GRF is an important contributor to this resilience, and will help ensure that clearance actions are taken when needed.
19. It will also aid our objective of surface contaminants being clearly recognized by all relevant stakeholders, including airport and aircraft operators, flight crew, and air traffic controllers.
20. And let us not lose sight of the fact that all of these measures will help to improve overall operational anticipation, collaboration, and predictability.
21. The effectiveness of our GRF roll-out will have implications for all these target outcomes.
22. Your objective over the next three days is therefore to raise awareness and understanding around the GRF itself, its methodology, and the associated ICAO documentation.
23. We will also present helpful case studies here and provide you with a helpful opportunity to meet with experts and expand your professional networks.
24. In terms of next steps, we should look forward together to this cooperative GRF framework eventually aiding in the development of new training materials, the planning of regional seminars which will be needed, and the eventual sharing of post-implementation best practices and lessons learned.
25. Together these activities will help to ensure that the GRF remains up-to-date and effective, long into the future.

26. On behalf of ICAO I wish to thank you for your past and current commitments to this important new step in how we collaboratively address the persisting challenges of runway safety.
27. I wish you all a very engaging and productive Symposium, and I will look forward to reviewing your outcomes.
28. Thank you.