

## **DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL AIR TRANSPORT NETWORK**



*An exclusive interview with ICAO Council President Olumuyiwa Bernard Aliu.*

Dr Olumuyiwa Bernard Aliu was elected as the fifth President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) on 1 January 2014. Under his stewardship, ICAO will lead the industry in achieving a global air transport network that delivers safety,

efficiency, convenience and environmental performance. In an exclusive interview with Bridging Skies, President Aliu discusses the need for global harmonisation in anticipating and tackling the challenges the industry will face from the projected doubling of global air transport capacity by 2030, as well as Asia's role in global aviation.

As air traffic and passenger volumes in the Asia-Pacific region continue to show strong growth, the defining challenge for the entire aviation community is delivering a sustainable global air transport network that realises the industry's full social and economic development potential. While this is first and foremost a capacity and efficiency issue, the new technologies, procedures, human capital development and infrastructure needed could have direct impacts on system security, security, economic viability and environmental performance if they are not managed effectively and standardised on a globally harmonised basis. With 191 Member States, the need for harmony is crucial.

### **Delivering a Collaborative Approach**

Today, with the aviation community faced with many challenges, ICAO is under pressure to find ways of ensuring the long-term viability of airlines and other stakeholders by coming to grips with such issues as market access, air carrier ownership and control, fair and equitable competition, taxes and levies, and consumer protection. "All of ICAO's goals, whether tactical or strategic, political or economic, will be magnified significantly by the capacity expansion, as

will be the implications of the actions we take to address near- and longer-term connectivity challenges in terms of increased airspace and airport congestion, the need to balance stringent security measures with facilitations, and growing environmental pressure relating to greenhouse gas emissions, local air quality and noise around airports.” explained President Aliu.

Highlighting ICAO’s role in aligning the industry’s goals, President Aliu shared, “As the global forum for cooperation among its Member States and the world aviation community, ICAO has been supporting system-wide global harmonisation. This was demonstrated by the approvals received at ICAO’s 38th Assembly on its revised Global Plans for Safety and Air Navigation, the development of Market-based Measures (MBM) to help mitigate aviation CO2 emissions, the continuing evolution toward risk-based aviation security and facilitation, and more forward-looking economic policies and tools.” In light of the new challenges, ICAO will continue to ensure effective implementation of its Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and seek collaborative mechanisms to better permit the coordinated delivery of technical assistance to those in need. President Aliu enthusiastically pointed out, “This is the great challenge of taking a consensus-driven approach, but the outcomes are well worth the effort.”

#### **Calls to Enhancing Global Aviation Safety**

With the well-being of the travelling public in mind, ICAO has implemented the Global Aviation Safety Plan, which calls for all States to implement effective safety oversight capabilities by 2017. President Aliu elaborated on ICAO’s roadmap on safety, “Those States having mature safety oversight systems should focus on the continued implementation of safety management in the near-term. The mid-term objective calls for all States to achieve full implementation of their State Safety Programmes (SSPs) and Safety Management Systems (SMS) globally to facilitate the proactive management of safety risks.”

#### **Boosting Aviation Capacity and Efficiency**

To optimise aviation system performance and efficiently manage air traffic growth, ICAO has asked all States and aviation stakeholders to place a focus on the upgrading of their air navigation and aerodrome infrastructures as well as the development of new procedures. Capacity and efficiency-related implementation targets, as outlined in significant detail in the State- and industry-agreed Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBUs) now reflected in the revised Global Air Navigation Plan, are currently prioritised on procedures, technologies and other requirements relating to the targets for Performance-based Navigation (PBN), Continuous Descent and Continuous Climb Operations (CCO/CDO), Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM), and the transition to Aviation Information Management (AIM). “The deliverables for each of these operational improvements will cover the whole package of requirements for implementation and include all of the necessary regulatory provisions, operational procedures, technologies and training requirements,” explained President Aliu.

**Minimising Environmental Impact**

With growing environmental pressures relating to greenhouse gas emissions, local air quality and noise around airports, the need to minimise the adverse environmental effects of civil aviation activities is crucial. As such, ICAO has taken active steps to reduce the aviation industry's carbon footprint. Sharing ICAO's initiatives, President Aliu noted, "On the MBM front, the ICAO Committee on Environment Protection (CAEP) will be outlining the global MBM design architecture under the supervision of the recently-established ICAO Council Environment Advisory Group (EAG). Outreach and agreement with all States and stakeholders will then be ensured through a series of regional seminars."

**Fostering a Sound and Economically-Viable Civil Aviation System**

With the vast capacity expansion expected in the Asia-Pacific, there is a critical need for massive investments in ground infrastructure and air navigation systems, as well as training and certification of aviation professionals to cope with the coming increases of passengers and aircraft movements. With that in mind, ICAO has launched several activities to help its Member States in the areas of training. "On the manpower front, we are continuing to pursue the skilled personnel training and development objectives outlined under our Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme," remarked President Aliu.

In the security and facilitation domain, ICAO is also continuing to work with its Member States and operators to determine more sustainable solutions. This includes developing procedures and technologies that are secure, practical, affordable and which minimise passenger and cargo impediments.

The need to continuously ensure the effective implementation of ICAO's SARPs, plans and programmes in a globally harmonised manner is a concern for all to effectively address the growing disparities amongst ICAO Member States. "The bottom line remains that we must all join forces to ensure continuing sustainability of the global air transport system," emphasised President Aliu. "There is no other option if we are to continue to optimise the enormous benefits it provides, in terms of both economic and social prosperity, for everyone on our planet."

**Addressing Asia's Role in Global Aviation**

The Asia-Pacific region already accounts for over 40 per cent of global air cargo movements and 26 per cent of world passenger travel. And by the end of this year, it is expected to grow until it represents over 30 per cent of all air travel globally. ICAO's current projections indicate that no other region in the world will achieve a higher level of growth than the Asia-Pacific region between now and 2020. With that in mind, ICAO recently established a new APAC Regional Sub-office in Beijing focused on Air Traffic Management (ATM) and is looking to augment regional training provision through cooperative agreements such as the new training MOU in Singapore. "All of these steps are to help ensure that the growth in Asia-Pacific will

be managed safely, while at the same time, ensuring that more frequent air services continue to promote increased and sustainable growth for Asia-Pacific States and businesses,” explained President Aliu.

At present, Asian States are already very directly involved in guiding and supporting ICAO’s work through the ICAO Council and Air Navigation Commission, as well as the many working groups, task forces and other deliberative bodies that form much of ICAO’s work programme. However, Singapore stands out for its key role in the development of international aviation. “Singapore has been an excellent example in recent years, in terms of truly optimising its participation in ICAO, whether through its efforts to make important contributions to Asia-Pacific safety assistance efforts or through ICAO’s COSCAP-South East Asia framework, its generous secondment of expert personnel or its assistance in developing countries’ training programmes. We are very grateful for its support and would point to it as an excellent example of proactive State leadership on air transport issues.”