



05 March 2013

STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM ON ICAO'S OFFICIALLY LIFTING THE SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Department of Tourism (DOT) is elated over the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) report lifting the Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) it had previously cited as requiring immediate corrective action to upgrade standards in aviation safety in the Philippines. This is one of the crucial steps that will lead to increased flights to and from the Philippines -- allowing local carriers to mount flights to long-haul markets such as the US and Europe, and foreign and local tourists to travel domestically with even greater confidence. This development will certainly make the country more competitive and will contribute tremendously in achieving the tourism sector's target of 10 million international visitors by 2016.

Now that opportunities and the global spotlight are shifting to our side of the world, we must continue to build on this momentum by implementing key reforms that would push and sustain the country's growth. The government's active response towards resolving the identified deficiencies is a clear commitment to ensuring that travel to and within the country becomes truly *more fun*.

We, therefore, thank Director General William Hotchkiss III and his entire team for the painstaking reforms they have instituted in the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP). We also congratulate Transportation Secretary Jun Abaya, as well as Former DOTC now DILG Secretary Mar Roxas, for their tireless efforts in boosting the image of the Philippines as a safe and enjoyable tourism destination.