

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact for the media:** Philippe de Segovia  
Tel +33 (0)6 70 21 70 47 - [p.de-segovia@socata.daher.com](mailto:p.de-segovia@socata.daher.com)

---



### **A TBM 700 becomes the first general aviation aircraft to fly across China to Beijing**

**Beijing, China, July 11, 2011** – A new chapter in general aviation history was opened this month when a DAHER-SOCATA TBM 700 very fast turboprop aircraft completed a 1,200 naut. mi. trip from Hong Kong to Beijing, China.

Flown by pilot-owner Wei Chen – a Chinese citizen living in Memphis, Tennessee, USA – this flight is a part of a 10-week trip around the world. In addition to the TBM 700 becoming the first single-engine aircraft ever authorized to fly from Hong-Kong to Beijing, his voyage also is part of the initial globe-circling flight for a Chinese pilot, with stopovers in 40 cities and 21 countries.

“Wei Chen’s flight is truly historic, and all of us at DAHER-SOCATA are proud he chose the TBM 700 to accomplish these aviation firsts,” said Nicolas Chabbert, the Senior Vice President of DAHER-SOCATA’s Airplane division. “They will serve as very positive steps in developing China’s general aviation sector.”

Chen left Memphis on May 22, and is expecting to complete the trip with a return home in August. The flight is supported by several organizations, including the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and the Greater Memphis United Chinese Association (GMUCA). His goals are to raise money for Memphis’ St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, as well as to promote general aviation in China and strengthen U.S.-China relationships.

“Flying around the world an aircraft such as the TBM 700 is the easy part of my project,” Chen said. “Fortunately, I received significant help from AOPA-China and support from the Chinese government.”

Chen is the owner of a Memphis-based steel trading company specializing in business between the United States and China. After coming to the United States in 1996 to earn an MBA at Memphis University, he began flying in 2007.

The TBM 700, and its successor the TBM 850, are fast single-engine turboprop aircraft. They combine cruise speeds and travel times typical of light jets with the economical direct operating costs of a turboprop, along with excellent range and payload capacity. The combined TBM 700 and TBM 850 fleet stands at 560 aircraft worldwide as of July 1, 2011, accumulating a total of 850,000 flight hours.

### **About DAHER-SOCATA**

DAHER is a European integrated equipment and services supplier. The company specializes in the aerospace, nuclear, defense and industry sectors, concentrating on three core activities: manufacturing, services and transport, which it builds into a global offer.

Founded in 1863, DAHER is an independent, international group with installations in 12 countries. DAHER has tripled in size over six years to reach an annual turnover of 740 million Euros in 2009.

DAHER-SOCATA, DAHER group’s aeronautics division, boasts a global and original offering to serve airframe manufacturers and tier-1 equipment manufacturers, with established expertise in four complementary activities presenting a wealth of synergies: aircraft manufacturing, aerostructures, services and technology specialties.

In 2011, DAHER-SOCATA is celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous aircraft production, marking a legacy that began in 1911 with its predecessor company – Aeroplanes Morane-Saulnier.

For more information, visit [www.daher.com](http://www.daher.com) and [www.tbm850.com](http://www.tbm850.com)