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News Release

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WORLD STATES GATHER TO ENDORSE NEW ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL AVIATION PROGRESS

MONTREAL, 24 September 2013 – Over 1,400 delegates, representing the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO’s) 191 Member States and major international and industry organizations, helped the UN specialized agency for aviation to successfully launch its 38th triennial Assembly today. Participating government Ministers and civil aviation officials will be discussing a range of critical global issues at ICAO over the next two weeks, many of them expected to impact how world States and operators will cooperatively manage the projected doubling of air transport traffic now expected by 2030.

“Rapid and dependable air transport connectivity remains essential to the socio-economic hopes and expectations of industries and peoples all over the world,” confirmed ICAO Council President Roberto Kobeh González. “Expanding our capacity from 100,000 to 200,000 flights daily in barely two decades poses significant challenges to aviation planners, from the standpoints of system safety, efficiency, security, economic viability and environmental stewardship. Businesses and travellers all over the world are looking to ICAO to help manage this process with little adverse impact on current service levels and this is precisely what our States are here to accomplish.”

An important priority at ICAO’s 38th Assembly will be the endorsement of revised global safety and air navigation plans. These have been developed between States and industry at a series of high-level ICAO consensus-building events held since 2011. The process has helped ICAO to confirm sector-wide operational performance targets to guide future technology development, a key component in how aviation expects to manage the coming capacity expansion without any sacrifice in terms of overall system safety or convenience.

In the area of aviation security, ICAO will be using the 38th Assembly to continue to drive momentum on the linkages now being drawn between how States and industry secure aircraft, passengers and cargo without creating bottlenecks and other obstructions to traveller convenience and trade flows. On the cargo side specifically, ICAO is now closely cooperating with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and cargo industry groups to achieve an effective security and facilitation solution governing the entire cargo supply chain.

ICAO Secretary General, Raymond Benjamin, who formerly headed up his organization’s aviation security branch, stressed that ICAO is focused on this area of activity given its current and direct impacts on global trade and basic traveller mobility.

“Over the past 70 years, aviation has been essential to expanding markets and creating tourism and other economic opportunities in every corner of the world,” Benjamin stressed. “Recent technological innovations, coupled with improved data sharing supporting more effective risk assessments, have created an opportunity where leadership and forward-looking standardization can permit us to improve on our well-established and effective security levels while greatly facilitating passenger and trade flows. We’ll therefore be looking to our States to firmly endorse our current priorities and planning at this Assembly so we can continue with this work.”

In the environmental area, ICAO has stressed repeatedly that aviation contributes just 2 per cent of global man-made greenhouse gas emissions each year and that approximately two thirds of this amount, or 1.3 per cent, are due to international flights.

The Organization's States had previously set out a global aspirational goal for the sector of carbon neutral growth from 2020. To achieve this, a broad range of measures including operational refinements, alternative fuels, new technologies and improved government awareness and planning are being pursued. ICAO is progressing on all these fronts through the development of a CO₂ standard for aircraft, the creation of guidance material on the environmental benefits of operational improvements and supporting progress on a globally-acceptable MBM solution for international flights, just to name a few of its environmental initiatives.

Since the last Assembly, the organization has engaged and collaborated with States to significantly improve capacity building, resulting in the development of Action Plans for CO₂ emissions reduction activities by States. ICAO is also entering into partnerships for possible funding in support of Action Plan implementation.

"Aviation's record on lowering its emissions has been unmatched over the last several decades," stressed Benjamin. "Aircraft today are at least 80 per cent more fuel efficient than they were in the 1960s and sector-wide we continue to improve our emissions performance through a broad range of efforts. No other major industry sector can match this record."

Elections to determine the State seats on the ICAO Council through 2016 will also be taking place at ICAO over the next two weeks. The 36-seat Council serves as ICAO's governing executive body in the period between its triennial assemblies.

The ICAO 38th Assembly runs from 24 September through 4 October.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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