



**Opening address by the President of the Council  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,  
at the first meeting of the  
Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC)**

(Montreal, 25 February 2008)

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to welcome you to Montreal and to extend my personal appreciation for having taken the time to participate in this important first meeting of the Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC).

The issue of climate change has been the subject of intensive study and debate over the past decade.

ICAO has been addressing the various environmental issues associated with international aviation for about 40 years now. In 1968, the ICAO Assembly adopted a resolution instructing the ICAO Council to establish international specifications and associated guidance material to control aircraft noise. In 1971, the Assembly expanded this role to include the evaluation of the environmental impact of international aviation emissions. Also in 1971, Standards and Recommended Practices for Aircraft Noise were adopted by the Council and designated as Annex 16 to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*. And in

1983, the Council created the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) as a technical committee of the Council combining the mandate for both noise and emissions into one committee.

More recently, in September the 36th Session of the Assembly resolved to create this Group known as GIACC. Appendix K of Assembly Resolution 36-22 sets forth the task assigned to you as the Members constituting the GIACC. Since then, ICAO has been working in accordance with instructions provided by its Member States who participated in the Assembly.

As we begin our process, it is essential that the scope of the task assigned to this Group is fully understood. For that purpose, we have provided you with the Terms of Reference approved by the ICAO Council which shall be considered during our meeting, along with the Council's comments.

The mandate of this Group is broadly constructed to consider all options available to address aviation's contribution to climate change. This includes *inter alia* improvements in aircraft technology and ground-based equipment; more efficient operational measures and more extensive use of such measures; improvements in air traffic management to improve efficiency, shorten routes and reduce congestion; the use of market-based measures, including positive economic incentives; the

deployment of modern, efficient aircraft into the in-service fleet; and other options to improve the environmental performance of international civil aviation that may come into consideration by this Group.

As you are well aware, one element of the Assembly Resolution regarding climate change was discussed in length. It related to the issue of a State, or group of States, incorporating into a domestic or regional emissions trading program aircraft operations by operators domiciled in other States. The decision of the Assembly was that this should only be done on the basis of mutual agreement between States.

I wish to emphasize that the mandate of the GIACC does **not** include further discussion on this issue. The decision was taken, and we must now move on. We are now looking to the GIACC to develop and recommend to the Council an aggressive Programme of Action based upon consensus, one that reflects the shared vision and determination of all Contracting States to deal with climate change. This will involve *inter alia*:

- Developing an implementation framework
- Identifying a means to measure progress
- Identifying possible aspirational goals
- Reporting progress resulting from actions implemented by Contracting States and Stakeholders

I also wish to emphasize that the GIACC must conduct its deliberations on the basis of consensus as established in the Assembly Resolution. I realize this is challenging, but it is absolutely essential. We must produce a report that will be endorsed and hopefully applauded by all stakeholders if we are to encourage substantive and determined action.

To facilitate consensus, advisers and observers to GIACC meetings will not be invited to participate in the deliberations. I am sure you will agree with me that it is necessary to take this step and will, therefore, support it accordingly.

The agenda of this inaugural meeting of the GIACC provides for the election of officers. In this respect, a chair and co-chair will be elected at the commencement of this and each of its other meetings. This meeting begins with three Working Papers submitted by the Secretariat to facilitate the discussion of the Group. I anticipate that participants of the GIACC will submit working papers to future meetings.

For several years, ICAO has successfully promoted initiatives and policies such as the liberalization of air transport and implementation of Standards and Recommended Practices. Environmental issues are not an exception to this success. ICAO will continue to exercise its leadership in this field and counts on the

cooperation and support of its Member States. The Organization is at the disposal of States to promote the global initiatives and actions adopted toward an improved environment.

We are about to embark on a process of great importance to ICAO and to international aviation. I urge you to approach this task with an open mind and in a spirit of cooperation. We know that the eyes of the world are upon us and that expectations are high. I am confident that we have assembled a distinguished group of high-level officials with the capability and motivation to fulfill this mandate.

Ladies and gentlemen, I extend to you my best wishes for a successful meeting.