

**SECRETARY GENERAL'S OPENING ADDRESS
TO ICAO/McGILL WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE
26 September 2010**

1. Ladies and gentlemen, this conference has been convened to reflect on a question that is fundamental to the growth of air transport as we know it today – **what route to sustainability?**
2. The context is not an easy one. According to Giovanni Bisignani, Director General of the International Air transport Association (IATA), the past 18 months have been the most difficult financially in the history of the industry.
3. On the other hand, the latest ICAO forecast calls for five billion passengers annually by 2030, up from the current 2.3 billion.
4. So another way to formulate the sustainability question may be to ask: **how do we bridge the gap between an extremely demanding present and a highly promising future.**
5. During your Conference, you will be focussing primarily on security and facilitation, the environment and the economic factor. These issues are indeed critical to sustainability.

6. At the ICAO Assembly which gets under way in just over forty hours, we will be considering the same issues and many more, since all aspects of air transport operations ultimately contribute to sustainability.
7. Highest on our list of priorities is safety. A system that is not safe is not sustainable for the long term. In the course of the Assembly, we will be considering a holistic safety strategy that came out of the High-level Safety Conference held this past March at ICAO.
8. Our objective is to find a way of reducing accident rates globally, with special emphasis on regions where rates are the highest. If accident rates remain stable, the growth in traffic expected throughout this decade and beyond could lead to one major accident every two weeks. This is clearly unacceptable. We need to reduce rates while at the same time reduce the total number of accidents. That is what the world expects of us.
9. To reach our goal, we had to think outside the box – and we did.
10. Our strategy is essentially based on transparency and the greater sharing of information. Currently, a number of organizations, including ICAO, routinely collect and analyse information from accidents and incidents. The problem is that this information does not circulate as well as it should. It more often than not remains caught up in silos.

11. In Washington last year, in a speech to the US Federal Aviation Administration world forum on safety, I proposed the creation a global system for sharing information. Thanks to the exemplary collaboration of major States and industry stakeholders, the idea made its way to the High-level Safety Conference and was enthusiastically endorsed.
12. In fact, on the opening day of the Assembly this Tuesday, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by ICAO, the FAA, the European Union and IATA for the creation of what will be known as the Global Safety Information Exchange. Our common belief is that the widespread sharing of relevant safety information by regulators and industry will help to better identify existing and emerging risks, thereby making it possible to take action before safety issues result in accidents.
13. It is understood that ICAO will take the lead in setting up the system and eventually coordinating the dissemination of information throughout the aviation community.
14. Our strategy also suggests a code of conduct to ensure that shared information is used only for the purpose of improving safety. This is vital as the required information is to flow freely and in a timely fashion.
15. I am confident that our safety strategy will be unanimously endorsed by the Assembly. Because, ultimately, our role is to save and protect lives – which in turn is essential to sustainability.

16. The same applies to security. The attempted sabotage of a commercial airliner on 25 December 2009 showed how much aviation is vulnerable to attack and how international the threat is. Terrorism is a global problem that requires global solutions.
17. The upcoming Assembly will be looking at solutions.
18. One is a worldwide Declaration on Aviation Security formulated in response to the 25 December incident, and to other new and emerging threats. The Declaration flows from Ministerial-level regional conferences on aviation security held in Mexico City, Tokyo, Abuja and Abu Dhabi. In all instances, there was a strong commitment by States, together with industry, to protect civil aviation from all kinds of terrorist threats, as well as an expression of collective responsibility for taking action. This includes the need for enhancing information collection and sharing, for effective technology and strong international standards for the continuation of our audit programme, and for increased capacity-building assistance.
19. Underlying this consensus is that security measures must be uniform across the board and commensurate with the level of threat. This cannot be achieved without the full cooperation of States and collaboration with key stakeholders, including industry partners.

20. The legal fight against terrorism is another important dimension of security. You are all aware that just days ago, on 10 September in Beijing, a diplomatic conference held under the auspices of ICAO adopted two international air law instruments for the suppression of unlawful acts relating to civil aviation. The treaties further criminalize the act of using civil aircraft as a weapon and of using dangerous materials to attack aircraft or other targets on the ground. The unlawful transport of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their related material now becomes punishable, while making a threat against civil aviation may now trigger criminal liability. The message is clear – any form of unlawful interference against civil aviation will not be tolerated.

21. I now turn to environmental protection. Here, the story is a bit different. While we have done much to reduce the impact of aviation on the environment, public and media pressure are demanding that we do much more, more quickly. Of course we will do more, for environmental and financial reasons. And we must be more forceful in telling our side of the story. We have too long let others paint a negative picture of aviation as one of the world's great polluters. We have to turn the tables on our detractors and better educate the world on the benefits of our actions and the extent of our plan of action to address climate change. Again, leadership and cooperation under ICAO is absolutely necessary and I intend to push hard to make that happen.

22. After all, we go into the Assembly with a strong record. Most recently the Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change adopted at the High-level meeting of October 2009. ICAO Member States, with the support of industry, produced the first and to date only globally harmonized agreement from a sector for addressing its CO₂ emissions. Briefly, it features:

- a global goal of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to the year 2050;
- an objective to develop a CO₂ certification standard for aircraft engines;
- development of a framework for market-based measures in international aviation; and
- further elaboration on measures to assist developing States and to facilitate access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

23. In February 2010, ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) quickly made good on one of the objectives by producing a timetable for the CO₂ standard, aiming at 2013. Once adopted, the standard will become the only global fuel-efficiency standard for any industry sector.

24. Another milestone was the adoption, in November 2009, of a global framework on the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation. This is the way of the future. Alternative aviation drop-in fuels use existing aircraft and airport infrastructures. They can be produced from a wide variety of feed stocks, enabling many regions to be candidate production locations. This other initiative could make aviation the first sector to be able to use sustainable alternative fuels globally.

25. We look forward to the Assembly for guidance in pursuing our efforts on three main areas: more ambitious environmental goals; the development and application of a framework of market-based measures; and measures to assist States.

26. Policies and recommendations from the Assembly will subsequently form the basis for aviation's input to the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2010, in Mexico.

27. Beyond safety, security and environmental protection, another aspect of air transport operations which impacts considerably on sustainability is efficiency. Being more efficient increases safety and security, and substantially reduces fuel burn – good for the environment and good for the bottom line, not to mention customer service.
28. How then can we become more efficient? By creating the future we want to see!
29. For example, for the first time in history, we convened last year a Global Air Traffic Management Forum on Civil/Military Cooperation. The goal was to foster awareness among the two airspace users of each other's needs and constraints and to see how we could arrive at optimum use of all available airspace – for operational requirements of air transportation, national defence and environmental conservation. At the outcome an action plan was outlined in which ICAO would play a key role as the international platform for progress on civil/military cooperation.

30. Another proactive action was ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Symposium. It served to crystallize issues around the anticipated shortage of hundreds of thousands of pilots, mechanics and air traffic controllers in the coming years. This lack of qualified aviation personnel can seriously undermine the sustainability of air transport if not addressed efficiently and forcefully. We take comfort in the fact that airline executives worldwide have congratulated ICAO and IATA for the effectiveness of their action with the NGAP undertaking. I believe we are on the right track.

31. Efficiency also means reacting quickly to keep aircraft flying safely in times of emergency. Let me give you two recent examples.

32. When the devastating earthquake struck Haiti on 12 January, we immediately took action to ensure the safety of the airspace in and around Haiti, through our Regional Office in Mexico and in cooperation with Member States in the Region. We then sent a mission to Haiti to assess damage and are now helping with plans to rehabilitate the country's civil aviation infrastructure.

33. The eruption of a volcano in Iceland in April was the first time that a volcanic disruption of this magnitude impacted such a densely utilized airspace. The ICAO Council met together with IATA only two days after the eruption to review the situation. The following day, ICAO's Air Navigation Commission (ANC) considered near-term initiatives to improve aviation safety in airspace contaminated by volcanic ash. And ICAO's new International Volcanic Ash Task Force (IVATF) is hard at work on a global safety risk management framework, so as to be better prepared for a similar event should it occur.

34. Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude, I want to thank you for your coming to this conference and for your interest in ICAO. I hope I have contributed to the discussion on sustainability.

35. All of what I have said reflects what ICAO is about, and the theme of this 37th Session of our Assembly: ICAO Uniting Aviation...for Safety, Security and the Environment... and I would add, sustainability!

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