



Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
ICAO Aviation and Sustainable Alternative Fuels Workshop
(Montréal, 18 October 2011)

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to ICAO and to begin by telling you a story this morning.

Two years ago, ICAO organized its first-ever Aviation and Alternative Fuels Workshop, followed by a world conference in Rio de Janeiro. Some of you were there. We wanted those meetings to be a global wake-up call for the aviation sector about the potential of alternative fuels in addressing our common challenge on climate change.

At that time, we raised a few eyebrows and provoked some pretty intense debates. But as we look back, the progress achieved was much greater than we could have ever envisaged... Just think...

There are five major consortia established and working on alternative fuels for aviation.

Commercial flights using alternative fuels are no longer just a concept. Almost 30 test flights have successfully taken place and, this year, some commercial scheduled flights using these fuels are in full operation. It means we are already flying with alternative fuels!!

Since late 2009, ICAO has identified 300 initiatives on alternative fuel production and deployment. This is a powerful testament to their feasibility. It is an even greater indication of the progress that can be made by a single sector when there is the willingness to take advantage of a valuable opportunity for collective action towards a common goal.

Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go, given the industry's fuel requirements, let alone what will be needed to stabilize international aviation's CO₂ emissions.

With this in mind, I am delighted to welcome you to the second ICAO Aviation and Sustainable Alternative Fuels Workshop, which is also the first of a series of ICAO activities leading up to next year's United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – the Rio+20.

As we move ahead this week, I suggest we embrace a more holistic view of sustainability.

Aviation delivers enormous economic, social and cultural benefits to our global society. Accordingly, our discussions must consider the interdependency between environmental conservation, economic growth and development and social well-being. That is why we need a broader definition of “environmentally sustainable”. In this sense, the widespread use of sustainable alternative fuels for

aviation has the potential to move aviation closer to sustainability as a sector in all three of these dimensions.

I am pleased to say that ICAO has put everything in place to provide a stimulating context for discussions.

First of all, we made sure that we invited all of the key stakeholders that were absolutely necessary for the successful global implementation of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation. This means research professionals, growers, fuel producers, fuel distributors, airports, aircraft manufacturers, airlines, financial institutions and regulators. I am very happy that all of you answered our call.

Second, considering the vital need to exchange information, we have included extended networking time to help foster cooperation and establish new connections. For many of you in the room this event marks a unique opportunity to meet face-to-face directly with stakeholders, such as fuel producers and financial institutions.

And to stimulate conversations and exchanges during the networking opportunities, you will hear about the vision for sustainable alternative fuels from States, international organizations, and consortia operating in all corners of the globe.

You will also be informed on the current state of research and the qualification of new processes for making jet fuel - what it takes to deploy an alternative aviation fuel, including legal and financial considerations.

You will hear many perspectives and real-life experiences from around the world. We hope you will find that some of these are relevant to your situation and can inspire you in designing your own strategies.

Our ultimate objective is a sustainable future for international aviation, a future in which alternative fuels are a key component.

At the Rio+20 meeting in Brazil next June, the international community will be asked to reassert its commitment to the goal of sustainable development. To achieve this goal, clear objectives will need to be established and a strong framework to address new energy challenges must be developed. The availability of renewable energies will be critical in meeting the sustainable development objectives of not only international aviation, but other sectors as well.

And now, it is my privilege to introduce our guest speaker, Mr. Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, and the Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that capacity, he is responsible for guiding and coordinating international efforts to generate the necessary political will of the global community towards a successful outcome in Rio next year.

Mr. Zukang is more than familiar with the challenge that “sustainable” development poses to our society and the level of cooperation and coordination that will be required among all of the stakeholders concerned.

In particular, Mr. Zukang has looked to his partners and colleagues in the UN system to lead the international community towards Rio+20. As he says, and I quote: “Countries will look to the UN system... for guidance on the kinds of policies they can adopt to move along a green development

path...The ultimate goal for the UN system should be the ability to present a concrete menu of policy options that assists all countries... The UN system has to lead by example.”

I now invite you to listen to Mr. Zukang’s keynote address. (video taped message)

Thank you for your attention. After this inspiring and supportive message from Mr. Zukang, I will now let you work. I wish you a very successful workshop.
