



**Welcoming remarks by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Taïeb Chérif,
at the first meeting of the
Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC)**

(Montreal, 25 February 2008)

Thank you Mr. President. I join you in welcoming most heartily the members of the GIACC and I wish to assure everyone that every effort has been made so that this inaugural meeting is as productive as possible.

I also want to emphasize that the Secretariat of ICAO is entirely committed to the global challenge of minimizing the impact of aviation on the environment. The Business Plan of the Organization establishes clear targets we intend to reach in support of the global effort to address climate change.

We have a strong foundation on which to build.

In 2004, we created an Environmental Unit to manage the work of CAEP and carry out the ICAO programme of action on the environment. One of the key activities of the Unit is coordination with relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations dealing with the environment. The Unit is currently composed of two professional staff, one secondee and two support staff. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank States that contributed to the establishment of the Unit and we look forward to continued and broader support as we expand our activities in keeping with the Resolution of the last Assembly.

I am especially proud of the work accomplished in 2007.

In February, amongst many achievements, CAEP/7 helped define mid- and long-term technology goals for emissions of nitrogen oxides from jet engines. It pursued the development of operational means to reduce fuel consumption and it completed an initial assessment of the models and databases currently used to estimate aircraft emissions locally and globally.

In May, a Colloquium on Aviation Emissions hosted by ICAO brought together world experts that presented up-to-date assessments of the latest technological advances and highlighted possible solutions to address aviation emissions' impacts.

In September, we published our first ever Environmental Report. I am pleased with the response to the Report from States, industry and even the news media. I believe we have created an invaluable resource that makes it easier to fully understand the technical and policy aspects of aviation's impact on the environment. It also responds to the critical need for the most authoritative, transparent and credible technical and scientific information on which to base discussions and decisions. Members of GIACC have before them an e-version of the Report.

And there was of course the ICAO Assembly which the President referred to in his opening address. Technical and operational achievements related to engine emissions reduction, as well as overall results of CAEP for the previous three years, were reviewed and unanimously endorsed.

We are now setting our sights on the future. We are developing a methodology for the calculation of the carbon dioxide emissions attributable to air travel. The intent is for a calculator to be used as the primary tool for calculating aviation emissions for use in the UN's Climate Neutral Initiative. It would also be a source of data for use in carbon offset programmes.

In the years ahead, we will pursue all technical and operational initiatives that can reduce the impact of aviation on climate change. Yet obviously, more than the conventional approach is needed. There is, of course, the huge potential of synthetic or bio fuels. There are interesting experiments being carried out at the moment, most recently with the Airbus 380, but we are probably far from a dramatic breakthrough.

That is why the meeting which begins this morning is so important.

Before I conclude, I would simply add that this coming Friday, there will be the unveiling in the lobby of a plaque indicating that the ICAO Headquarters is the first building in Canada to receive the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification. It is quite fitting that your discussions will be conducted in a uniquely green environment.

Mr. President...

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