

ICAO EMBLEM AND ITS HISTORY

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The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was established in 1944 by 52 nations whose aim was to assure the safe, orderly and economic development of international air transport. This article outlines the history of the emblems, which have been used by ICAO until the present time. The origins of the United Nations emblem are also provided hereafter, as it constitutes the basis of the ICAO emblem.

HISTORY OF THE UN EMBLEM



Figure 1

The story of the United Nations emblem started with the symbol created by the Presentation Branch of the United States Office of Strategic Services in April 1945 in response to a request for a lapel pin to be designed for the "United Nations Conference on International Organization" to be held in San Francisco. Among the various designs that came out, an azimuthally equidistant projection of the world map centred on the North Pole and showing all countries in a circle with a softening touch of crossed branches of olive was retained as the unofficial emblem (Figure 1) and appeared on the original copy of the UN Charter signed on 26 June 1945 and on early UN documents. The projection of the map extends 40° South Latitude and includes four concentric circles. It should be noted that the 100th meridian west of Greenwich was made the vertical axis of the projection.

The first Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Trygve Lie, submitted a report to the First Session of the UN General Assembly held in 1946, which suggested the adoption of an emblem for the United Nations. The Sixth Committee, responsible for legal questions, brought several modifications to the original design which had been used at San Francisco to include all the countries to the sixtieth parallel and to make the Greenwich meridian as vertical axis in order to avoid the truncation of countries and to represent them as far as possible in their proper relationship to the cardinal points. The present distinctive emblem of the United Nations (Figure 2) was approved by Resolution 92-(I) on 7 December 1946 by the First Session of the UN General Assembly, held in New York.

DESCRIPTION OF THE UN EMBLEM

The design adopted for the UN emblem may be described as follows: a map of the world on a north polar azimuthally equidistant projection inscribed in a wreath of crossed conventional branches of an olive tree; the projection extends to 60 degrees south latitude and includes five concentric circles, all except the central circle being divided into octants, with the Greenwich meridian as the lower vertical axis. The two symbols composing the UN emblem are the *olive branch*, which can be traced back to ancient Greece as a symbol of peace and the



Figure 2

world map, which depicts the area of concern to the United Nations in achieving its primary intended purpose of maintaining international peace and security. The map projection, occasionally referred to as Guillaume Postel's projection, represents the world somewhat as a round stadium in which all nations are assembled. The design possesses the essential requirements of simplicity and dignity, as well as an aesthetic quality, which have enabled it to survive with a considerable measure of success as an effective international symbol enjoying global acceptance.

ICAO EARLY EMBLEMS



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Since 1946, two versions of early emblems (Figures 3 and 4), with a design showing the eastern and western hemispheres between a pair of wings, were used by ICAO on conference badges and publications. The design of Figure 3 was also embodied in the seal of the Organization (Figure 5).



Figure 6



Figure 7

In October 1950, these early designs were substituted by other similar emblems (Figures 6 and 7), which were a combination of the early designs with four concentric circles, all being divided into octants, inscribed in a wreath of crossed conventional branches of olive tree, and therefore show similarities with the emblem of the United Nations.

Further to a request from ICAO to standardize the emblems of the Specialized Agencies, the Preparatory Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, at the 4th meeting of its 21st session, on 10 July 1952, agreed that, when new Agencies were considering the adoption or changing an emblem, they should bear in mind the desirability of basing their design on the United Nations emblem.



Figure 8

The early emblems had been occasionally subject to criticism with respect to their design and also to the value of their symbolism; it was also felt that ICAO's emblem should follow more closely the pattern of the United Nations, putting an additional accent on the idea of unity of the United Nations family of international organizations.

In 1954, the two hemispheres between the wings were removed from the ICAO emblem and the polar projection of the world was shown as in the UN emblem; it displayed longer wings set lower on the globe than on the current emblem (Figure 8).

FIRST OFFICIAL EMBLEM

A modified version of the emblem, with the wings relocated slightly higher on the globe for better balance (Figure 9), was approved by the Secretary General of ICAO on 6 January 1955; at this stage, he decided that steps should be taken towards adopting an ICAO emblem, as none of the prior emblems had ever received formal recognition by the Council or the Assembly. On 21 February 1955, the Secretary General of the United Nations authorized the use of the United Nations emblem with the design of the wings superimposed to serve as the official emblem of ICAO.



Figure 9

In August 1955, the new emblem, as approved by the United Nations, was submitted for formal approval by the ICAO Council. When considering the design of this new emblem, the Council felt that the incorporation of the initials "ICAO" and "OACI" would identify it more clearly with the Organization; these acronyms would refer to the English, French and Spanish denominations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, as the original text of the Convention on International Civil Aviation had been drawn up in those three languages.

Further to the Council's request to present additional proposals for approval by the 10th Assembly, members of the Secretariat were invited to submit further designs for an official emblem; six staff members submitted ten different designs. The ad hoc Committee on ICAO emblem selected one of the five designs submitted by Mr. Maurice St. Onge, Canadian, Cartographic Draftsman, in the Aeronautical Information Section of the Secretariat. Furthermore, Mr. St. Onge was requested to revise his selected design.



Figure 10

As none of the revised designs was judged to be superior to the basic design in use since 1951, the emblem as per Figure 10 was eventually selected to maintain the practical advantages of retaining a visible sign of ICAO's relationship with the United Nations, as a radically different ICAO emblem would have taken many years before achieving the currency which had been attached in many countries of the world to the widely-recognized "UN crest".

ICAO Council agreed to recommend to the Assembly this first official emblem (Figure 10), which was adopted by the 10th Session of the Assembly, held in Caracas in July 1956 (Resolution A10-11).

SECOND OFFICIAL EMBLEM

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) deposited its instrument of adherence to the Convention on International Civil Aviation on 15 October 1970 and became the 120th member of ICAO on 14 November 1970. Further to a request of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on 30 October 1970, the Assembly decided at its 18th Session in 1971 to proceed with the introduction of the Russian language in ICAO. In October 1972, the Secretary General of ICAO agreed to introduce a revised ICAO emblem (Figure 11) incorporating the initials of the Organization in Cyrillic alphabet in recognition of the introduction of Russian as a fourth language of the Organization.



Figure 11

The Council recommended to the 21st Session of the Assembly the adoption of the new official emblem (Resolution A21-4). It should be noted that the Cyrillic characters adopted for the emblem do not correspond to the initials of the Organization in Russian, but rather the transliteration of the English ICAO. ICAO became also the only UN Specialized Agency to include more than two acronyms in its emblem.

INTRODUCTION OF ARABIC AND CHINESE LANGUAGES

In 1974, the 21st Session of the Assembly approved the use of Arabic in correspondence between ICAO and the Arab States and interpretation at the Assembly Sessions and Regional Meetings for the Middle East. The use of Arabic in ICAO had been on a pragmatic and reasonable approach taking into account the real needs of the Arab Contracting States and the conditions at ICAO. The 26th Assembly held in 1986 approved Arabic as a working language at ICAO.

In 1977, the 22nd Session of the Assembly had decided to adopt the Chinese language as one of the working languages of ICAO. In accordance with the decision to extend the use of the Chinese language in ICAO, the Chinese Unit was established in October 1994.

THIRD OFFICIAL EMBLEM



Figure 12

In May 1995, a revision to the ICAO emblem (Figure 12) was made to recognize the introduction of Arabic and Chinese as working languages of the Organization. In view of the difficulty in accurately reproducing the Chinese characters, it was initially proposed to limit their number in the emblem and to show only "Civil Aviation Organization" in Chinese. A further proposal for the amendment of the Chinese-language inscription to be used on the emblem (Figure 13), reflecting more accurately the full name of the Organization, was submitted by China. Despite the fact that the Arabic inscription appearing in the emblem was not an Arabic word but a transliteration from the English,

the new emblem was adopted (Resolution A31-1) at the 31st Session of the Assembly held in 1995. The possibility to review the choice of the Arabic acronym for the name of the Organization could be considered later. The emblem at Figure 13 is the current one used by ICAO.



Figure 13

VARIATIONS OF THE ICAO EMBLEM

Occasionally, variations of the emblem had been used by ICAO to mark some of its anniversaries, as shown at Figures 14 to 18.

At the invitation of the ICAO's Secretary General, staff members were invited in February 1993 to submit designs for a logo to mark the 50th anniversary of ICAO, commemorated in 1994. Seventy submissions were received from 28 staff members and the selected official version for use by ICAO and Contracting States, is reproduced at Figure 17. The original design was submitted by Mr. Brian Darling, Canadian, Systems Procedure Writer in the Office Automation Section of the Secretariat.



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

CONCLUSION

The compilation of the various emblems used by ICAO since its inception has shown a consistent evolution of the design according to the languages used by the Organization, with however the accent put on having a pattern close to the emblem of the United Nations, embracing the world through the spirit of cooperation to achieve the safe and orderly development of civil aviation.