

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO),
DR. TAÏEB CHÉRIF
ICAO/MCGILL WORLDWIDE SYMPOSIUM ON AN SYSTEMS**

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this joint ICAO/McGill Symposium on Air Navigation. The focus of our meeting over the next three days will be congestion in the skies, a very topical issue given the existing congestion in many regions of the world and an ICAO forecast for 30 million movements and 2.8 billion passengers worldwide by the year 2015.

What makes this symposium rather unique is the presence among us of a judicious blend of professionals and academics, as well as key representatives from a number of States. I am sure the eclectic nature of this group, with a broad range of interests in the field of air navigation, will widen the scope of our discussions and lead to a particularly substantive outcome. I am also encouraged by the fact that many of you have already made significant contributions in disciplines that have a significant impact on air navigation. I want to thank you all for having joined us here today.

A point of departure for our discussions should be the common vision shared by ICAO and the world civil aviation community for a global air traffic management (ATM) system that:

- highlights interoperability and seamlessness across regions, for all users during all phases of flight;
- meets agreed levels of safety, while providing for optimum economic operations;
- is environmentally sustainable; and
- reflects national security requirements.

A milestone in the implementation of the global ATM system was reached in February of this year when ICAO sent its 189 Member States a proposal to amend the Global Air Navigation Plan for CNS/ATM Systems.

The proposed Global Plan is based on recommendations of the Eleventh Air Navigation Conference of 2003 and two related industry roadmaps developed subsequent to the Conference. It is part of an integrated set of tools and guidance material, which includes the Global ATM Operational Concept, ATM Systems Requirements and Performance-Based Transition Guidelines. Together, they will guide the aviation community to the seamless global ATM system we all seek.

We have integrated all of this work into the ICAO Business Plan, which stresses the implementation of harmonized air traffic management systems and performance-based efficiency improvements. We have also ensured that the Business Plan will bring about increased functional integration between ICAO Headquarters and Regional Offices. These measures will collectively enable ICAO to fully exploit opportunities that have emerged as a result of evolving technologies.

Because the ICAO Business Plan is results-oriented, guidance material and interactive planning tools for States, regional planning groups and air navigation services providers have been developed to establish performance objectives and implementation time

lines. The Global Plan will thus become the baseline for measurable achievements as the global ATM system continues to evolve from systems-based to performance-based. States and regions will be able to select initiatives tailored to their particular needs in order to meet agreed-upon performance objectives.

Ultimately, a deliberate and coordinated approach to implementation of an air navigation services infrastructure will depend upon cooperation and transparency among all stakeholders. It will also require interaction between ICAO regions for greater harmonization and alignment of regional programmes and implementation activities. The cooperative approach would be supported by interactive software programmes and other common planning tools that foster uniformity in the application of the various components of the Plan.

Before I turn over the control of the meeting to our Chairman, I would like to emphasize that ICAO is committed to meeting the operational expectations of the world aviation community. Accordingly, I see our objective over the next three days as achieving full understanding of the specific needs and challenges of all parties involved, to reach consensus on the future direction of efficient and sustainable air navigation, and to formulate some conclusions that would assist us in reaching our goal.

This is a demanding task yet we must be diligent in addressing successfully the issues that, if left unattended, could compromise the future capability of air transport to continue stimulating economic activity around the globe in a safe and secure manner. We are the trustees of airspace for the public and we must make every effort to justify the confidence reposed in us.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and candour in sharing your thoughts, experiences and suggestions. I want to assure you that the results of your discussions will be taken into account as we continue to shape the regulatory framework in support of the growth of air transport around the world.

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