



**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO),
MR. ROBERTO KOBEH GONZÁLEZ, AT A CEREMONY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF
THE THIRTY-EIGHTH EDWARD WARNER AWARD BESTOWED ON
DR. SILVIO FINKELSTEIN**

(Montréal, 18 September 2007)

On this first day of the 36th Session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), it is a great privilege and a distinct pleasure for me to present, on behalf of the ICAO Council, the highest honour in the world of civil aviation, the Edward Warner Award, to Dr. Silvio Finkelstein. Dr. Finkelstein is a doctor who has been, and continues to be, a leader in the field of aviation medicine, a discipline inextricably linked to safety, and his vision and determination have made a major contribution to safety in international civil aviation.

This Award also reminds us of a great international civil servant, Dr. Edward Warner. Dr. Warner led the Organization from 1945 to 1957, and enlisted the cooperation of nations throughout the world to assure the safe and orderly development of civil aviation. His visionary leadership laid the foundation for the development of ICAO, from the 52 initial signatories to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, to the 190 we have today.

Next year, Dr. Finkelstein will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of his graduation as a doctor from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Buenos Aires, his native city. His first contact with aviation medicine, the discipline about which he became so passionate, occurred in 1955 when he was a medical student and was called up for military service in the Argentine Air Force. He was assigned to the medical examination unit of the National Institute of Aviation and Space Medicine (INMAE), an institute at which he now holds the title of Director *Honoris Causa*.

During his professional life, his work has spanned a wide range of interests, from academic research to international regulation. He worked as an Aviation Medicine Physician at the Civil Aviation Air Base of the Argentine Government and, during helicopter search and rescue activities, he carried out humanitarian work, transporting injured and ill patients by air and participating in rescue operations.

Dr. Finkelstein has worked on research projects using hypobaric chambers that involved astronauts and other space crew. He conducted research on the tolerance of patients with heart and lung diseases to reduced oxygen levels found in commercial aircraft cabins, from which guidelines for airline travel by passengers with medical problems were developed.

In 1971, Dr. Finkelstein joined ICAO as an Aviation Medicine Officer and, in 1975, was appointed Chief of the Aviation Medicine Section, a post he occupied until his retirement in 1994. Within ICAO, Dr. Finkelstein made aviation medicine education the cornerstone of his activities. Further, it was his firm conviction that health and safety are integrated concepts which neither can, nor should, be separated.

With respect to education, Dr. Finkelstein focused his attention on three areas: the ICAO *Manual of Civil Aviation Medicine*, which was developed under his leadership and was published for the first time in 1973, the development of a Standard for aviation medical examiners emphasizing the importance of training, and the establishment of a programme of regional seminars. The first seminars took place in Argentina, Nigeria and Thailand, and became very popular. Dr. Finkelstein received many awards, from various Administrations, for his success in establishing as both official and obligatory, aviation medicine education programmes.

During his time in ICAO, Dr. Finkelstein undertook a special study on the potential adverse safety effects of tobacco smoking. Over a decade of work, despite facing many difficulties and obstacles, his research on the subject was submitted to the deliberative bodies of ICAO. His efforts were rewarded by success when, in 1992, the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A29-15 concerning smoking restrictions on international passenger flights, a remarkable achievement at the time which resulted in recognition for Dr. Finkelstein's work being received from the four corners of the globe.

Dr. Finkelstein has co-authored several books and articles, and has been President of three scientific associations. He has received numerous distinctions from collegiate bodies and decorations from a number of governments, and has been appointed as honorary member of twelve national professional associations. Since his retirement, Dr. Finkelstein has remained active, working as a high-level consultant to government authorities and providing his services to the ICAO Technical Co-operation Bureau for multinational projects, concerning matters such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Avian Flu.

Recently, a large part of his time has been devoted to studies on crew and passenger health and the development of systems to reduce the risk of spreading communicable disease by air transport. In his capacity as Chief Observer of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, he participated in the deliberations of the 2004 ICAO Assembly which adopted Resolution A35-12. This significantly raised the profile of health and aviation, and resulted in the Assembly declaring that "the protection of the health of passengers and crews... is an integral element of safe air travel".

The Edward Warner Award comprises a gold medal and a diploma, both of which I have the privilege to present to Dr. Finkelstein. The citation accompanying the Award reads:

EDWARD WARNER AWARD

conferred by the Council
of the
International Civil Aviation Organization
on

Dr. Silvio Finkelstein

in recognition of his eminent contribution to the
development of international civil aviation in the field of
aviation medicine.

Throughout his distinguished international career, he has fostered aviation medicine education and made it the cornerstone of his activities.

His deep commitment to his work and assiduous efforts have led to major achievements, including the establishment, for medical examiners, of mandatory training in aviation medicine and the adoption of Assembly Resolution A29-15 on smoking restrictions on international passenger flights.

His wide knowledge of and dedication to aviation medicine and his untiring energy in emphasizing the strong link between health and safety in aviation operations have benefited civil aviation throughout the world and gained him the well-deserved respect and consideration of the civil aviation community globally.