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Keynote speech delivered by Mr Lalonde at the ICAO “Destination Green” Symposium.

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Mr President, Madam Chairperson, Madam Hupé, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, for inviting me. I am pleased to be with you at this important moment in your discussions, before your General Assembly in September.

I would also like to thank ICAO for attending Rio last June. Every twenty years, the international community takes stock of its situation, its trajectory and its common issues and attempts to overcome two widespread shortcomings, namely short-termism and a blinkered approach. Whilst we must deplore the fact that the vessel Earth houses third class dormitories next to first class cabins, the issue first and foremost is to avoid shipwreck.

The Rio+20 Conference took note of the progress achieved since the first Rio Summit in 1992 and welcomed the fact that such a high proportion of the world’s population has been lifted out of poverty. It presented the prospect of a middle class of 7 billion people at the turn of the century and commended the remarkable progress made in terms of technology and its contribution to development. When one thinks that there were hardly any mobile phones or Internet back in 1992.

However, at the same time, it also expressed concern at the degradation which is already visible in nature, together with pressure on resources and the risks generated by the pursuit of economic growth measured solely on the basis of GDP. The world’s population has doubled since the first conference on sustainable development in Stockholm in 1972, and the United Nations Population Fund is warning that the world’s population will oscillate between 9 and 11 billion by the middle of the century, depending on whether women of child-bearing age have more or less children in the years to come.

The decline in biodiversity has been underlined. Perhaps one day our descendants will judge our generation for the way in which we have treated animals, our evolutionary companions. While many coastal populations derive their living from the sea, fish stocks have collapsed and oceans are suffering from increased acidity. This tragedy is indicative of the fate of “the Commons” of humanity, namely, the seas, the air and ecosystems, etc. Since they do not belong to anyone, they are orphans. The global community is organized into States, which defend their own interests; they may have created some international institutions, but their purpose is to resolve problems between States rather than dealing with humanity’s common problems. That is why it is necessary to hold these conferences.

The Rio+20 Conference therefore focussed on guiding the economy and the United Nations to take better account of the Commons. It was thus decided that a bundle of sustainable development objectives for the whole of humanity should be negotiated between now and 2015. 2015 is therefore an important date for the international community since it is also the deadline that was set for the first generation of Millennium Development Goals dedicated to combating poverty, and the negotiators of the Convention on Climate Change are attempting to reach an agreement by 2015 in Paris.

As is the tradition at these conferences, the currents of growth and wealth creation rub up against the counter currents of sustainability, thereby making waves around the taboo question: does growth have any limits? And if so, how can we fairly distribute these limited resources? It should be stated that we are no

longer referring to the environment in the local sense of the word, but rather to the fundamental mechanisms of the biosphere. Scientists inform us that after the carbon cycle, which is at the forefront of our minds, we will have to worry about the nitrogen and phosphorous cycles. I must admit that I am both alarmed at their ever more urgent warnings and reassured every morning to see that the end of the world has been postponed once more. However, one thing is certain: the world which we will pass on to our children is not the one that we received from our parents. I was in New York when Sandy unleashed its fury and it was impressive. Two months earlier, the Chinese authorities had to evacuate part of Shanghai to counter the damage caused by the typhoon Haikui.

And this leads us on to the climate. As you are no doubt aware, the Mauna Loa Observatory in the Hawaiian islands, which has been measuring the CO₂ content in the atmosphere since 1958, has sounded the alarm: the concentration level has just exceeded 400 parts per million, whereas it was at only 280ppm before the industrial era. Therefore, we will soon no longer be in a position to remain below an increase of two degrees at the end of the century. We will hear more about this in the IPCC's Fifth report at the end of the year. A recent exhibition illustrated how the earth's surface has changed since 1984 thanks to a series of images from the Landsat satellite, while if we look further back in time, we discover that the sea level was 100m lower twenty thousand years ago.

The international community has not remained inactive. It signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, which took only a year and a half to negotiate. Then in 1997, Kyoto and its avatars took up a lot more of the diplomats' time. However, today, change is in the air - we have entered the 21st century and left the 20th century behind us. In the 20th century, developed countries represented two thirds of emissions while developing countries accounted for only a third back then. We have the opposite proportion nowadays. The future successor to the Kyoto protocol will not only have to settle the balance of the past but also prepare for the future, as we have seen reflected in the recent progress made during the negotiations. The Durban Platform and the Doha Gateway provide for an agreement involving all States to be concluded by 2015 in order to be implemented by 2020 at the latest. Everyone will be concerned and everyone is working towards this at the moment with national plans, taxes on carbon, emission quotas, energy savings incentives and carbon-free sources. Even the 49 least developed countries have just announced that they have accepted that the principle of reducing emissions also applies to them – a major development.

I especially welcome the effort made by other actors such as local communities, which are often ahead of States. For example, Quebec, where we find ourselves today, has linked up its emissions permit market with the one in California. I commend the associations, some of which are in attendance this morning, that submit quality reports to us. I commend businesses - 7000 of them are members of the United Nations Global Compact, and respect the principles and share the objectives that the international community has set for itself. And there are 350 of these 7000 businesses, including aviation companies, that want to contribute to combating climate change - 350 is just for starters!- and they have grouped together in the "Caring for climate" initiative. They are striving to reduce their carbon footprint throughout the value chain as well as testing and disseminating good practices and participating in adaptation efforts. They will be attending the next meeting of the signatory States to the Convention on Climate Change in Warsaw in November, and will be presenting a platform for action there, which all businesses are invited to join.

This then is the backdrop on the eve of ICAO's General Assembly. What about aviation in all of this?

Aviation is an industry that is very concerned about security, aware of the inherent risks and certainly has a long term vision. Just think how long it takes to develop a new plane.

This is a growing industry – reputedly growing at 5% per annum, especially in Asia, in spite of various crises and shocks, with 1,700 companies, 3,700 airports, 23,000 aircraft, 3 billion passengers and 30 to 60 million flights per annum over the next twenty years.

This is an industry on the innovative cutting edge, which has multiplied its energy efficiency fivefold over fifty years and has an impressive panoply of resources for going even further, ranging from fuselage materials to engines, via flight paths, airports and different types of fuel.

However, this is also an industry, which represents 3% of greenhouse gas emissions today and is predicting that it will increase its energy consumption threefold between now and 2050. Whether we like it or not, one tonne of kerosene emits 3 tonnes of CO₂. Aviation currently emits 700 million tonnes of CO₂.

That is why we have to welcome the perspectives opened up by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and ICAO: to continuously improve energy efficiency between now and 2020; neutral carbon growth from 2020 and a long term goal, which, according to IATA's estimates, could represent a 50% reduction in aviation emissions by 2050, compared to 2005 levels. It is a good idea to set ourselves goals to which we can aspire or commit ourselves to achieving them. We must at least endeavour to do so. Certain measures have already been implemented such as: defining a CO₂ standard, something which ICAO is working on; the national plans being submitted to ICAO by its Member States and the assistance being organized by ICAO. There is also a basket of measures covering technology, various infrastructures, flight procedures, types of fuel and market mechanisms.

In actual fact, all of these measures need to be used, whether they are undertaken by governments or businesses; everyone has their role to play. I cannot prevent myself from wondering about this recourse to biofuels: I have the impression that you regard them as a silver bullet. I have had the opportunity to work on biofuels, and I recall the hopes that were pinned on jatropha because it grew on marginal lands and was therefore not in competition with food crops. This is indeed the case, but the harvesting of nuts, and therefore oil, was also perceived as marginal. It's true that certain countries have been successful with sugar cane but can we apply this example across the board? New generation biofuels are now being announced and science and technology do sometimes achieve miracles so let's follow these developments closely.

In the meantime, it seems that it will be difficult for aviation to make progress unless it equips itself with a market mechanism. When the costs of reductions in one sector are relatively high, it may be appropriate to purchase reductions achieved at a lower cost in another sector. I know that you are exploring three formulas, and I understand that industry is in favour, in the first instance, of a CO₂ emissions offset mechanism. This would re-launch the carbon market as well as the clean development mechanism, that invention of climate diplomacy. I catch myself imagining a big alliance between aviation and rain forests; it's appealing to think of aviation taking care of the forests. However, offsetting does not reduce emissions: at best, it can only help to stabilize them. Aviation has to set itself a ceiling and then gradually reduce it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There comes a time when one has to take the plunge. I have been delighted to take note of the understanding which reigns between ICAO and IATA. I have also observed the leading role played by industry, which took the initiative in terms of opening up possibilities in 2009 that were then taken up by ICAO the following year. IATA is now putting forward a goal for 2050 and proposing the adoption of a carbon emissions offset mechanism.

Basically, aviation represents the happy face of globalization in the eyes of the world's populations. To a large extent, it is aviation that enables dialogue between civilizations and allows its travellers to experience a sense of planetary belonging. Aviation companies desire to be good world citizens, and are also aware of their responsibilities. They all aspire to be the best, loved by the public and respected by public opinion. They shy away from the disorderly initiatives that are springing up here and there, obliging them to follow contradictory orders, and they would like to have a global framework.

It is therefore solely up to the Member States of ICAO, ICAO which governs international flights, to step away from purely national concerns in order to allow aviation companies to move forward in the direction that they wish to follow. ICAO has achieved remarkable work in terms of internationalizing air transport since its inception. And it is precisely because of this planetary vocation that the convention on climate change negotiators asked ICAO to organize international flights' contribution to the common struggle. It is therefore up to ICAO to create this international framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the Member States, the world awaits you. Dare to be bold...

Thank you.