



**CEANS Pre-Conference Symposium
14 September 2008**

**Opening address by the Director, Air Transport Bureau
Mrs Folasade Odutola**

I would like to join the Secretary General, Dr. Chérif in welcoming you all to ICAO Headquarters for this important event. It is also my pleasure to welcome our Moderator for the Symposium, Mr Vijay Poonosamy, and all the speakers and panellists who have graciously accepted our invitation to this timely gathering relating to ICAO's air transport activities.

This Symposium will address the key topics that will be discussed at the CEANS, under the guidance of influential individuals from various sectors of the industry and government authorities. I would like to reaffirm from the very start that the main purpose of this event is to prepare us all for the Conference that starts tomorrow. We are delighted to begin the day setting the scene for the Conference with two high-level presentations. The first one, by Mr. Saif Mohammed Al Suweidi, Director General of the United Arab Emirates General Civil Aviation Authority, will offer an insight into the next phase in the evolution of air transport. The second presentation, by Mr. Nasim Zaidi, Representative of India on the Council of ICAO, on behalf of Mr. Ashok Chawla, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India, will deal with the pressing challenges to growth in terms of the availability of infrastructure and capacity building.

These will be followed by panel discussions led by a cross-section of senior officers from airports, ANSP, and regulators from around the world. Finally, to round off the Symposium, Dr. Assad Kotaite, our immediate past president of Council, will moderate the panel discussion on "The status of ICAO's policies on charges and taxes".

On your behalf, I thank them all sincerely for having accepted our invitation to join us for the Symposium.

Before I invite Mr Poonosamy to take control of this meeting, I would like to mention that the Secretary for this Symposium is Ms. Magda Boulos (on my right/left). Ms Boulos began developing the programme for this event early in the year and I take this opportunity to thank her very much for her excellent work. I invite participants who have any questions concerning arrangements during the Symposium to contact Ms. Boulos directly.

And now, a few words about our Moderator for today. Mr Vijay Poonoosamy is Vice President of International Affairs of Etihad Airways and a national of Mauritius. He holds a law degree from the University of Nottingham and a Masters degree in International Law from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Mr Poonoosamy was Chairman of the historical 1994 ICAO World-wide Air Transport Conference. He was also the Chairman of the 1999 ICAO Special Group on the Modernisation of the Warsaw Convention

Mr Poonoosamy is Vice Chairman of the ICAO Special Committee on Aviation Security Conventions and a member of the Industry Affairs Committee of IATA.

Mr Poonoosamy, I leave this meeting in your very capable hands!

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