

**Message of Dr. Assad Kotaite, President of the Council
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
on the occasion of
International Civil Aviation Day, 7 December 1995**

ICAO is celebrating its 51st birthday today, 7 December 1995, and our birthday present from the 183 Contracting States of the Organization could not be more appropriate. At its 31st Session, which took place in Montreal from 19 September to 4 October last, the ICAO Assembly acknowledged that ICAO has for over 50 years effectively and efficiently fulfilled its functions, but recognized that the Organization needed to be even more efficient when faced with new and rapidly evolving technological, economic, social and legal challenges at a time of global financial constraints. In effect the Assembly, which is the sovereign decision-making body of the Organization, recognized that the world aviation community is going through a period of substantial change, and that ICAO is not immune to the process. It therefore gave the Organization a clear charge for the next half century of its existence.

I welcome this challenge by the Assembly. In my own presentation I stressed the importance of change, not for the sake of change itself, but to make things work better. As each revolutionary development in air transport has faced the Organization, it has rallied to the needs of its Contracting States presented by that development. The Organization has always found its strength in the spirit of global cooperation entrenched in the Chicago Convention by its founding fathers, as well as in its adaptability to changing realities.

That is why, as we celebrate today under the theme "The Aeroplane in our Lives", I am convinced that ICAO is singularly well placed to continue its leadership role in the global air transport industry.

The vitality of the economies of our Contracting States has become increasingly linked to air transport. The States' recognition of this, and of the reality that the safety, regularity and efficiency of international civil aviation depend upon global consensus, has led them to be even more demanding of their Organization, ICAO. We will continue to grow and thrive under this mandate, and, in the process, continue to build that complex structure which supports the aviation community worldwide.

