

**Message of Dr. Philippe Rochat, Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
on the occasion of
International Civil Aviation Day, 7 December 1995**

The international air transport industry, already one of the world's largest, continues to grow at a gratifying pace. In 1994, 1.2 billion people travelled by air. When combined with distances travelled, world passenger traffic performance reached 2 086 billion passenger-kilometres. This year, we expect that figure to grow to 2 222 billion passenger-kilometres, an increase of 6.8 per cent, and next year (1996) to 2 372 billion, a further increase of 6.5 per cent. The 20 million tonnes of freight carried by air in 1994 represented a 14 per cent advance over 1993, and freight is expected to increase at an even higher rate than passenger traffic. Financially, 1994 represented the second year of operating profits, after three years of operating losses (1990-1992), for the world's scheduled airlines. All this indicates that air transport is an important growth industry, not only to the world as a whole, but also to regions and individual States.

If we stop to think of how influential commercial air transportation has become in our lives, we would recognize that most things that are important to us have an air transport element. Even the fundamentals of life like food — whether it be inputs for agriculture, imported food items, or exports —, health and education have become dependent on air transport to a large extent. The training requirements for civil aviation services and infrastructure have a profound impact on skills development and consequently on the labour pool in every State. And those sectors of each State's economy in which civil aviation plays the most significant part, for example trade, transport and tourism, are vital to the health of that economy and to the well-being of its citizens. Above all, civil aviation serves increasingly to bring the world's people together, not only by shrinking distances and minimizing natural obstacles, but also by making them more aware of common imperatives through the growing combination of the aeroplane, the satellite and the computer.

We mark International Civil Aviation Day each year on 7 December. This year's theme "The Aeroplane in our Lives" is a tribute to how this form of transport, not yet 100 years old, has transformed our lives. We of the ICAO Secretariat are pleased that the remarkable growth of civil air transport has been accompanied consistently by increasing safety. We pledge to you that, in full cooperation with all our Contracting States and the international aviation community, we will continue our efforts to ensure that this safest form of transport becomes even more safe, regular and efficient.