

**Message from the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Renato Cláudio Costa Pereira,
for the worldwide celebration of
International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 1999**

The twenty-first century will be tremendously challenging and stimulating for the International Civil Aviation Organization and the world aviation community!

As we prepare to cross this historic threshold, the mission of ICAO remains the same as it was throughout the twentieth century, to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. Our role continues unaltered, to formulate and modernize the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

The context in which we will be called upon to fulfill our goals, however, will be dramatically different, a new world order characterized by the increased globalization of trade and economics, the unprecedented sophistication of civil aviation systems and the sustained growth in the demand for air travel.

Throughout, safety and security will always be the first priorities. Nothing is more precious than human life; it transcends all political and economic considerations. On this point, there is an unshakable consensus among governments and all sectors of the air transport industry.

Accordingly, the 185 Contracting States of ICAO have provided their Organization with the resources and enforcement capabilities to ensure that it continues to effectively carry out its pivotal role as the global regulatory agency.

For example, the ICAO of the twenty-first century will be able to assess the degree to which safety-related SARPs are implemented around the world, under the ground-breaking Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme established on 1 January 1999. For the first time, ICAO will be permitted to audit the safety oversight capabilities of each of its 185 Contracting States, on a mandatory and regular basis, and to recommend appropriate action plans for optimum aviation safety.

I believe this ground-breaking initiative will be the catalyst for a new era in global cooperation among governments, airlines, airports, manufacturers, and all other air transport partners. Eventually, other areas of international civil aviation can become the object of a concerted effort to ensure that all SARPs are implemented consistently and effectively.

As we move in that direction, ICAO is knitting closer ties with each sector of the aviation community, to integrate with our activities the enormous expanse of expertise and experience in the design and operation of aviation systems and equipment.

We are an increasingly effective and productive organization, adopting a business-like approach to realizing our objectives and plans. We are implementing procedural, managerial and administrative reforms which have already yielded substantial results in the decision-making processes within ICAO.

Indeed, ICAO is well poised to meet its current and future challenges with renewed vigour and determination, in the spirit of friendship and understanding of this year's International Civil Aviation Day celebrations.