

**Message from the President of the Council of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Dr. Assad Kotaite,  
for the worldwide celebration of  
International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 2002**

On 17 December 2003, the aviation community will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of powered, controlled and sustained flight. On the occasion of International Civil Aviation Day 2002, we begin a year-long celebration of the historic flight by the Wright Brothers that stands as the fulfilment of a centuries old dream passionately shared by early aviators in many countries.

From the perspective of these one hundred years, we might wonder whether those pioneers of the air could have dreamed that their passion would literally spread around the world and, with major advances in communications, eventually transform our planet into what Canadian Marshall McLuhan first called the “global village”.

We can be grateful for their imagination and their sense of adventure. By the second half of the twentieth century, air transport came into its own as an industry and, within a few years, emerged as a catalyst for fundamental economic, social and cultural transformation. Directly and indirectly, it now affects every person on the face of the earth.

And yet, were it not for the wisdom of national representatives from 52 States who participated in the Chicago Conference of 1944, it is very likely that air transport would have evolved in a chaotic fashion, if at all. In five short weeks, those men of vision wrote, adopted and signed the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*. This timeless document established the framework for aviation to grow in a safe and orderly manner, in a spirit of equality of opportunity for all. It also created the instrument that was to give life to this grand design, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Throughout its existence, ICAO has created and continually updated the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as related policies and guidance material that, combined, have provided the Organization’s now 188 Contracting States with the ways and means to shape the growth of air transport worldwide in such areas as aircraft operations, airports, air traffic management, security and the environment.

In so doing, it has been a productive forum for nations of the world to discuss issues of common interest or settle differences, in an atmosphere of friendship and understanding, upon which the peace of the world depends. In its second century, aviation has the potential to remain one of the strongest tools at our disposal to achieve that high ideal, by bringing both people and States together.