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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY 2003 BRIDGES TWO MILESTONES IN AVIATION HISTORY

Montreal, 3 December 2003 – "For 60 Years ... Setting the Standards for International Civil Aviation" is the theme of the 2003 edition of the International Civil Aviation Day, celebrated annually on 7 December to mark the creation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on that day in 1944.

In this year's message marking the event, Dr. Assad Kotaite, President of the Council of ICAO, bridged two critical milestones in the history of air travel: the creation of the United Nations specialized agency in 1944 and the 100th anniversary of the first flight of the Wright Brothers on 17 December 1903, synonymous with the birth of powered, controlled and sustained flight.

"During this first century of flight, air transport forever changed our global society: economically, politically, socially and culturally. Such a transformation could only have been achieved by the enabling technical and operational infrastructure agreed to by sovereign States and implemented through ICAO and its charter, the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*", he said.

"As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of flight and embark upon the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of ICAO, let us remember that international civil aviation in the 21st century can, and should, be viewed as a constantly evolving project of unprecedented proportions and potential for the whole of humankind. That, ultimately, is the vision of air transport, a powerful force for the continued well-being of every man, woman and child on our small planet," he concluded

Dr. Taïeb Chérif, Secretary General of ICAO, pointed to the record of aviation safety as a measure of the Organization's effectiveness. "In 1947, the first year that ICAO kept records, of 21 million passengers carried, 590 lost their lives in 34 aircraft accidents (excluding the USSR). In 2002, with over 1.6 billion passengers carried, there were 791 fatalities in 14 accidents (including the Commonwealth of Independent States). Given air transport's extraordinary growth over the years, this is a remarkable achievement indeed."

"ICAO is indispensable to the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation", Dr. Chérif emphasized. "As it looks to the future, ICAO is focused on constantly improving aviation safety, while addressing new and emerging threats to security, in an era of restructuring of the air transport industry. In so doing, the Organization is responding by streamlining its management processes and increasing the efficiency of its operations; making provision for innovative sources of income that are complementary to the essential contributions of its Member States and seeking ever closer collaboration with all players in the aeronautical sector".

ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of civil aviation in the world. A specialized agency of the United Nations, it sets international standards and regulations necessary for the safety, security, efficiency and regularity of air transport and serves as the medium for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 188 Contracting States.

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**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 2003**

On this International Civil Aviation Day 2003, ICAO launches one year of celebrations leading up to the 60th anniversary of the Organization, created on 7 December 1944. Ten days later, on 17 December, the world marks the 100th anniversary of the first flight of the Wright Brothers, synonymous with the birth of powered, controlled and sustained flight.

During this first century of flight, air transport forever changed our global society: economically, politically, socially and culturally. Such a transformation could only have been achieved by the enabling technical and operational infrastructure agreed to by sovereign States and implemented through ICAO and its charter, the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

I believe that global air transport has largely met the lofty aspirations of those who, over the years, have so eloquently expressed its potential for the good of mankind. There comes to mind such thoughts as "the bringing together of peoples, languages, ideas and values", "a tool for humanity to serve humanity", and the perennial preamble to the Chicago Convention which argues that air travel could greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world.

The road has been fraught with obstacles: technological, operational, political and economic. Always they were overcome through dialogue and cooperation at all levels. For the past two years or so, we seem to have experienced one crisis after another: the shockwave caused by the events of 11 September 2001, both in terms of financial instability and security threats, particularly at airports; the SARS epidemic; environmental pressures associated with the resumption of growth patterns, all of this against the backdrop of a fundamental restructuring of the air transport industry. Dialogue and cooperation will be even more needed as we meet these and other challenges of tomorrow.

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of flight and embark upon celebrations leading up to the 60th anniversary of ICAO next year, let us remember that international civil aviation in the 21st century can, and should, be viewed as a constantly evolving project of unprecedented proportions and potential for the whole of humankind. That, ultimately, is the vision of air transport, a powerful force for the continued well-being of every man, woman and child on our small planet.

**Message from the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Taïeb Chérif,
for the worldwide celebration of
International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 2003**

The Secretariat of ICAO is composed of dedicated men and women from all parts of the world and from all fields of aviation expertise. For close to 60 years, it has effectively managed countless programmes and activities related directly to the safety, efficiency and regularity of the global air transport system.

Its first responsibility is to maintain current and relevant the regulatory framework of international civil aviation, through the development and updating of operational and technical standards in such varied sectors as airworthiness, air traffic management, personnel licensing and training, accident investigation and prevention, aerodromes, and many more. It also provides leadership and direction in the formulation of policies in such fields as liberalization, privatization, airport operations and the environment.

A measure of its effectiveness is the current level of safety of air travel around the world. In 1947, the first year that ICAO kept records, of 21 million passengers carried, 590 lost their lives in 34 aircraft accidents (excluding the USSR). In 2002, with over 1.6 billion passengers carried, there were 791 fatalities in 14 accidents (including the Commonwealth of Independent States). Given air transport's extraordinary growth over the years, this is a remarkable achievement indeed.

As it looks to the future, ICAO is focused on constantly improving aviation safety, while addressing new and emerging threats to security, in an era of restructuring of the air transport industry. In so doing, it is facing formidable challenges of its own. While its groundbreaking initiatives in the areas of safety, security, air navigation and technical cooperation are proving extremely valuable, they are exerting mounting pressure in terms of human and budgetary resources.

The Organization is responding by streamlining its management processes and increasing the efficiency of its operations; making provision for innovative sources of income that are complementary to the essential contributions of its 188 Member States and seeking ever closer collaboration with all players in the aeronautical sector.

ICAO is indispensable to the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation. With the continued unwavering support of Member States and of the aviation community, it will pursue relentlessly its mission to provide all the citizens of the world with a global air transport system that is as safe, secure, efficient, and economical as is humanly possible to achieve.