

**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 2005**

ICAO has exercised leadership for close to 40 years in maximizing compatibility between safe and orderly development of civil aviation and the quality of the environment, translated this year into the theme for International Civil Aviation Day – *The Greening of Flight*.

The basis for action has always been that we have but one sky and but one planet, and that we share the responsibility for protecting them both by addressing the adverse environmental effects of aviation - noise at and in the vicinity of airports, and aircraft engine emissions at the local level and at high altitude.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Organization developed a range of standards, policies and guidance material for the application of integrated measures embracing technological improvements, operating procedures, proper organization of air traffic, appropriate airport and land-use planning, and the use of market-based options. For example, the implementation of satellite technology to air navigation allows for more direct flights, resulting in less fuel burn and less pollution.

All of this has contributed to aircraft operations that today can be 70% more efficient, cleaner and quieter than in the 1970s. However, the liberalization of air travel and the remarkable growth of the air transport sector is outpacing environmental achievements, hence the need for even more concerted efforts on the environmental front.

In 2004, ICAO adopted three major environmental goals, to:

- a) limit or reduce the number of people affected by significant aircraft noise;
- b) limit or reduce the impact of aviation emissions on local air quality; and
- c) limit or reduce the impact of aviation greenhouse gas emissions on the global climate.

Channelling resources to meet these goals is ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), the global forum for discussion and debate, information gathering and the formulation of recommendations since 1983. CAEP brings together experts from ICAO Contracting States, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations and members of the world aviation community concerned by environmental issues.

The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 16 February 2005 gave new impetus to ICAO's work in addressing greenhouse gas emissions and reinforced ICAO's leadership role on aviation and climate change. Specifically, the Protocol calls on industrialized countries of the world to work through ICAO to pursue the limitation of greenhouse gas emissions from international civil aviation.

Yes, we have come a long way and we also have a long way to go. Aviation is a universal dream realized. It promotes the economic, social and cultural development of peoples and nations around the world. It is part and parcel of our lives in this global society. We all have a collective responsibility to promote *The Greening of Flight* for generations to come, and ICAO will be there to lead the way.