



**Opening address by the President of the Council  
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González  
to the Seventh Meeting of the  
Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP)  
  
(Montreal, 5 February 2007)**

On behalf of the Council and the Secretary General of ICAO, I would like to welcome you all to the Seventh Meeting of the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP). CAEP is essential for ICAO to reach its Strategic Objective of minimizing the adverse environmental effects of global civil aviation and to meet its three related goals: limit or reduce the number of people affected by significant aircraft noise, limit or reduce the impact of aircraft engine emissions on local air quality and limit or reduce the impact of aviation greenhouse gas emissions on the global climate.

Over the years, you have consistently provided the Organization with authoritative and credible technical information which is absolutely necessary for discussions in global fora on complex environmental issues with considerable social, economic and political implications. Through your deliberations and recommendations, you and your predecessors have made it possible for ICAO to develop and promote realistic, comprehensive and forward-looking environmental solutions that have been endorsed by the world community. The depth and scope of your technical advice have proven essential in arriving at decisions of a political nature.

During this latest CAEP/7 cycle, which culminates with the present meeting, you laid the foundation for decisions and actions in a number of critical areas. You took a first step in the establishment of the interdependencies modelling framework that will provide, I am sure, much more analytical capability for CAEP to make recommendations in the future. You selected and analyzed candidate models and databases that will enable a comprehensive assessment of options to address the impact of aviation on the environment, including the trade-off of possible measures related to noise and emissions.

You also laid the groundwork for future assessments of the evolution of noise and emissions emanating from aviation operations, thereby forming the basis for the review of our environmental goals. You established a process for formulating a long-term vision for NO<sub>x</sub> goals, something that industry has been requesting for a long time. You considered novel solutions to address emissions from international aviation, such as the use of emissions trading. You proposed distinct approaches to deal with the impact of aviation on local air quality and on global climate change, making it possible to address these issues separately in the CAEP cycle and increase our effectiveness with more focused measures. And you have done all of this while continuing to develop the necessary proposals to ensure that our main Standards and policies remain relevant, while developing measures leading to greater operational efficiency.

As CAEP/7 gets under way, expectations are high, especially in the area of market-based measures to limit or reduce emissions. At its last regular session in 2004, the ICAO Assembly endorsed, through Resolution A35-5, the further development of an open emissions trading system for international civil aviation and requested the Council of ICAO to provide further guidance to States for its implementation. The CAEP Emissions Trading Task Force has prepared the much awaited draft guidance for your review and ultimately for consideration by the next session of the Assembly in September. The guidance will certainly be one of the highlights of this meeting and I am sure that the outcome will prove invaluable in promoting a global consensus on such a critical subject.

Although I consider emissions trading a central issue of this meeting, I hasten to add that all of your deliberations and deliverables will be highly consequential. Together, they could form the basis for an ICAO plan of action encompassing all measures designed to deal effectively with aviation environmental impacts, particularly with emissions. The need for concrete and coordinated action was underscored by findings contained in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made public last week, in Paris. The Working Group 1 contribution to the Report – titled “Climate Change 2007: the Physical Science Basis” – clearly states that “there is more than a 90 per cent probability that human action has contributed towards recent climate change”. Without a doubt, there is a need to act, and more than ever, ICAO is determined to provide the world with the leadership and guidance it is looking for in moving towards a sustainable global air transport system.

The results of CAEP/7 will also be incorporated into the first ICAO Environmental Report which will be published every Assembly year from now on. And they will be watched closely by participants at the ICAO Colloquium on Aviation Emissions in May as well as other environmental meetings in the coming months.

Of course, the impact of CAEP rests ultimately with States and the measures they adopt and enforce. As the officially recognized international body to deal with aviation and the quality of the environment, ICAO depends on the support of States. I would be most grateful if you could convey to your respective States and organizations our sincere appreciation for their cooperation and support in terms of expertise, models and databases that they have made available to CAEP. I would also like to thank our members who have already contributed in a very tangible manner to the creation of the new Environmental Unit at ICAO, notably by seconding valuable personnel to assume responsibility for major components of our programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge of CAEP can be seen as reconciling differing legitimate interests and viewpoints in a world that is in constant mutation. One might be allowed to wonder whether the accelerating change that is an integral part of today’s modern society is beginning to exceed the capacity of our social institutions to cope. Adapting to change is particularly difficult for institutions dealing with international or global issues that require a concerted, cooperative effort by many countries if they are to succeed. Often the question is not only if we know what needs to be done, or whether we have the technical capability to do it, but whether we can agree on how and when.

What we have accomplished together through CAEP in more than two decades and what I believe we can accomplish in the future demonstrates that we can indeed agree on how and when. The CAEP process can serve as a model of global cooperation in solving seemingly insurmountable problems. As we begin our deliberations, let us be guided by this thought and by the conviction that what we will do in a few short days may have a lasting impact for generations to come. I sincerely thank each and every one of you for having taken this precious time to be with us and to have given so much thought and energy in preparing this meeting.