



**Remarks by the President of the Council
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
to the Seminar on CO₂ Emissions Reduction from Aircraft
co-hosted by the Japan International Transport Institute (JITI)**

(Washington, 9 October 2007)

I would like to thank the President of the Japan International Transport Institute, Mr. Hiroshi Maruyama, for his kind invitation to say a few words to this Seminar.

I believe that all of us at this Seminar share a common understanding of the impact of aviation on global climate change. Various United Nations and international bodies tell us that there is more than a 90 per cent probability that human action has contributed towards recent climate change and that aircraft engine emissions contribute about 2 per cent of total CO₂ emissions.

This proportion could very well rise in the future for two reasons. On the one hand, a number of high-polluting industries have made public their intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. More important, airline traffic is expected to increase steadily in the future. ICAO's latest forecast for the next 20 years calls for average annual increases of 4.6 per cent for passenger traffic and 6.6 per cent for cargo traffic. Under present operating conditions, air transport will definitely pollute more than today, in spite of the remarkable fuel efficiency gains of the past 40 years.

At the seventh meeting of the ICAO Council Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) held earlier this year, several avenues for progress were proposed, including guidance for manufacturers and operators, as well as recommendations for States on an open emissions trading scheme. The proposals were presented at the ICAO Colloquium on the Environment held last May. You may recall the presentation made subsequently to a meeting of your study group on CO₂ emissions reductions from aircraft on 29 May this year by the Chief of ICAO's Environmental Unit, Mrs. Jane Hupe. CAEP's proposals were supported by the ICAO Council in June and they were discussed by Member States of the Organization at the triennial Assembly just a few days ago, from 18 to 28 September.

The Assembly agreed to create a new Group on International Aviation and Climate Change composed of senior government officials, and the Group's mandate will be to recommend an aggressive ICAO Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change. The Programme will formulate an "implementation framework" consisting of strategies and measures that Contracting States of ICAO can use to achieve emissions reductions. It will identify fuel efficiency goals and means of measuring progress.

Options to be considered include voluntary measures, technological advances in both aircraft and ground-based equipment, more efficient operational measures, improvements in air traffic management, positive economic incentives and market-based measures. ICAO will unveil the Programme at a high-level meeting and implementing the Programme will produce vital improvements in the environmental performance of international aviation.

The Assembly agreed that market-based options were a valuable instrument for addressing aircraft emissions. A majority of the delegations, however, felt that States should not apply emissions trading systems to the airlines of other States except pursuant to mutual agreement.

What has impressed me most about all of our deliberations is how addressing aviation's impact on the environment is a highly complex challenge. It involves many interconnected technical, operational, economic, social and political factors. Accordingly, we need a concerted and holistic approach.

We must persist in our drive to reduce emissions at source, by making engines even more fuel efficient and by working on alternative fuels to reduce fuel emissions altogether.

We must focus even more on operational measures that reduce flight times and increase efficiency, thereby reducing fuel burn and related emissions.

We need to continually expand our scientific and technical understanding of the effect of emissions on the atmosphere, so that our decisions are made on the basis of the most authoritative and credible information available. This is the objective behind the first-ever Environmental Report published by ICAO during the last Assembly. The Report, which is available on ICAO's website, constitutes a comprehensive update on technical and policy aspects of aircraft noise and engine emissions. It is my hope that the Environmental Report will become a catalyst for generating a wider consensus on the way to a sustainable air transport system.

We also need to deal responsibly with market forces that respond to an ever increasing demand for air travel and freight shipments by air with a corresponding increase in air traffic. As we know, more flights to more destinations, often in already congested areas, will have an enormous impact not only on climate change, but on local air quality as well.

This is a societal question that presents us with a dilemma of global magnitude. Air transport is a driver of economic and social development that contributes to the well-being of hundreds of millions of people around the world and supports the world's largest industry, travel and tourism. It represents a beacon of hope for many developing countries. At the same time, it contributes to the degradation of our global environment and the quality of life in many places.

I do not believe that the demand for air travel will diminish nor that it should. I do believe we must intensify our efforts to deal with the problem, with bold targets and a reenergized sense of global commitment.

As the global forum for international aviation matters, ICAO is exercising its leadership in a more proactive way, by bringing together all parties concerned. Our role is to build bridges among sometimes widely diverging views and interests, to reach and maintain an appropriate balance between the growth of air transport and environmental protection.

Ultimately, however, it is up to States as regulators to establish and enforce clear targets. It is up to the industry to meet those targets and, why not, surpass them. And it is up to travellers to do their share by taking part in offsetting programmes that can help neutralize the effects of air travel.

Fortunately, there are positive signs that we are taking more consequential actions. States, particularly major contributors to climate change, are intensifying their dialogue on how best to deal with the issue. Environmental concerns are definitely permeating the planning and strategies of most global aviation stakeholders, and public pressure is affecting a real influence on moving the debate forward.

This Seminar can help the process along by strengthening the emerging consensus and by generating new perspectives, as well as innovative and viable solutions. Any situation can benefit from being looked at in a new light.

I would, however, stress one point. This is a global problem *par excellence* and it cannot be resolved without global cooperation. We must all work together to a higher-order purpose, that aviation should improve the quality of life for everyone on the planet and not reduce it.

To conclude, I should like to repeat my message at the opening of the ICAO Assembly on 18 September. I said something to the effect that we should be guided in our discussions by the thought that what often seems overwhelming or impossible as we look ahead, actually seems inevitable looking back. Let us make decisions today that will stretch our thinking and our capabilities, so that tomorrow they will appear as the only course of action we could have taken. Again, what often seems impossible looking ahead seems almost inevitable looking back, especially if we act together, in a spirit of unrestrained cooperation.

I thank you for your attention and wish you every success.