



**Opening address by the President of the Council
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
at the third meeting of the
Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC)**

(Montreal, 17 February 2009)

It is my pleasure to once again welcome you to Montreal, this time for the third meeting of GIACC. I would like to begin by thanking you for your support of the GIACC process thus far, and for the progress you have made since our last meeting.

Up to now, our focus has been on collecting and reviewing information related to specific aspects of climate change. Starting today, we shift our attention to actually formulating the Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change.

Before we begin, I would like to quickly review and comment on some of the key elements of Appendix K of Assembly Resolution A36-22 which created GIACC and established its mandate.

First and foremost is the acknowledgment of the principles of non-discrimination and fair opportunities enshrined in the Chicago Convention. These are *sine qua non* with the existence and action of ICAO as the global standard setter for its 190 Member States. The global air transport system could not operate otherwise.

At the same time, the Appendix acknowledges the principles and provisions on common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and respective capabilities under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. The GIACC Programme of Action must in turn also acknowledge and accommodate these principles.

I would suggest that one way is to remember that we are dealing here with international aviation emissions which cannot practically be attributed geographically by State, as domestic emissions can. The context is therefore quite different.

We also must keep in mind that the aspirational goals to be identified by the GIACC are aimed at the air transport sector as a whole. They are to be achieved collectively, without specific national or regional responsibilities, and will ultimately contribute to the improved efficiency of airlines and the industry in general.

As for emissions trading schemes, whether global or regional, Assembly Resolution A36-22 stipulates that they are to be implemented on the basis of mutual agreement. This means that the strategies and measures available to States should be voluntary.

Finally, Assembly Resolution A36-22 promotes special considerations for developing countries and assistance, if required.

I am confident that, as requested in Assembly Resolution A36-22, you will be able to come to an agreement based on consensus and the shared vision and strong will of all Contracting States.

Along these lines, I had the pleasure of attending the Ministerial Conference on Global Environment and Energy in Transport hosted by the Government of Japan last month. A highlight of the Conference was the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on Global Environment and Energy in Transport. I was very pleased with the strong expression of support in the Declaration for the key role of ICAO as the competent United Nations body on aviation issues. There was also strong encouragement from the Ministers for ICAO to continue to lead in developing globally effective measures to address greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation. In fact, the Declaration reflects Assembly Resolution A36-22 which, and I quote, “requests the Council to: ensure that ICAO exercise continuous leadership on environmental issues relating to international civil aviation, including GHG emissions”.

Equally important, I believe, was the fact that the Conference was attended by 20 States representing some of the largest aviation markets in the world. Many of those States are represented here today through a participant in GIACC and all of the States are parties to the UNFCCC. It is expected that they will bring to the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Copenhagen a position consistent with the Tokyo Declaration.

In keeping with our focus on policy, this meeting has been organized to provide updated information during the morning session. After that, the agenda will be solely dedicated to policy topics. We are fortunate that under the leadership of Ms. Mpofu, as the sitting Chair, and with the able leadership of the three working group chairs, these topics are well defined and understood. I have been informed that the coordination meeting held yesterday was useful in furthering understanding of the issues and the views held by the participants.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Mpofu for her cooperation and leadership demonstrated since the beginning of GIACC/2.

The GIACC is well prepared for the discussions over the next three days. You have at your disposal the Secretariat resources and the meeting rooms of ICAO, and you can count on my full cooperation to assist you. All the ingredients are available to make this a very successful meeting. And so, let us begin.