



**Address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
to the High Level Conference on
Safety and Environment 2010+ (HLCSE)**

(Galapagos Islands, Ecuador — 7 April 2010)

I would like to thank the Government of Ecuador for hosting, in conjunction with ICAO, this first High Level Conference on Safety and Environment. It is an honour to be with you in the magnificent Galapagos Islands, to address two of ICAO's top priorities: aviation safety and the protection of the environment.

Let me begin with safety, which is the core of the Organization's mandate – to ensure the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. It is the fundamental principle that underpins the activities of all air transport stakeholders, including efforts to minimize the impact of aviation on the environment. This is particularly critical in the 21st century, when climate change has emerged as a daunting universal challenge. As we move forward, safety and sustainability will be inseparable more than ever.

Last week, at the ICAO High-level Safety Conference in Montréal, high-level officials from several Member States reaffirmed their resolve to support a safety strategy based on the Global Aviation Safety Plan, or GASP.

The GASP is aimed at three specific targets, namely:

- To reduce the number of fatal accidents and fatalities worldwide, irrespective of the volume of air traffic;

- To significantly lower accident rates, particularly in regions where they remain high; and
- To bring about, by 2011, a situation whereby no single ICAO region records an accident rate that is more than twice the worldwide rate.

Regarding the first target, we have done quite well. Over the past decade or so, the number of fatal accidents and associated fatalities has consistently dropped despite an increase in traffic.

As for the second target, the reality is that the overall accident rate has remained disturbingly stable over the same timeframe. While we have been successful in reducing the number of accidents resulting in fatalities, non-fatal accidents continue to occur at a persistent rate. We must therefore develop and implement new strategies to bring down the overall accident rate, as much and as quickly as possible. At the same time, we must provide the necessary assistance to any region having an accident rate which remains more than twice the worldwide rate.

I am pleased that the results of the High-level Safety Conference support our ongoing efforts to meet the three objectives of the GASP. In essence, what is involved is a fundamental shift from a prescriptive-based approach to the implementation of proactive safety management practices, where risks can be assessed and mitigated before they result in tragic accidents or serious incidents.

States and service providers have already begun implementing safety management practices within the context of initiatives designed to affect

cultural, organizational and technical changes that will enable the transition to a proactive safety environment. State Safety Programmes and Safety Management Systems represent essential building blocks of ICAO's safety strategy and they will increasingly provide benefits as they continue to mature.

In recognition of the potential benefits of these important programmes, the high-level officials in attendance at last week's High-level Safety Conference asked ICAO to begin working on development of a 19th Annex to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*. It would be appropriately dedicated to Safety Management. As you may be aware, creation of a new Annex is a decision of major significance, and one that will require a substantial investment of time and effort. Nonetheless, it should be done and it will be done, to ensure that international safety management Standards and Recommended Practices are successfully integrated into the multiple disciplines that make up the global aviation system.

Let me emphasize that for risk management to be successful, the sharing of multiple sources of information is paramount. It must become the norm for all aviation stakeholders rather than an exceptional practice. The sharing of sensitive data can yield enormous benefits, but it also has the potential to create vulnerabilities. That is why ICAO is focusing on means to establish an environment that will foster the exchange of critical information without undue risk for the individuals or organizations providing the data.

Another essential component of risk management is the capacity to manage change at multiple levels. At an organizational level, for example, we must change the manner in which we respond to risks. As I mentioned earlier, we have to proactively address emerging threats before they cause harm rather than responding to serious events once they have occurred.

The final point I wish to make is that the risk management processes used by States and service providers to protect people can also be used to protect the environment. A data-driven risk management approach can be synergistic, assuring both a safe and environmentally sustainable aviation system.

These days, when we speak of the environment, we naturally think of the global climate change talks of last December in Copenhagen. What sticks in our minds is the fact that, for whatever reasons, the meeting did not produce the outcome expected. What went unnoticed is the tremendous progress of the past two years especially in relation to aviation and the environment.

Under the leadership of ICAO and the concerted efforts of all concerned stakeholders, aviation produced a globally harmonized agreement that to this day remains the first and only agreement created by an industrial sector to address the issue of climate change.

At a high-level meeting on the environment held at ICAO last October, States accounting for 93 percent of the world's commercial air traffic, together with the air transport industry, set the following objectives:

- a) to reach a global and annual improvement of 2 percent in fuel efficiency by the year 2050;

- b) to develop a worldwide CO₂ standard for aircraft by 2013;
- c) to develop a framework for market-based measures in international aviation;
- d) to establish measures aimed at assisting developing States and facilitating access to financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity-building;
- e) to develop and establish the worldwide use of alternative fuels; this could make the aviation industry the first sector to use sustainable alternative fuels on a global scale;
- f) to continue work on the reduction of airport noise annoyance and aviation engine emissions which affect local air quality.

We lost no time in acting on those bold yet necessary objectives. The eighth meeting of ICAO's Committee on Aviation and Environmental Protection this past February recommended a number of concrete steps.

One is a timetable for the development of a CO₂ Standard for commercial aircraft, with 2013 as a target date. This would establish the first global fuel-efficiency standard for any industry sector.

CAEP also proposed NO_x (Nitrogen Oxides) standards 15 percent more stringent than the current levels, applicable to new aircraft engines certified after 31 December 2013. This would help ensure that the most efficient technology is used in the production of aircraft engines in the near future.

These and other CAEP recommendations will be reviewed by the Council of ICAO in the coming months and submitted to the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly in the fall, when Member States may wish to strengthen the provisions even more. In the meantime, an ICAO Environment Colloquium in May will provide a timely opportunity to review progress to date and stimulate further discussion on the material under review.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude my brief remarks here this morning by paying tribute to the State of Ecuador for its foresight in upgrading its network of airports. It has shown great sensitivity and imagination in bridging safety and environmental concerns, for the benefit of passengers and residents alike.

I am especially impressed with the comprehensive renovation of Baltra airport which is the reason why we are all here today. It is quite fitting that the first ecological airport in the world, as you have named it, be located in one of the most diverse and precious natural heritage sites. It is a living example of what can be accomplished when there is a concerted effort to both protect lives and the environment.