



**Address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González, to the
Nineteenth Ordinary Assembly of the
Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC)**

(Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 2 November 2010)

It is a distinct pleasure for me to share a few thoughts before you undertake the Nineteenth Ordinary Assembly of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission.

But please allow me first to thank LACAC and the authorities of the Dominican Republic for your kind invitation to take part in this Assembly and for your hospitality.

Your meeting takes place within the context of growth of air transport in Latin America, a sure sign that the economy is also growing.

Some of you may recall that in my opening remarks to the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly on 28 September, I mentioned that most of the growth in population worldwide in the coming decades will occur in developing countries. The trend will undoubtedly generate a corresponding increase in air travel.

This is good news for Latin America, yet it will require huge investments in new aircraft, airports and air navigation facilities to progressively handle millions of additional passengers. It will mean training tens of thousands of aviation workers to manage and operate complex systems and technologies. And it will involve collaborating even more closely — States, industry and, yes, passengers — to maintain the integrity of the air transport system as it grows to meet ever increasing demand.

That is what the ICAO Assembly was all about: uniting aviation for safety, security and the environment.

Let's begin with safety. Despite improvements in Latin America, the Region still has not attained the goal of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan for an accident rate which is less than double the global average. With the projected increase in traffic I spoke about earlier, there is no choice but to think and act differently. Otherwise, the number of accidents will inevitably increase.

At the High-level Safety Conference held this past March at ICAO, a far-sighted strategy was put forth and later adopted by the Assembly. It consists of five key elements which you may want to consider as you move forward with your own strategy.

The first element is for States to commit to the continuous monitoring approach regarding their safety oversight systems. This will help identify deficiencies more efficiently, and to correct them more effectively by making it easier to allocate resources in a more targeted way.

The second element supports the concept of transparency with the creation of a truly international mechanism for the sharing of safety information, based on globally-harmonized metrics and analysis methods. An important step in this direction was taken at the Assembly with the signing by ICAO, the United States Department of Transportation, the European Commission and the International Air Transport Association, of a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Global Safety Information Exchange.

The third element is the development of a code of conduct to ensure that sensitive safety information is used only for the purpose of making improvements. This region has taken the lead here with the creation of the first Regional Aviation Safety Group for Pan America (RASG-PA). The group has in turn implemented a mechanism for the sharing of information, reaching consensus on the top aviation safety concerns, and making sure that all industry stakeholders align their mitigation strategies in a coordinated manner. I encourage all of your Administrations to take an active role in this process.

The fourth element reaffirms the productive role that regional oversight organizations can play in improving safety. For individual States which do not possess the resources or the expertise to act alone in resolving safety concerns, dedicated regional bodies are best suited to coordinate and align multiple initiatives by strategically leveraging expertise and resources of States concerned.

And finally the fifth element supports the creation of a new Annex dedicated entirely to safety management. This new Annex will facilitate a coordinated approach to promulgating the practices necessary to assure the highest levels of safety throughout the international aviation system.

I would add that the Assembly also endorsed ICAO's plan to establish a multi-disciplinary approach to address the critical issue of runway safety, a critical decision given that the majority of accidents and serious incidents resulting in fatalities occur during the take-off and landing phases of flights. The initiative will bring together representatives from airlines, airports, air navigation service providers and regulatory authorities. In May 2012, the Organization will host a Global Runway Safety Symposium in Montréal, followed by a number of regional workshops to identify and further resolve runway safety issues.

Let me now turn to security. Here again we need to closely coordinate our scarce resources to address current and emerging threats; strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms among States and industry; utilize modern technologies to detect prohibited items, while respecting the privacy and safety of individuals; strengthen and promote travel document security; and seek to achieve both a high level of security and the efficient facilitation of passenger travel.

At the Assembly, a Declaration on Aviation Security was adopted that will support achieving these objectives. It was formulated in response to the 25 December incident, and to similar threats. The Declaration reaffirms international commitment to enhance aviation security collaboratively and proactively through screening technologies to detect prohibited articles, strengthening international standards, improving information-sharing and providing capacity-building assistance to States in need.

The Assembly also fully supported a new ICAO aviation security strategy, which highlights key priorities, such as identifying and preventing new forms of attack before they occur, streamlining security checks so that they remain effective but are not duplicated unnecessarily, and improving the capabilities of States to oversee aviation security.

These two initiatives are complemented by a Diplomatic Conference held in Beijing, under the auspices of ICAO, and which adopted two international air law instruments for the suppression of unlawful acts relating to civil aviation. The treaties further criminalize the act of using civil aircraft as a weapon and of using dangerous materials to attack aircraft or other targets on the ground.

From a regional perspective, I am pleased that the recently created AVSEC/FAL Regional Group for the Americas has merged its activities with the LACAC FAL/AVSEC Group; this is the spirit of collaboration and coordination sought with the Memorandum of Cooperation recently signed between LACAC and ICAO prior to the ICAO Assembly.

Getting back to the theme of the ICAO Assembly, uniting aviation on safety and security was relatively straightforward. Progress on the environmental question was more difficult. Nevertheless, Member States adopted a historic resolution making ICAO the first United Nations agency to lead a sector in the establishment of a globally harmonized agreement for addressing its CO₂ emissions.

The resolution builds on achievements since the last ICAO Assembly in 2007, which included a global goal of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to the year 2050, a global framework for the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation, and a target of 2013 for a CO₂ standard for aircraft engines.

New initiatives include the development of a framework for market based measures and a medium-term goal to keep the net global emissions from international aviation at the same level starting in 2020.

Also featured are mechanisms for assistance and technology transfer to developing States, and exemptions from market-based measures for States with low emissions due to their small international traffic base.

This remarkable accomplishment will form the basis for ICAO's presentation at the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting scheduled for December in Mexico.

The last point I wish to raise today is the potential to increase the efficiency of air navigation systems to further improve the safety and the security and sustainability of aviation. On a global scale, we must accelerate the implementation of the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, which calls for an interoperable and seamless global air traffic management (ATM) system – one that applies to all users, during all phases of flight, and that meets agreed levels of safety, provides for optimum economic operations, is environmentally sustainable and meets national security requirements.

Our NACC and SAM Regional Offices are deploying several initiatives for implementing the improvements expected in the ICAO Plan. LACAC can play an important role for promoting these initiatives by close coordination with both Regional Offices.

You will recall that the Council decided to strengthen all of the Regional Offices and give them greater autonomy. In line with this, the Secretary General has provided additional resources, including a total of seventeen positions. The Mexico and Lima Offices will each receive an extra staff member to assist States in the implementation of technical cooperation projects. Additional management tasks will also be delegated to the various Regions.

Ladies and gentlemen, in all of the initiatives and activities I have mentioned and many others, cooperation has been and remains the catalyst for effective and long-lasting results. Cooperation has also been the hallmark of the productive relationship between ICAO and LACAC for several decades.

Our two organizations have pursued similar goals, albeit at different levels, around a common cause — the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation. Through the years, our relationship matured, and so did our commitment to ever increasing cooperation, collaboration, and coordination in taking up these new and emerging challenges. Today, especially in a Latin America that is being expanded and redefined, civil aviation must adapt rapidly and effectively to a constantly changing political, technological, economic and social environment.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a most productive session.