



**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO),
MR. ROBERTO KOBEH GONZÁLEZ,
TO THE 7TH ANNUAL ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY
"ASSAD KOTAITE LECTURE"**

(Montreal, 25 November 2010)

The annual Assad Kotaite lecture honours one of the most influential aviation leaders of the twentieth century and early part of the 21st. Dr. Kotaite was constantly shaping the future, by remaining keenly aware of the present while drawing on the lessons of the past.

This evening, I would like to talk about the strategy for shaping our global air transport system, so that it responds to the needs and aspirations of the next generation and the ones that will follow.

One thing is certain; those generations will live in a much crowded world.

In my opening address to the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly on 28 September, I quoted figures from the United Nations Population Division that in 2050, there will be nine billion people on the planet, compared to 6.9 billion today. Much of this expansion will occur in developing nations.

Given our current model of economic development, we can expect an exponential growth in the demand for all kinds of goods and services, including air travel, both domestic and international.

This is good news for the travel and tourism industry, and the air transport sector. ICAO's long-term forecast shows passenger traffic increasing at an annual rate of 4.6 per cent to the year 2030. Passenger traffic would double to five billion a year, from today's 2.3 billion, and increase even more by the middle of the century.

At the same time, this anticipated growth poses an extraordinary challenge. As I pointed out at the Assembly, progressively handling hundreds of millions of additional passengers will require huge investments in new aircraft, airports and air navigation facilities. It will mean training hundreds of thousands of aviation workers to manage and operate extraordinarily complex systems and technologies, some of which have not yet been invented. And it will involve collaborating even more closely - States, industry and, yes, passengers - to maintain the integrity of the global air transport system as it grows to meet ever increasing demand.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, I felt that we had succeeded in defining the approach required for meeting our challenge.

SAFETY

Let's look first at safety, our number one priority. What the Assembly did was essentially to adopt the strategy developed by the High-level Safety Conference of March 2010.

The aim of the strategy is to reduce the global accident rate and to make sure that no Region has an accident rate which exceeds the world average by more than twice.

There are five major elements to our strategy.

One is a commitment by States to share information regarding the performance of their respective safety oversight systems. This will help States identify deficiencies more quickly and correct them more effectively, by making it easier to allocate resources in a targeted way.

Second is a greater emphasis on transparency, through the creation of an international mechanism for the sharing of safety information, based on globally-harmonized safety metrics and analysis methods.

As you know, a concrete step in that direction was taken on the opening day of the Assembly when ICAO signed with the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States, the Commission of the European Union and the International Air Transport Association a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of a Global Safety Information Exchange. In time, more partners are expected to join the Exchange and the information collected could eventually be made available in some form to the general public.

In support of increased transparency and sharing of information, a third element of the safety strategy will see the development of a code of conduct for making sure that the sensitive safety information collected is used only for improving the safety of civil aviation. This protection is essential if we want the required information to flow freely and in a timely fashion throughout the system.

The fourth element deals specifically with the objective of reducing accident rates on a regional basis. It is, in fact, a reaffirmation of the productive role that regional safety oversight organizations can play in improving safety. In many cases, individual States do not possess the resources or the expertise to resolve safety concerns on their own. Dedicated regional bodies can leverage expertise and resources among targeted States and apply them, in a coordinated manner, to agreed-upon safety initiatives.

Finally, the fifth element is for the creation of a new Annex to the Chicago Convention dedicated to safety management processes. This will reaffirm that safety is ICAO's primary focus. It will also facilitate the promulgation of Standards and Recommended Practices, which are absolutely necessary to achieving the highest levels of safety around the world.

What is perhaps most striking about the new safety strategy is that it takes us from a largely traditional and reactive model, to a predictive model, which relies on performance-based and results-oriented parameters.

In addition to the strategy I have just outlined, the Assembly also endorsed ICAO's plan to deal with runway safety. The reality today is that the majority of accidents and serious incidents resulting in fatalities occur during the take-off and landing phases of flights. This will be addressed through a multidisciplinary approach which will bring together representatives from airlines, airports, air navigation service providers and regulatory authorities. Our efforts are currently focused on preparing for a Global Runway Safety Symposium hosted by ICAO in May 2012 which will be followed by a number of regional workshops to identify and further resolve runway safety issues.

SECURITY

Let me now turn to security. Although much of the preparatory work in this area had been going on for a long time, the attempted bombing of a commercial airliner on 25 December 2009 was a catalyst for accelerating and expanding our efforts. The incident showed once again how much aviation is vulnerable to attack and how the security threat is international in nature. Terrorism is a global problem that requires global solutions.

Accordingly, one of the major initiatives adopted by the Assembly was a worldwide Declaration on Aviation Security. The Declaration was formulated in direct response to the 25 December incident as well as other new and emerging threats.

One aspect of the Declaration which I find particularly valuable is the way in which it was developed. In the early part of 2010, under the initiative of the Secretary General, ICAO organized a series of Ministerial-level regional conferences on aviation security. These were held in Mexico City, Tokyo, Abuja and Abu Dhabi.

In all instances, there was a strong commitment by States, together with industry, to protect civil aviation from all kinds of terrorist threats. As important, there was a strong expression of collective responsibility for taking action. This includes greater information collection and sharing, more effective technology and strong international standards for the continuation of our audit programme, and increased capacity-building assistance.

Underlying this consensus was the recognition that security measures must be uniform across the board and commensurate with the level of threat. This cannot be achieved without the full cooperation of States and collaboration with key stakeholders, including industry partners.

The other major action of the Assembly was the adoption of a proactive, Comprehensive Aviation Security Strategy for the next six years which will succeed the Aviation Security Plan of Action adopted to deal with events of 11 September 2001.

This proposed strategy comprises seven focus areas: addressing new and existing threats; promoting innovative, effective and efficient security approaches; promoting the sharing of information amongst Member States; promoting global compliance and establishing the sustainable aviation security oversight capability of States; improving human factors and security culture; promoting the development of mutual recognition for aviation security processes; and emphasizing the importance of security amongst States and stakeholders.

Whether we like it or not, aircraft and air transport facilities will remain attractive targets to terrorists. Even when terrorists don't succeed, they can still destabilize the system and reduce public confidence in air travel.

This was addressed at a Diplomatic Conference held in Beijing, this past September, under the auspices of ICAO. The Conference 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. The unlawful transport of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their related material now becomes punishable, while making a threat against civil aviation may now trigger criminal liability.

The message is clear – any form of unlawful interference against civil aviation will not be tolerated.

ENVIRONMENT

The message was also clear with regard to environmental protection.

We went into the Assembly with remarkable achievements, including:

- The first globally harmonized agreement from a sector for addressing CO₂ emissions;
- A global framework for the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation; and
- A deadline of 2013 for the development of a CO₂ standard for aircraft engines.

We were looking for a clear policy statement in three major areas: more ambitious environmental goals; the development and application of a framework of market-based measures; and measures to assist States.

Those of you who attended the Assembly know that discussions were difficult. Nevertheless, we were able to adopt a Resolution which confirmed ICAO's leadership in civil aviation environmental protection.

The Resolution further reaffirmed that the climate change issue as it applies to international aviation must be managed and resolved through ICAO, in a manner that is fully complementary of the manner in which the UNFCCC operates.

By adopting the Resolution, the Assembly demonstrated once again ICAO's capacity to unite aviation on some of the most challenging issues of our time.

In real terms, the Assembly:

- fully endorsed the 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement goal;
- agreed on a mid-term aspirational goal that while the international aviation sector continues to grow, its global greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation will remain limited;
- requested the Council to undertake further work on exploring the feasibility of a long-term goal;
- agreed on guiding principles for the design and implementation of market-based measures for international aviation and a process to develop a framework for market-based measures; and
- looked at concrete steps to assist States to contribute to the global efforts, while ensuring that States with small contributions to the global air traffic are not burdened disproportionately.

What we have done is to create an excellent basis on which to make very real progress over the next three years as we head into the next Assembly in 2013. It was very encouraging to note that this positive assessment was echoed by all major aviation stakeholders.

The European Union called it very significant because at a global level, governments and the aviation industry have for the first time agreed to cap greenhouse emissions from 2020. The State Department of the United States called it an unprecedented global commitment to collective action, among developed and developing countries around the world. IATA applauded ICAO Member States on achieving the first global governmental agreement with aspirational goals to stabilize carbon emissions. Airports Council International said it was a historic agreement for a globally harmonized

approach to addressing aviation's CO₂ emissions. And other government and industry bodies saluted the determination of the ICAO membership to clearly put a stake in the ground on the way to reducing and eventually eliminating the effects of air transport on our climate.

EFFICIENCY

Before I conclude my address this evening, I would like to single out three other significant results of the Assembly that will enhance the overall efficiency of the global air transport system.

One is the endorsement by the Member States of ICAO's plan intended to guide the estimated 50 billion dollar investment that they will make in their aviation infrastructure over the next 10 years.

The Assembly also endorsed ICAO's future work on liberalization, while it reaffirmed that the Organization should continue to exercise its leadership role in facilitating and assisting States to liberalize international air transport.

Finally, on the eve of the Assembly, ICAO concluded Memoranda of Cooperation with two regional organizations – the African Union and the European Union – and four regional civil aviation bodies – the Arab Civil Aviation Commission, the African Civil Aviation Commission, the European Civil Aviation Conference and the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission. The objective is to help reduce aircraft accident rates, improve security in flight and at airports, and promote the overall sustainable development of the air transport industry.

These Memoranda capture the essence of what ICAO is all about – a global forum for cooperation among States and all aviation partners for the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation.

CLOSING

In closing, allow me to share, as I did at the Assembly, what I would like to be able to say at the 38th Session of the Assembly in 2013:

In safety, we have made significant progress in diagnosing emerging safety issues, providing regulators and industry parties with the information they need to mitigate safety risks before they result in accidents.

In security, our actions now reflect the full understanding that, in an aviation security environment that is constantly changing, we must maintain a global aviation security mindset which strives for continuous improvement, supported by determined political will and the full engagement of all States and industry.

In environmental protection, we have adopted a CO₂ standard for aircraft engines and we are unequivocally committed to reaching goals that are in line with the demands of a society determined to achieve carbon neutrality.

And finally, that we have definitely set into motion the systems and programmes that will promote the highest levels of efficiency in all aspects of international civil aviation for decades to come.

That in essence is the foundation for shaping our global air transport system, so that it responds to the needs and aspirations of the next generation and the ones that will follow.

I thank you all for your kind attention.