



**Address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
to the 67th IATA Annual General Meeting and World Air Transport Summit**

(Singapore - 6 June 2011)

My dear Giovanni,

It is a great honour for me to be here, in the company of the leaders of the world airline industry, as you prepare to take your leave as Director General of IATA.

There is no more fitting venue than this Annual General Meeting to recognize your exceptional contribution in further strengthening the long-standing relationship between our two organizations over the course of your mandate.

In many respects, you were the driving force in bringing ICAO and IATA together on a number of major initiatives to enhance the safety, security and overall sustainability of the global air transport system.

IATA was quick to join forces with ICAO in reacting to major crisis situations, such as the eruption of the Icelandic volcano in April 2010. Our common objective was to get planes back in the air as soon as possible and as safely as possible. We wanted to minimize the financial and operational impact on carriers as well as on passengers and shippers.

When someone tried to blow up a commercial airliner in December 2009, IATA came to the forefront. We both worked hard to develop and implement measures to improve security, without unduly disrupting operations or increasing the cost of doing business. We kept on track in striking a balance between protecting the lives of passengers and facilitating their transit through airports as quickly and efficiently as possible.

On the environment front, IATA was instrumental in collaborating with ICAO to make aviation the first sector to establish a globally harmonized agreement for addressing its CO₂ emissions. I recall with appreciation many discussions we had over the past few years on this complex and critical issue for the well-being of our planet.

Always you were straightforward calling a spade a spade and submitting for consideration concrete and practical solutions.

Every time you came to Montréal, you made sure to call on your friends at ICAO. It was a delight to meet with you, for business and pleasure. In Geneva or at IATA events around the world, you greeted us with the same hospitality. And when we could not meet, you were available on the telephone to review important matters, regardless of the time or day.

What we will remember above all Giovanni, is your commitment to cooperation – friendly, enthusiastic and contagious cooperation.

As this IATA AGM prepares to confirm the next Director General of the Association, I would like to assure Mr. Tony Tyler that we very much look forward to the same inspired cooperation that has been the trademark of Giovanni and his team for almost a decade.

The challenges before us make it imperative that we continue the course, together with every other stakeholder of the aviation community. The projected doubling of passengers and aircraft departures over the next 20 years will require that we all work together as never before – to lower the accident rate worldwide, streamline security measures, and foster harmonized and economically viable development of international civil aviation without causing undue harm to the environment. If the future is a reflection of the past, we shall not fail.

And so, Giovanni, on behalf of the Council, the Secretary General and your many friends at ICAO, please accept our most sincere wishes for a healthy, prosperous and busy retirement.

Somehow I have the feeling that we will still wake up in the morning to see your picture on the front page of the New York Times, the Washington Post or in living colour on CNN.

One thing is certain – we look forward to crossing paths with you in an airport somewhere, sometime during your many travels to come. Every time, it will be a renewed pleasure.