



**Address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
on the occasion of the inauguration of the
COSCAP-SA Office in Dhaka**

(Dhaka, Bangladesh - 4 July 2011)

Honourable Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism,
Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Diplomats and Directors General of Civil Aviation of South Asia,
Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
Distinguished Civil and Military high-level officials,
Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu-alaikum and a very good morning to you all.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh, particularly His Excellency the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism and the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority for their kind invitation to visit Dhaka and to speak with you today.

The relocation of the COSCAP-South Asia Office to Dhaka is a significant milestone for Bangladesh and a reaffirmation of its commitment to the future of civil aviation in this country. It is also a demonstration of your desire to engage more fully in the global effort to promote the safe and orderly growth of global air transport.

Aviation is a powerful impetus for the economic development of Bangladesh. A healthy and growing national air transport system gives access to the global marketplace. It creates well-paying jobs at home and supports the world's largest industry, travel and tourism. Overall, civil aviation contributes about 8 per cent of the global GDP and encourages social and cultural development everywhere.

In short, to promote the growth of air transport is to promote progress. At the same time, it means addressing head-on the many challenges that come with growth.

In ICAO's 20-year forecast for aviation professionals, we estimate that the number of commercially-operated aircraft will jump from about 62,000 today to some 152,000 in 2030. During the same period, the number of aircraft movements should jump from 26 million annually to about 52 million.

Much of this growth will take place in the Asia/Pacific Region and Bangladesh is well-positioned to benefit from this trend. This has clear implications for Bangladesh and other States in the region. Notably, there is a pressing need to ensure that civil aviation authorities have the necessary human and financial resources to ensure effective safety oversight for a rapidly growing industry.

When a regulator cannot keep pace with the industry it oversees, aviation safety will be compromised. Conversely, a strong and competent regulatory authority ensures a strong, competent and competitive aviation sector.

The first step is to develop and retain skilled professionals to carry out surveillance and oversight of the industry. Once these resources are secured, regulatory bodies can strengthen their regulatory framework based on ICAO Standards.

The challenge faced by some States relative to the safe and orderly growth of civil aviation cannot be met in isolation. Regional forums and organizations are essential to reaching that goal. COSCAP South Asia is one organization that is committed to mutual cooperation in sustaining a safe and secure civil aviation system.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Chandrasena Nimalsiri, Director General of Civil Aviation of Sri Lanka and his Government for hosting the COSCAP Office in Colombo for the past five years.

This morning, together with the Honourable Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, I had the privilege of inaugurating the new COSCAP South Asia Office in Dhaka. The relocation of the COSCAP Office here opens the door for the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh to take a leading role in the development of civil aviation throughout South Asia.

Under the leadership of Air Commodore Mahmud Hussain, whom I wish to congratulate on being elected Chairman of the COSCAP Steering Committee, COSCAP will continue, I am sure, to enhance regional harmonization with ICAO's global safety strategy. Besides developing human resources, this strategy requires States to harness new concepts and technologies. Here again, COSCAP can assist by implementing time-sensitive programmes and organizing regular conferences, seminars and workshops for the benefit of the whole region.

I would encourage COSCAP to prioritize its efforts by focusing on providing assistance in resolving deficiencies identified through ICAO continuous monitoring activities. Most importantly, COSCAP can assist in addressing significant safety concerns raised by ICAO through the systematic exchange of expertise among its members. COSCAP can also help bridge the information gap between all stakeholders in international civil aviation, including ICAO, regulators and the industry. This will help ensure that all operators abide by the rules and regulations that promote safe transport by air.

I am certain that the Directors General of Civil Aviation of South Asia are well aware of issues affecting their region. I am equally convinced that you will do whatever is necessary to make civil aviation here amongst the safest in the world.

The key to success is cooperation, and COSCAP South Asia has an essential role to play in encouraging this cooperation. As always, ICAO stands ready with guidance and assistance in order to turn this vision for South Asia into reality.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to the Honourable Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism for making my visit most enjoyable and productive. I would also like to wish Bangladesh success in its new leadership role in the development of civil aviation in the region.