



**Opening address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
to the 48th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation,
Asia and Pacific Regions**

***“Sharing information and experiences to enhance safety and efficiency of Air Navigation
Services (ANS) in the Asia-Pacific with specific reference to Oceanic Zones”***

(Noumea, New Caledonia – 10 to 14 October 2011)

I am delighted to be here with you for another annual conference of DGCAAs of the Asia and Pacific Regions.

I would like to thank sincerely the Government of France for hosting this meeting. It is for me an excellent opportunity to interact with key aviation decision-makers in a region that is home to some three quarters of the world's population and where the potential for growth is perhaps the highest in terms of absolute numbers.

For example, ICAO's medium-term forecast is for traffic for Asia/Pacific airlines to grow considerably faster than the global average, at 7.9 per cent this year, 8.8 next year and 8.7 in 2013. Long-term prospects are equally impressive.

In this lucrative market with a large oceanic airspace, safety and efficiency of air navigation are paramount. The theme of your conference rightly points to the sharing of information and experiences as the way forward to meet these objectives.

I totally agree. From the very beginning, dialogue and cooperation have shaped global air transport into the safest and most efficient mode of mass transportation ever. They will do so in the future.

In this spirit, I commend you for having placed safety at the top of your agenda and for having transformed the Conference into the first meeting of the Asia/Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Group.

The Regional Aviation Safety Group concept was established by the ICAO Council in May 2010 to support the development of regional performance frameworks for safety based on the Global Aviation Safety Plan – the GASP – and the associated Global Aviation Safety Roadmap.

The Regional Aviation Safety Groups will build on the work already done by States and existing sub-regional organizations such as the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs). Your deliberations and the outcome of your DGCA Conference will help shape the establishment and operation of the safety framework for the Asia/Pacific Region.

The GASP is currently being updated to create a strategic document focused on the coordination and implementation of safety-related activities by ICAO, its Member States and the aviation industry. With the overall goal of reducing the global accident rate and the number of related fatalities, the revision will emphasize transparency and sharing of safety information as fundamental tenets of a safe air transportation system.

Also, you may recall that the High-level Safety Conference last year recommended that ICAO develop, in close coordination with States as well as national and international organizations, a new Annex dedicated to safety management responsibilities and processes. The new Annex was to address the safety management responsibilities of States under the State Safety Programme. I am pleased to inform you that the Council approved the recommendation and, this past March, the Air Navigation Commission proposed the establishment of a Safety Management Panel to move forward on a new Annex with a preliminary draft expected early next year. A number of States in the Asia and Pacific Region have nominated experts for membership on the Safety Management Panel.

In security, the focal point was the adoption by the Assembly of the Declaration on Aviation Security, which established a new global policy framework for cooperative action among government and industry stakeholders. I want to take this opportunity to commend the Government of India for hosting earlier this year the first regional conference to develop a regional implementation roadmap based on the Declaration. Similar cooperative events are planned around the world, including one next January in Malaysia.

The spirit of cooperation is also at the heart of the ground-breaking Assembly resolution on the environment, which paved the way for consolidated action on: 1) States' action plans and assistance to States; 2) sustainable alternative fuels for aviation; 3) market-based measures; and 4) global aspirational goals.

State action plans support the sharing of information and experiences during regional seminars where we work with States to identify how they can reduce CO₂ emissions from international aviation and what assistance they may need to reach their targets.

There are many more examples of where the coming together of States and industry is shaping the future of aviation, but let me now turn to the central theme of this conference – the safety and efficiency of air navigation services, again under the concept of sharing of information and cooperation.

You may recall that the Assembly last year directed the Organization to double its efforts for meeting the global needs for airspace interoperability, while maintaining its focus on safety. The response was the “Aviation System Block Upgrades” initiative. This is a programmatic framework that develops a set of air traffic management solutions or upgrades, establishes a transition plan, and enables global interoperability.

The methodology for “Aviation System Block Upgrades” was presented at the Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium – the GANIS – held last month at ICAO. This was a platform for global and regional industry partners to share latest developments and to identify commonalities or differences between their respective air navigation systems, so as to facilitate interoperability and harmonization. Valuable feedback from GANIS participants will be incorporated into presentations at the Twelfth Air Navigation Conference to be held in 2012.

The purpose of that Conference is to gain consensus, obtain commitments and formulate recommendations for a harmonized global air navigation system. We expect the discussion to follow through on proposed operational improvements rather than aviation disciplines, as we consider the One Sky concept.

This One Sky concept revolves around three distinct, incremental components: conceiving the notion globally, developing the implementation plans regionally, and implementing the infrastructure locally. Elements such as security and the environment would then be addressed within the context of air navigation.

While the Conference will also focus on a new Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), stakeholders will have the opportunity to come together around major themes, set priorities, and refine the way forward based on lessons learned. Special consideration will be given to maximizing existing capabilities and systems, while planning for their expansion, taking into consideration user requirements.

In preparation for the Air Navigation Conference, a seamless ATM Symposium and *Ad-Hoc* Meeting of the APAC Region were recently held in Bangkok. On the agenda were ATM modernization programmes and associated enablers such as legislation, harmonized procedures, and ATM policies, many of which vary greatly across the Asia/Pacific Region. This symposium was the first of its kind and will be followed by similar events in other regions.

Another very important part of ensuring seamlessness across regions is civil/military cooperation and I am pleased that an ICAO Civil/Military Cooperation Seminar has been planned for 28 February to 2 March next year for the APAC Region in Bangkok.

I am also pleased to see that performance-based navigation (PBN) is progressing well in the Region. The Asia/Pacific PBN Task Force has created a robust review process and the emphasis on PBN educational workshops has resulted in a number of new PBN plan submissions. Still, more work needs to be done and I urge States to complete the PBN implementation plan as a matter of urgency to meet the timelines stipulated in the Assembly Resolution.

Another consideration is that PBN implementation not only results in increased safety and efficiency, but it reduces aviation’s impact on the environment. Nancy Graham, the Director of the ICAO Air Navigation Bureau, joined hands with IATA and CANSO to develop a measurement strategy known as the ICAO Fuel Savings Estimation Tool. The tool captures the difference in flight trajectory performance in terms of fuel consumption before and after implementation of operational improvements at the local, regional or global level. This will help States to estimate and report fuel savings consistent with the models approved by ICAO’s Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection and aligned with the Global Air Navigation Plan. I wish to thank IATA and CANSO for this important partnership. Since your region was the first to receive the fuel measurement tool during the APANPIRG meeting last month, the challenge is to deploy it as widely and as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, whether we are talking about aviation safety or security, seamless skies, or any other aspect of international civil aviation, consistent and timely progress requires total and unfettered cooperation. I hope that the examples I have given today and the future plans I have outlined will contribute to the dialogue you are about to undertake. I look forward to the results of your deliberations.