



**Opening address by the President of the Council of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
to the Fourth Annual ICAO Air Services Negotiation Conference (ICAN/2011)**

(Mumbai, India, 17 to 22 October 2011)

I am delighted to be here in Mumbai for the Fourth Annual ICAO Air Services Negotiation Conference.

Let me first say how privileged we are to welcome to this Conference Her Excellency the President of India and this country's Minister of Civil Aviation.

I take this opportunity to also express our deep appreciation to your Government for hosting this important Conference and to extend our most sincere congratulations on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of civil aviation in India.

It is fitting that a record number of States are taking part in this year's edition of ICAN, in a region where the potential for growth is perhaps the highest in terms of absolute numbers of passengers.

For the next three years, ICAO's forecast is for traffic of 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, due to higher economic prospects in States such as India. The same applies for the long-term, where prospects for growth are equally impressive.

By 2030, the number of passengers will have doubled from today's 2.6 billion to about 5 billion, a large proportion of which will be on international flights. This will require the conclusion of air services agreements with a growing list of States, a process that will be very time consuming and expensive, without the guarantee of success.

This is what makes ICAN so practical and cost-effective. Once every year, ICAO offers Member States a central meeting place for them to conduct air services negotiations or consultations. These are mostly bilateral now, but we hope they will become increasingly multilateral in the future.

I am sure many of you have already reaped a great deal from this ICAO facility in the past three years, achieving significant savings and improved efficiency in your negotiation process. This conference also provides you with a forum to exchange experiences and discuss topical issues, as well as excellent networking opportunities.

The success of ICAN is reflected in the increasing number of States that take part year after year. The first edition held in Dubai in 2008 attracted 27 States; the second one, in Istanbul, 52 States; and the third, in Montego Bay, 38 States. I commend India for hosting this year's ICAN, an event with a record-high number of more than 60 States participating.

Another measure of success is obviously in the number of agreements signed. In the past three ICANs, delegations from all regions of the world each held an average of over four bilateral meetings. A combined number of more than 500 meetings were held, leading to the signing of more than 120 bilateral agreements or arrangements.

These agreements help improve the economic environment of the airline industry, which in turn leads to more and better air services for the travelling public and better commercial opportunities for shippers and forwarders.

It is no surprise that the ICAO Assembly last year adopted Resolution A37-20, which encourages States to make use of and benefit from this unique ICAO facility and innovative service. I am convinced that the formula will keep expanding in both numbers and features in the years to come and play an increasing role in promoting the economic liberalization of the global air transport industry.

In a related initiative to support the sustainable development of international air transport, ICAO has proposed to convene a worldwide air transport conference on the sustainability of air transport. The conference will take place in Montréal from 18 to 22 March 2013. Our objective is to more accurately reflect the needs of States and the industry in the current economic, regulatory and operating environment.

Of course, an air transport industry that is not safe, secure or environmentally friendly cannot be sustainable in the long run. That is why ICAO continues to put in place, in cooperation with Member States and industry partners, innovative and practical measures in all three areas.

I would like to give you a few examples.

In safety, we are addressing head-on the number one cause of fatalities in aviation – runway-related accidents. This past June, we held a highly successful Global Runway Safety Symposium (GRSS), after which we launched a series of regional workshops to roll down the practical outcome of the Symposium.

To deal with pilot fatigue, increasingly associated with aircraft accidents, we joined forces with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) to produce guidance material for operators on Fatigue Risk Management Systems, in line with similar guidance for regulators.

We completed the development of the Global Safety Information Exchange for the sharing of safety-critical information among regulators and industry, and eventually the public.

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.

On the environment, the Assembly adopted a ground-breaking Resolution 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.

Having provided these few examples of how we are increasingly proactive in our focus on safety, security and the environment, I would like to recall the objective of ICAN, which is to facilitate the negotiation of air services agreements. While these are designed to boost traffic, there must at the same time be a concerted effort to increase the efficiency of air navigation services. This is absolutely necessary to ensure the growth that those same agreements can provide.

At the Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium (GANIS) held just a few weeks ago, ICAO presented a proposal that will assist in the modernization of air traffic management systems in order to cope with the anticipated doubling of passenger traffic around the globe by 2030.

The very constructive feedback we received from Symposium participants will be used in refining the next revision to the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan that will be presented to Member States at the Organization's 12th Air Navigation Conference in November 2012. That Conference will help define the planning horizon for the coming decade.

Success in this endeavour ultimately depends on States, operators, air navigation service providers, manufacturers and airports working closely together to synchronize deployment of the future systems.

In the same way, global cooperation among all aviation stakeholders will be more important than ever as the world aviation community tackles some of the greatest challenges in its history.

The next few years will be extremely demanding and I am convinced that India will continue to play a determinant role in promoting friendship and collaboration among States, much as it has done since the early days of ICAO and through its valuable contribution to the Council of the Organization. Hosting this fourth ICAN conference is another tangible expression of this commitment to foster goodwill among nations.

I thank you for your kind attention.