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ICAO NEWS RELEASE

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Sharp focus on Safety and Environmental Protection in 2007

Montreal, 28 December 2007 – Major decisions taken at the 36th Session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), held from 18 to 28 September, reaffirmed the organization's global leadership role in 2007, sending a powerful message as to the critical strategic importance of ICAO in establishing the future direction of international civil aviation.

The Assembly, which attracted a record number of 179 Member States and 44 observer delegations, amongst many initiatives embraced a plan for advancing aviation safety in Africa and made significant progress in tackling the issue of climate change.

Aviation Safety in Africa

A new strategy for sustained improvements in aviation safety in Africa was endorsed by representatives of 40 States from the African Region and world aviation stakeholders during a high-level meeting held on the eve of the 36th Assembly.

The *Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa*, or AFI Plan, was developed by ICAO in cooperation with African civil aviation authorities and the air transport industry and represents the most coordinated and inclusive effort ever to deal with the very serious safety challenges facing the majority of African States.

The Plan differs from past initiatives in that it integrates ICAO's performance-based Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the air transport industry's new Global Aviation Safety Roadmap, both of which focus on activities with the highest return for improving safety.

Under the leadership of ICAO, the Plan will draw upon expertise available in the Organization's Headquarters and Regional Offices in Africa, the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG), other Contracting States and concerned stakeholders such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO), the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) and international funding agencies like the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

The Plan's initial implementation phase is expected to cover a four-year period. The next step will be a special regional air navigation meeting in 2008, which will serve as a checkpoint for progress.

Environment

On the issue of climate change, the Assembly agreed to a programme of action to address the issue of aircraft emissions more effectively. A resolution adopted by consensus called on the ICAO Council to form a new "Group on International Aviation and Climate Change," composed of senior government officials. Its purpose is to develop an aggressive Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change. The programme will feature an implementation framework for States to use in achieving emissions reductions, including voluntary measures, technology improvements, more efficient operational measures, improvements in traffic management, positive economic incentives, and market-based measures.

The new programme will also include specific ways of measuring progress, the identification of global aspirational goals in the form of fuel efficiency for international aviation and progress reports from Member States. ICAO will convene a high-level meeting for the purpose of reviewing the programme and taking next steps in late 2009 or, at the latest, early 2010.

The Assembly agreed that market-based options are valuable tools for addressing aircraft emissions. A majority of the delegations felt, however, that States should not apply emissions trading systems to the airlines of other States except pursuant to mutual agreement.

Environment Report

With a view to continually expanding its scientific and technical understanding of aviation's impact on the environment and to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of the most authoritative and credible information available, ICAO produced its first-ever Environmental Report in 2007. The Report constitutes a comprehensive update on technical and policy aspects of aircraft noise and engine emissions and may serve as a catalyst for generating a wider consensus on the way to a sustainable air transport system. Publication of the triennial report will coincide with future ICAO Assemblies. The current edition is available at the ICAO website: www.icao.int/env

Assembly Report on website

The full report on the ICAO Assembly, including major decisions and future activities flowing from the Organization's six strategic objectives – safety, security, environmental protection, efficiency and continuity, as well as rule of law - can be consulted on www.icao.int.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 190 Contracting States.

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