

**Address by the President of the Council
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Assad Kotaite
to the Eleventh Air Navigation Conference**

(Montreal, 22 September 2003)

On behalf of the Council and Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), I would like to welcome all of you to the Eleventh ICAO Air Navigation Conference. And on this occasion, it also gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Dr. Taïeb Chérif, our newly appointed Secretary General. Dr. Chérif has served on the Council of ICAO since 1998 and brings to his new position a great deal of knowledge and experience from the world of international civil aviation.

Over the next 12 days, you will define and agree on the next steps towards fulfilling our vision of an interoperable, seamless and global air traffic management system for international civil aviation in the 21st century.

Those of you who attended the Tenth Air Navigation Conference in 1991, or are familiar with its outcome, will remember it as a pivotal event in the evolutionary process toward an improved air navigation system. We decided then to move from a ground-based to a largely satellite-based air navigation system that also relied on digital communications technologies. At that same time, we endorsed a new concept to meet the future needs of international air transport. Originally known as the Future Air Navigation System or FANS, it is now known as communications, navigation and surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) systems.

Since then, we have all together made considerable progress in many aspects of implementation of CNS/ATM systems, diligently addressing various technical, operational and institutional issues.

- ICAO has developed and adopted the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) required for enabling the communications, navigation and surveillance technologies to be implemented.
- ICAO has also enhanced the effectiveness of mechanisms for the ICAO Planning and Implementation Regional Groups to foster the introduction of CNS/ATM systems in an orderly and cost-beneficial manner. These regional planning groups have brought uniformity and consistency to the exercise.
- ICAO has developed a Global Plan to align and harmonize the systems planning and implementation process to provide high-level guidance to States, regions, service providers, users and manufacturers on how to realize benefits from the new technologies.
- And all of us as aviation community partners have been making progress in many other areas, often incrementally, and I take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation for your excellent contribution.

Now, the time has come to fine-tune our strategy and to embark upon the next phase in establishing the air navigation infrastructure of the future. New technologies necessary for the modernization of the air navigation infrastructure are available, and ICAO has developed the relevant global Standards and

Recommended Practices that will help States to implement those new technologies in an orderly and cost-effective manner. During this conference, we will turn our attention to specific elements of a rejuvenated approach to the air traffic management component of the equation and also address the CNS technologies.

This conference will review a proposed global air traffic management operational concept. This global concept is visionary in its description of the services that will be required to operate the global air traffic management system up to and beyond 2025, while outlining a range of changes that can be expected throughout the planning horizon. An important premise of the operational concept is the idea that timely, accurate and quality-assured information will be available and shared on a system-wide basis. The extensive sharing of information encourages collaborative decision-making, thereby allowing air traffic management to optimize efficiency in the conduct of its operations.

A critical feature of the air traffic management operational concept is its performance orientation. This responds to the need for ensuring that we meet the expectations of various stakeholders for the best possible outcome in terms of safety, efficiency and economics.

Central to the issue of meeting expectations is the type of technologies and systems that will allow us to meet the various performance requirements of the new air traffic management operational concept. We must define what facilities, services and systems are needed to move a set number of aircraft through specific airspaces and airports, in the safest and most efficient manner possible, and based on performance requirements.

These issues will be discussed within the context of the relationship between technological developments and operational requirements. In the past, technological developments were driving operations. We must now shift our approach towards operational needs driving technological developments. Eventually, we must aim for a more symbiotic relationship between the two streams - technology and operations - so that we make optimum use of human and financial resources in developing an operationally sound and productive air navigation system for the 21st century.

Harmonization is another vital factor in providing transparent air traffic services. The ultimate goal of integration and harmonization is to provide transparent services so that users can operate seamlessly across different systems, with a consistent level of safety and with minimum requirements for equipment carriage. We will look at ways to reconcile the differences both within regions and between neighbouring regions by adopting an approach based on cooperation and consensus building.

As you know, the foundation of the global communications, navigation and surveillance infrastructure is the availability of the required radio frequency spectrum that enables the safe operation of all aviation radio systems, be they ground- or satellite-based. In this connection, we will assess the results of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radio Conference, held earlier this year. The conference was very successful for civil aviation and secured continued availability to aviation of the spectrum. But we cannot rest on our laurels; the next ITU conference will be held in 2007 and we will be starting our preparation here, at our conference.

We will discuss varied and wide-ranging issues related to aeronautical navigation including those surrounding the global navigation satellite system (GNSS). In a few moments, the GNSS service providers will inform the conference of the status of the system's developments and its evolution. This information will aid discussions on a number of concerns over the role of satellite-based navigation in the provision of aeronautical navigation services, today and in the future. Of particular importance are the issues of GNSS' vulnerability to interference and its capabilities to support low minima operations. Subsequently, ICAO's policy for transition to satellite-based navigation will be updated in light of these discussions and conference recommendations which are expected to guide the development of aeronautical navigation services for years to come.

At this conference, we will also review the developments on aeronautical mobile communications since the Tenth Air Navigation Conference and in particular consider the planned evolution of existing communication systems and the potential development of future ones in the framework of the global air traffic management operational concept.

As always, safety remains key to all of these considerations. A highly integrated air traffic management system must be built upon the highest of safety standards. To accomplish this, we need to review the ways that we address safety. The ICAO Council has adopted Standards that require States to implement systematic and appropriate air traffic services safety management programmes to ensure that safety is maintained in the provision of air traffic services. I am pleased that you will be presented at this conference with the new ICAO Air Traffic Services Safety Management Manual and that you will address all aspects of safety, including the work of the Air Navigation Commission on its Global Aviation Safety Plan, the expansion of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme to air traffic management and the idea of a systems approach to safety. We need to gain a total understanding of the safety implications of the new systems and to identify the measures we must take to maintain and improve upon the excellent safety record of civil aviation.

In light of the events of 11 September 2001, we must also address security. We need to understand the vulnerabilities of air traffic management and of communications, navigation and surveillance infrastructure and to identify practical measures to eradicate or lessen their impact. Indeed, while we forge ahead in the design of our global air navigation system of the future, the fundamentals of both safety and security must be our central focus.

Throughout your deliberations, I am sure you will remain conscious of the vulnerable state of the air transport industry. For the past two years, global air transport has experienced more adversity than in any other period in its history. In 2001, world passenger traffic fell by 3 per cent as a result of a slowing world economy and the events of 11 September. These effects continued into 2002 and were intensified by the build up to war in Iraq. Traffic fell in the first part of 2003 because of the war and particularly the impact of concerns regarding Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). In many parts of the world, airlines are now in crisis, characterized by bankruptcies, unprecedented losses, massive layoffs and radically shifting schedules. As a consequence, many airports have suffered sharp declines in revenues. States have also experienced financial difficulties regardless of whether they are developed or developing countries.

But, recovery is now under way and traffic for 2003 is expected to be about the same as in 2002 on year-on-year basis. We then expect traffic to rebound, with over 4 per cent growth in 2004 and over 6 per cent in 2005. Our forecasts assume gradual restoration of passenger confidence in international travel, improved application and facilitation of aviation security measures, an improving world economy and a stable operating environment. In the longer term, global scheduled passenger traffic growth can be expected to proceed at an average annual rate of around 4 per cent.

This should motivate us in our drive to develop a work plan that will ensure greater efficiency of the global air navigation infrastructure. ICAO itself was born in a period of great chaos near the end of the Second World War, and it has blossomed into one of the most enduring institutions of the 20th century, and now the 21st century. We must press on with our vision, because the progressive realization of a sound, flexible and performance-based air navigation system will ultimately be of immense benefit to all sectors of the industry.

It is now an honour for me to declare open the Eleventh ICAO Air Navigation Conference and to invite the President of the Air Navigation Commission, Mr. Daniel Galibert, to address the conference and elaborate on its Agenda.

I wish you very successful deliberations.