



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization,
Raymond Benjamin
to the ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels
Rio de Janeiro – 16-18 November 2009**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to open this Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels. I would like to thank the Brazilian authorities and in particular the National Agency of Civil Aviation (ANAC) that kindly offered to host this Conference in the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro. On behalf of ICAO, I would like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Solange Paiva Vieira, President-Director of ANAC and Lieutenant Brigadier Jorge Godinho Barreto Nery, Secretary of Civil Aviation of the Ministry of Defence who are joining me here today.

We are meeting at a very opportune time. The ICAO High-level Meeting was held last month in Montreal and the UNFCCC COP/15 meeting will be held next month in Copenhagen. Today's meeting provides us with an opportunity to build on the foundation provided by the High-level Meeting in order to show the strong resolve of aviation stakeholders to COP/15.

The recently held ICAO High-level Meeting reiterated the commitment of the 190 ICAO Contracting States to address the climate challenge through efficiency improvements.

However, let me be clear, all data shows that efficiency improvements alone will not succeed in reducing in absolute terms the greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft. In other words, employing measures for efficiency improvement, which have worked so well for so long, will still leave a significant mitigation requirement. We must close this mitigation gap or it will be closed for us.

One option to close the gap is alternative fuels. The High-level Meeting strongly encouraged all stakeholders to explore the development of alternative fuel technologies and the use of sustainable alternative fuels, including biofuels, in aviation. The High-level Meeting recommended, in particular, that States and international organizations attend this Conference to share their efforts and strategies to promote the use of alternative fuels and bring its results to COP/15.

Another element from the High-level Meeting that I must mention is the identification of a need to elaborate on measures to assist developing States as well as facilitate access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building. This will be essential in the development of a sustainable infrastructure, especially as it relates to aviation alternative fuels.

This Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels is our opportunity to come together and establish an internationally agreed high-level global roadmap to demonstrate our commitment to a sustainable air transport system.

We as the stakeholders of the air transport system have an obligation to reduce our impact on the climate. Not only is this a significant moral challenge, this may be the most significant technical challenge our industry will face this generation in what has already been a challenging era for aviation. Our success is essential to ensure we remain the premiere mode of transportation.

A key element of this new world must be sustainable production of aircraft fuels and with that, new jobs, new businesses associated with feedstock diversity and co-products, enhanced wealth, and effective use of local resources.

You may be asking, what is the role of ICAO in alternative fuels. After all, the fuel certification standards are being adequately addressed through standard setting organizations. Different States and regions have aggressive roadmaps and plans to develop and deploy alternative fuels. At this stage, how can ICAO help? I ask the same question.

As the Secretary General of ICAO, I can assure you that ICAO is here to help the progress. ICAO is the only recognized international organization for aviation issues. We aim to provide a forum for all 190 contracting States and all aviation stakeholders to come together; not only to agree on solutions, but to share lessons learned and coordinate activities. This conference and our endeavours in the arena of alternative fuels are no different.

At this Conference, we want to build on the success of the Workshop that was conducted in February 2009 in Montreal. Most of you were there and found a lot to share. We talked about technologies, pros and cons of different options, and started the discussions on coordinating efforts. We must take this discussion to the next level and establish an international high-level global roadmap on alternative fuels for aviation.

The promise of the future for sustainable alternative fuels for aircraft rests on three building blocks:

1. **Markets**: Airlines must confirm that the demand for alternative jet fuel is reliable, deep, and accessible. Without a predictable market, investments in new fuels will not be made or the fuels will supply other markets for transportation fuels such as trucking. Also, new markets for co-products of the fuel production process must be nurtured to ensure the financial viability of these processes. These markets may represent significant opportunities for the countries that develop them: new jobs, new businesses, and new prosperity.
2. **Infrastructure**: Fuel producers and suppliers must establish scalable links between production facilities and airports to ensure rapid, consistent, reliable fuel transport that meets airlines requirements. The new infrastructure must connect harmoniously with existing fuel delivery systems.
3. **Financing**: States must recognize that R&D requires significant support in the near term. Pilot and commercial scale facilities will need incentives and support to advance the speed of deployment.

Each of these considerations will be addressed during this Conference.

Different feedstocks and processes are suitable for different regions; some tropical, some temperate. This allows multiple solutions to the problem, each tailored to local capabilities and resources.

Regional development can be pursued for supplying airports within the area. Coincident with that are new business opportunities for co-products; reduced petroleum product imports; and increased employment.

Keeping in view the benefits cited, there is an urgent need to assist developing States as well as facilitate access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity. I hope the presence of States' representatives, financial institutions, fuel producers, and aviation stakeholders can start this important discussion.

According to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in reference to climate change, "We need the world to realize, once and for all, that the time to act is now and we must work together to address this monumental challenge. This is the moral challenge of our generation."

Coming out of this meeting, we hope that States and industry stakeholders will be prepared to work together to achieve our common vision on aviation alternative fuels.

If our collective efforts are successful we may one day look back on this meeting as a truly momentous occasion.

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