



**Remarks by the
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma,
to the National Day Reception for the Birthday of
His Majesty the Emperor of Japan**

(Montréal, Canada, 25 March 2026)

Good evening Distinguished guests,

It is my great honor, as President of the Council to be here to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. On this occasion, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and deepest respect to His Majesty, whose life has always been devoted to the promotion of peace and harmony in the international community.

Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation to the Japanese delegation for their kind invitation and for organizing this meaningful celebration. Their gracious hospitality and thoughtful efforts have brought us together this evening in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect, which we deeply value.

Today, I brought this old book, a legal instrument from my office instead of my musical instrument. It is the proceedings of the Chicago Conference, which you must be familiar with if you are engaged in legal work in this industry. This is one of my most frequently consulted books when I was a junior officer in ICAO's Legal Bureau 25 years ago.

One day, I noticed on page 42, the opening statement by the head of the delegation hosting the conference, who introduced the message from the President of the United States. He said, "The progress of these armies, navies and air forces of the United Nations has already opened great areas to peaceful intercourse which had been closed for more than four years." "Steadily the great areas of the Pacific are being freed from Japanese occupation. In due time, the Continent of Asia will be opened." Yes, it was 1 November 1944, this was introduced when Japan considered it was still in the midst of war. The discussion for international civil aviation after the war, in the peace era, was held on the opposite side of the globe. The first officer coming from Japan to ICAO's Legal Bureau discovered this fact in 2001, 56 years after the end of the war.

Japan's constitution, which was adopted after the end of war, has a preamble saying, "We Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trust in the justice and faith of the peace-loving people of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace ..."

At the desk in the ICAO Legal Bureau, a junior Japanese Officer thought, “My existence here in ICAO might be a kind of very, very small reflection of our constitution. It is small yet might be meaningful.”

Twenty-five years later, thanks to all of your support, he is here again in a different capacity. This time, he has no doubt that his existence here is absolutely a reflection of Japan’s constitution.

His Majesty, the Emperor is always devoted to the peace and harmony of the international community. Again, it is my great honor and pleasure to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty today, with all of you.

Thank you very much for your attention.