



Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the
Arab Air Carriers Organization
(Cairo, 19-21 October)

Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted at the opportunity to join you at this Annual General Meeting of the Arab Air Carriers Organization and would like to convey my thanks to the Secretary General of AACO, Mr. Teffaha for his kind invitation to say a few words.

1. My contribution to your discussion on meeting the environmental challenge will be to share my thoughts on the historic resolution adopted by the 37th session of the ICAO Assembly on the subject just 12 days ago.
2. Before I do, I want to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the carriers of this region to the fight against climate change. This has been in large part through the acquisition of modern, fuel efficient aircraft. At the same time, I want to also recognize the efforts of States in providing energy efficient infrastructure such as airports and air navigation services.
3. When I said historic a few moments ago about the resolution, I am not the only one to describe it in this way.
4. The State Department of the United States called it an unprecedented global commitment to collective action, among developed and developing countries around the world, to limit and reduce carbon emissions from international aviation.
5. IATA applauded the 190 Member States of ICAO on achieving the first global governmental agreement with aspirational goals to stabilize carbon emissions.

6. Airports Council International said it was an historic agreement for a globally harmonized approach to addressing aviation's CO₂ emissions.
7. Other government and industry bodies likewise saluted the determination of the ICAO membership to clearly put a stake in the ground on the way to reducing and eventually eliminating the effects of air transport on our climate.
8. I believe there is a lot to learn from the process that got us here. In fact, in some years from now, we may very well look back at the three-year period since our last Assembly in 2007 as a watershed moment in our collective determination to tackle the greatest environmental challenge facing mankind.
9. But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me briefly recount what we came to the Assembly with two weeks ago.
10. First and foremost were the remarkable results of the High-level meeting of October 2009. States representing 93 per cent of global commercial traffic produced, with the support of industry, the first globally harmonized agreement from a sector for addressing its CO₂ emissions. It included:
 - 1) a global goal of 2 per cent annual fuel efficiency improvement up to the year 2050;
 - 2) an objective to develop a CO₂ certification standard for aircraft engines;
 - 3) the development of a framework for market-based measures in international aviation; and
 - 4) further elaboration on measures to assist developing States and to facilitate access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.
11. The following month, at an ICAO conference in Rio de Janeiro, a global framework was adopted for the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation. Alternative aviation drop-in fuels use existing aircraft and airport infrastructures. They can be produced from a wide variety of feed stocks, enabling many regions to produce them, thereby placing aviation in a position to be the first sector to be able to use sustainable alternative fuels globally. This is a key element of our strategy to reach sustainability and clearly the way of the future. In February of 2010, ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) committed to a timetable for the CO₂ standard, aiming at 2013. Once adopted, the standard will become the only global fuel-efficiency standard for any industry sector.

12. Between all of these meetings, we worked in close cooperation with Member States and industry on ways to achieve more ambitious collective goals. A number of feasibility studies were presented to the Council of ICAO. We also started to prepare the guidelines for the development of State action plans. Many States, including Egypt, have consulted with us on the initial steps and some preliminary Action Plans were presented at the Assembly.
13. With all of these concrete results and initiatives for moving forward, I felt confident that the Assembly would be in a position to take another significant step on our journey to sustainability. I was looking for a clear policy statement in three major areas: more ambitious environmental goals; the development and application of a framework of market-based measures; and measures to assist States.
14. I was also conscious that we were coming to the Assembly with an unusual set of circumstances. Probably for the first time in history, and despite its best efforts, the Council of ICAO was not able to put forth a proposal to the Assembly. As a consequence, I took the responsibility of submitting a proposed resolution that would serve as the basis for discussion during the Assembly.
15. I must admit, and a number of you have witnessed it, that the Assembly discussions were difficult. There were a number of divergent views on many aspects of the proposed resolution. But at the 11th hour, we had a resolution.
16. So what did we achieve?
17. In broad terms, the Assembly amplified the momentum of the 36th Assembly in 2007 and the high-level meeting of October 2009 in confirming ICAO's leadership in civil aviation environmental protection. It reaffirmed that the climate change issue as it applies to international aviation must be managed and resolved through ICAO, in a manner that is fully complementary of the manner in which UNFCCC operates.
18. The Assembly once again further demonstrated ICAO's capacity to build consensus on some of the most challenging issues of our time – upholding the principle that the more divergent the views, the more significant the consensus.

19. More specifically, the Assembly went the extra mile and set the stage for even more progress in the months to come.
 - It fully endorsed the 2 percent annual fuel efficiency improvement goal;
 - It agreed on a mid-term aspirational goal that while the international aviation sector continues to grow, its global greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation will remain limited;
 - It requested the Council to undertake further work on exploring the feasibility of a long-term goal;
 - It agreed on guiding principles for the design and implementation of market-based measures for international aviation and a process to develop a framework for market-based measures;
 - It looked at concrete steps to assist States to contribute to the global efforts, while
 - Ensuring that states with small contributions to the global air traffic are not burdened disproportionately.
20. You may have read about these and other aspects of the resolution in media reports. Some elements of the resolution, however, remained under the radar, yet they are critical to the overall success.
21. One of the key ones is the action plans that States provide to ICAO. I alluded to them at the beginning of my presentation. An action plan outlines the respective policies and actions of States, as well as annual reporting to ICAO on international aviation CO₂ emissions. This makes it possible for ICAO to measure progress in relation to aspirational goals. Information is also given on market-based measures considered by States, reflecting their respective national capacities and circumstances.
22. To help the process along, the Assembly requested the Council to help disseminate economic and technical studies and best practise related to aspirational goals, and to provide guidance and other technical assistance for the preparation of action plans by June 2012.
23. The concept of action plans has proven its worth many times over at ICAO. Through our audit programmes for safety and security, we established with the cooperation of states detailed action plans to correct deficiencies identified through the audits. The global air transport system today is unquestionably safer and more secure because of that.
24. Why can't we do the same with the environment? I am not speaking of audits, obviously, but of cooperative arrangements where we work together based on action plans submitted by States. This can further assist in identifying sources of assistance, including financing. States need and want more information before making decisions and action plans do just that.

25. Let me now address a few words to some of our detractors. I agree that the Assembly resolution is not perfect, that it does not solve everything.
- There remain differences between developed and developing States;
 - There remain varied positions on the management of market based measures;
 - The *diminimus* concept has to be clarified – how do we deal with states with small traffic base;
 - Aspirational goals still have to be defined; and
 - A framework for market-based measures has to be developed.
26. The point is that the resolution provides a context for these and other issues to be worked out, building on highly significant achievements.
27. This is a step by step process. None of us believe that we can achieve immediate results on very complex issues. But we have created for ourselves an excellent basis on which to make very real progress in over the next three years as we head into the next Assembly in 2013.
28. Despite our differences, we all agree on the fundamentals and we all have a stake in making this happen.
29. This was clearly evident at the Assembly. We agreed on the merits of the issues. By being fair and transparent, we were able to eliminate many of the roadblocks and eliminate fears. Through constructive dialogue, we put flexibility back into the process.
30. At the end of the day, we have a strong and positive message to bring to Cancun. There is no alternative to success. And the ICAO process of dialogue and cooperation has demonstrated that it is possible to reach agreement on even the most widely divergent views. Aviation wins, the environment wins.
31. Achieving sustainable aviation is a long and winding road. Like all global challenges, it requires a global solution.
32. Together, we will succeed.
