**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)
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TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AVIATION**

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It is truly a pleasure for me to be here in India and to address such a prestigious audience of policy- and decision-makers, regulators, and experts in various disciplines related to civil aviation.

India is one of 52 original signatories to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the charter of ICAO. Since that historic event in Chicago in 1944, solid progress has been achieved here and the country can look forward to an exciting and prosperous future for its air transport sector. Indeed, these are great and challenging times for Indian civil aviation.

India's civil aviation industry is experiencing a significant and sustained domestic growth in passenger and cargo traffic and it is positioning itself to benefit from a corresponding anticipated increase in the number of international tourists and business travellers. The modernisation and upgrade of airports is but one example of farsighted planning on the part of Indian authorities to avoid airport congestion normally associated with strong traffic growth. It also brings to light the tremendous investments that will be required for airports and air navigation services to meet growing demand in an efficient and timely manner.

The overall challenge for India is to manage this rapid growth systematically, while ensuring the safety, security, sustainability and efficiency of air transport operations. This is exactly the mandate of ICAO, but on a global scale. I welcome the opportunity to review key elements of the ICAO response to the challenge, in the hope that this may provide food for thought in your deliberations.

Our first priority is safety. This involves a multi-faceted approach largely based on the uniform and consistent implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices, or SARPs, as they appear in the Annexes to the Chicago Convention. To help States in this process, the Organization, in 1999, launched the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme referred to as USOAP. USOAP assesses the effectiveness of the safety oversight mechanism of a State and includes action plans to correct identified deficiencies. In seven years, the mandatory programme has clearly improved safety.

The stature of USOAP was further enhanced by the Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation held at ICAO in March 2006. DGCAs from 153 Contracting States unanimously agreed that ICAO should post the results of safety oversight audits on the ICAO public website, with the consent of States. Such transparency and sharing of information should encourage States to correct outstanding deficiencies more quickly and make it easier for States and donors to provide to those in need the required financial or human resources. The deadline for posting audit results of all States is March 2008. To date, 87 States have already authorized ICAO to publish the information, including India. The summary report on India indicates substantial progress towards implementing the recommendations of the audit carried out in 1999.

Transparency and sharing of information is also at the heart of our *Unified strategy to resolve safety-related deficiencies.* The Strategy emphasizes the free-flow of safety-related information by everyone involved in air transport, at every level, and across every discipline. This is an essential condition for creating or strengthening partnerships among various stakeholders to resolve deficiencies.

Then there is the relatively new concept of safety management systems, SMS. Safety Management Systems represent the most effective way of responding to the need for results-based supervision of personnel and functions with a relatively small workforce. Many ICAO Member States are implementing or looking into safety management systems to complement their existing regulatory structure. We encourage them with concrete assistance in the form of standards and related guidance material, and a model legislation to make it easier to implement SMS. I am happy to announce that ICAO will be giving a course on SMS in Delhi, from 7 to 18 May. Ultimately, we would like to see an effective synergy between USOAP, the Unified Strategy, and the growing application of SMS worldwide.

The final safety initiative I want to highlight is the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap developed by members of the air transport industry, in consultation with ICAO safety specialists. This marks the first time that governments and industry have jointly developed a unified and coordinated approach to reducing accident rates, particularly in developing regions of the world, in accordance with ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan.

Aviation security is another priority. In managing security issues, governments have the difficult and unenviable task of balancing the need for maintaining and encouraging anti-terrorist vigilance while concurrently putting in place workable security measures that do not compromise the efficiency of the air transport sector. ICAO's overall strategy is based on a *Plan of Action for Strengthening Aviation Security,* which includes a Universal Security Audit Programme, complemented by a series of related activities. One such activity deals with ICAO-standard Machine Readable Travel Documents, including electronic passports, as an effective way of increasing the security of air travel and at border control points. In the long term, we must diligently assess new and emerging threats and continually monitor and upgrade existing security processes, to ensure they are commensurate with the level of threat identified, while expediting the clearance of passengers and cargo at airports.

The impact of aircraft engine emissions is another potentially serious obstacle to the growth of air transport. As we meet here in Bangalore, ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection, CAEP, is meeting at ICAO Headquarters in Montreal to address this complex issue, particularly the subject of market-based measures to limit or reduce emissions. The results of the meeting will be incorporated into the first ever ICAO Environmental Report to be published in the coming months.

The last point I wish to raise this morning is the latest step in the development of a global air traffic management system. ICAO's vision for the ATM system of the future is one based on interoperability and seamlessness across regions for all users during all phases of flight, that meets agreed levels of safety, provides for optimum economic operations, is environmentally sustainable, and reflects national security requirements. Last November, the Council of ICAO approved a revised Global Air Navigation Plan as means to that end. ICAO has already integrated this work into its new Business Plan, which stresses the implementation of harmonized air traffic management systems and performance-based efficiency improvements.

Addressing these challenges and any other that may arise, either at the national level or the global level, can best be done, can ONLY be done, through cooperation among all stakeholders involved. For its part, ICAO looks forward to working with India and its other 188 Member States in ensuring the continued safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. Our actions, individually and collectively, will determine the extent to which air transport generates economic, social and cultural benefits to citizens of this country and the rest of the world.

I thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a most fruitful conference.

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