



International Civil Aviation Organization

Tel.: +1 (514) 954-8220/8221

Website: www.icao.int

ICAO NEWS RELEASE

COM 21/12

STAKES HIGH FOR PASSENGERS AND BUSINESS AT LANDMARK ICAO CONFERENCE

MONTREAL, 19 November 2012 – Seeking to deliver a strategic solution guiding global aviation’s response to the significant capacity challenges projected over the coming decades, over 191 government and industry participants arrived at the Headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) today for the beginning of a landmark air navigation conference.

“Current industry projections are pointing to a doubling of global flight volumes between now and 2030,” stressed ICAO Council President, Roberto Kobeh González. “This highlights the urgent need for global aviation to coordinate the adoption of the most advanced technologies and procedures. Societies and businesses, in every corner of the world, must continue to be able to look to air transport as a safe and efficient means of facilitating travel, tourism and economic growth in the twenty-first century.”

The stakes at ICAO’s Twelfth Air Navigation Conference (AN-Conf/12) are particularly high. The complex nature of modern aviation demands a tremendous level of coordination on behalf of the many States, operators and manufacturers who cooperate with one another through ICAO. Hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of infrastructure and aircraft modernization planning will be impacted by their decisions.

If global air transport is unable to reach agreement at ICAO this November, airline passengers could find themselves facing far more frequent delays and cancellations. Businesses, too, could find their expectations on next-day delivery or fast, reliable access to foreign markets increasingly difficult to assure.

“The Twelfth Air Navigation Conference represents a critical juncture for aviation,” remarked ICAO Secretary General, Raymond Benjamin. “We cannot simply double the size of every airport and aircraft to handle the growth now being projected. This means that unless we act now to agree on the strategic path needed to deliver our operational objectives, what people expect from aviation today may become increasingly difficult to deliver tomorrow.”

Anticipating the urgency of the decisions that will come out of its Twelfth Air Navigation Conference, ICAO has spent the last several years building State and industry consensus around what it has termed aviation system ‘Block Upgrades’. This 15-year strategy, based on modular performance improvements measurable over defined availability timelines, is designed to assist States and regional organizations in their operational planning.

“In the past, technologies tended to come and go and aviation found itself being pulled in directions that in some cases were counter-productive to realizing the ‘one sky’ concept we’ve been pursuing,” noted ICAO Air Navigation Bureau Director, Nancy Graham. “The Block Upgrades put technology development squarely at the service of agreed operational targets, which in the end is good for air traffic management, good for the environment and good for the State planners and industry players who need more investment certainty surrounding their R&D.”

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.