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## ICAO PRE-ASSEMBLY SYMPOSIUM STRESSES RENEWED FOCUS ON AIR TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY AND END-USER NEEDS

**MONTREAL, 23 September 2013** – A sustainable future for the global air transport system depends on its ability to expand its available destinations and to transport people and goods point-to-point in the shortest time possible.

That was the overall message coming out of a special air transport symposium organized by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and McGill University this past weekend. The event was intended as an important primer for the 1,500 State, industry and other air transport officials attending the 38th Triennial Session of the ICAO Assembly which kicks off tomorrow through 4 October.

Under the theme of increasing air transport connectivity, aviation experts from around the world agreed during two days of frank panel discussions on the need to focus efforts on the end user, whether travellers or businesses, and to work more cooperatively towards the continuous improvement of the overall air transport experience.

“The time has come for the global air transport community, whether States or industry, to take a more holistic approach to current challenges and fully respond to the needs of users. The more connectivity we engender in realizing a convenient and positive travel experience, the more air transport will continue to contribute to economic development and prosperity around the world,” stressed ICAO Secretary General, Raymond Benjamin.

“Last March, at the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference, ICAO Member States unanimously recognized the leadership role of their Organization in the economic regulation of air transport. Our 38th Assembly is an opportunity to discuss new and forward-looking policies that support a more focused and inclusive strategy guiding future air transport growth.”

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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, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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