

Message from Captain Jack Netskar

President, International Federation of AirLine Pilots Associations (IFALPA)

ICAO has been instrumental in the success of international aviation over the past seventy years. IFALPA underlines this pivotal role for ICAO for the next decades to overcome major environmental challenges. ICAO has been synonymous with collaboration. Strong alliances, mutual support, stakeholder commitment and technological, economic, social, and operational balance meet in Montreal. Global issues need a global approach with local or national nuances. IFALPA recognizes its own role as one of the stakeholders which must reach out and commit to these challenges.

Safety is always the primary concern for pilots, and as such, for IFALPA. Environmental sustainability is also a basic requirement for future air transport and is inextricably linked to safety.

To underline our commitment, IFALPA has strengthened its environmental goals with a renewed mission: “IFALPA will contribute to the industry’s efforts to minimize the environmental impact of commercial aviation.” Furthermore, in the IFALPA Climate Working Group, the Federation has gathered operating expertise from the global pilot community to concentrate on the many environmental challenges.

The whole operation generally boils down to the flight deck. Enhanced navigational technologies, new sustainable aviation fuels, airspace redesign, new “green” or noise abatement operating procedures, all of these measures are “felt” by the pilot in the cockpit and must be managed and balanced in the end by the flight crew during flight.

With the vantage point at the end of the chain, the pilot has the perfect overview on what can or cannot be done in operating practice. What will and will not work and how things function. In short, what measures will be effective and what will have positive or negative side-effects, so-called interdependencies. IFALPA has the ability and feels the obligation to contribute.

For instance, a continuous descent is often preferred by the pilot, as the standard descent flying technique, but as the aircraft descends into a busy airport, the pilot will encounter



many obstacles: ATC restrictions, procedural inconsistencies, navigational (FMC) or noise constraints, limited airspace and runway capacity, punctuality concerns, possibly unexpected weather, and workload issues. The pilot can identify these hurdles and work together with other stakeholders on a multi-faceted solution to create the ideal environment for an efficient descent: with clear procedures, more accurate (4D) navigation, streamlined and seamless ATC centers, better information exchange, etc.

Many initiatives for sustainable aviation are underway on different levels, many of which have pilot input: within the several research centers and national development programs (FAA, SESAR, Nav Canada, UK CAA), within ICAO (OPSP and CAEP), regionally (NATS, in the pacific region, at Eurocontrol) and locally at airports, with national authorities, ANSPs and airline operators. All these collaborative efforts should improve the safety and sustainability of aviation, capable of meeting the demands of today, and facing the challenges of tomorrow.