

**Message from the Secretary General of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Dr. Philippe Rochat,
on the theme "Using Satellites to Make Civil Aviation Safer"
for the world-wide celebration of International Civil Aviation Day
on 7 December 1996**

We of the International Civil Aviation Organization, at our Headquarters in Montreal, at our seven regional offices, and in close co-operation with our 184 Contracting States, have for years had our sights and thoughts on the skies overhead as we continuously strive to build the best and safest civil aviation system.

In recent years these sights and thoughts have gone thousands of miles beyond our eyes into the near reaches of outer space where scores of satellites — communications satellites, navigation satellites, weather satellites and others — are tirelessly orbiting our planet.

These unseen satellites are also opening a new era of progress for civil aviation. Satellites are now a major component of ICAO's new communication, navigation, and surveillance/air traffic management systems (the "CNS/ATM systems").

These new systems, planned for global implementation over the coming fifteen years, will introduce new economies in flight and increase the capacity of our airspace. But most of all they will further enhance the safety of air transport which is already today the most reliable mode of transportation.

The new systems are unprecedented in their global scope and complexity. Their implementation requires the active participation of many thousands of people — governments, aircraft operators, airports, air traffic controllers, service providers, manufacturers, interested organizations, and others — working together with the common goal of building what is best for all of us.

Let us now stimulate and multiply these cooperative efforts and move on towards an enhanced future for civil aviation world-wide.