**Keynote Address by the Secretary General of**
**ICAO**
**Mr. Raymond Benjamin**
**to the**
**IATA's 2010 "Wings of Change" Conference**

(Santiago, Chile – 24-25 March 2010)

1. I would like to thank the Government of Chile and the International Air Transport Association for inviting me to participate in the Sixth "Wings of Change" Conference focusing on **partnering for prosperity**. The challenging times we currently face make global cooperation more pressing than ever. We are all interconnected and we each have a specific role to play in ensuring the prosperity of an industry, upon which depends the wellbeing of hundreds of millions of people around the world.

2. The role of ICAO in this collaborative effort is to work with its Member States to maintain current a global regulatory framework that is responsive to the requirements of both the regulator and industry stakeholders – be they airlines, airports, air navigation services providers or manufacturers. In this ongoing process, ICAO relies heavily on input from industry to ensure the soundness and relevance of our Standards, operating procedures and policies. In this sense, we are partners for the common good.

3. Over the next few minutes, I would like to highlight more recent initiatives of ICAO in strengthening three fundamental elements of an efficient and prosperous air transport system – safety, security and sustainability. Without a safe, secure and sustainable operation, long-term prosperity is impossible. We all know this. We also know that keeping up to speed requires boldness, imagination and determination. For States, this translates into political will.

4. This coming Monday, ICAO Member States will have an opportunity to take another major step in that direction as we begin our High-level Safety Conference. The intention is to build on our historic progress in the areas of transparency and information sharing. In so doing, we can demonstrate our capability to adapt to change, work together even more than ever, and set the stage for significant improvements in safety where they are most needed.

5. We all know the figures. Over the past ten years, there has been a 46 percent decrease in the total number of fatal accidents, at a time of significant growth in traffic worldwide. This is good news but the reality is that the overall accident rate has remained disturbingly stable over the same timeframe. We must take action now to develop and implement new strategies to bring down the overall accident rate, as much and as quickly as possible.

6. That is what next week's safety conference is all about - agreeing on new strategies for managing safety and complementing our traditional prescriptive-based methodology with a proactive, performance-based approach that will better equip us to respond to emerging safety issues **before** they result in accidents or incidents. We have recent innovations to build upon.

7. By now, the industry is well familiar with the potential of Safety Management Systems to improve safety. The concept has been incorporated into newly-created State Safety Programmes which are becoming widely implemented. A Continuous Monitoring Approach for our safety oversight programme will make for a more effective and efficient use of resources in assessing State compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

8. These innovations and trends are fundamental building blocks of ICAO's evolving safety strategy and they bear witness to ICAO's embracing of the risk-based approach, all the while recognizing that this requires an equivalent commitment to risk-management. At an organizational level, for ICAO, for States and for aviation organizations, we must all adjust the way in which we respond to risk through our respective safety management processes.

9. This also means that we need to fully understand the risks associated with the many facets of today's complex aviation system. The problem is that while vast amounts of data are regularly collected, this information is not effectively shared.

10. To overcome this limitation, ICAO is developing, and is close to unveiling, an internal integrated safety trend analysis and reporting system that will eventually have the capability to analyze various types of data, thereby creating a multidimensional assessment of emerging safety issues.

11. The success of these efforts, and the success of a proactive approach to safety, will ultimately rest on policy decisions that facilitate the free exchange of information while also protecting the sources of that information. Simply stated, the sharing of valuable safety information must become the norm, rather than an exceptional practice among States and concerned aviation stakeholders.

12. At the Conference next week, we will be asking States to agree on the development of a global organizational framework to protect the providers of sensitive safety data used for future information sharing initiatives. Without this protective framework, essential information will remain unavailable to ICAO and to other organizations involved in the analysis and resolution of global safety issues.

13. Another major decision we expect from States deals with the creation of a new Annex to the Chicago Convention. It will be dedicated to Safety Management and highlight safety as ICAO's primary focus. It will facilitate a coordinated approach for the promulgation of the practices necessary to assure the highest levels of safety throughout the international aviation system.

14. The deliberations and conclusions of the safety conference will definitely shape the future of aviation safety around the world and have an impact on the industry.

15. Before I leave the subject of safety, I would like to make an announcement about new ICAO requirements to manage crew fatigue, as fatigue has been implicated in several high profile accidents and incidents recently. Currently, civil aviation authorities use prescriptive regulations to limit flight time and duty periods.

16. This approach has the advantage of providing clear-cut limits but, it is necessarily a one-size fits all solution and as such, is rarely the most efficient or most cost-effective method of managing the fatigue-related risks of any one specific aeroplane fleet or route structure. Additionally these prescriptive limitations have often been based more on industrial agreements than on evolving science related to fatigue and its effects on performance.

17. ICAO is tackling this issue head-on. Late last year, the Standards and Recommended Practices were updated to introduce fatigue management concepts. The Standards now require prescriptive limitations to be developed based on scientific fatigue management principles.

18. At the same time, ICAO formed a task force to look at a Fatigue Risk Management Systems solution and, with the cooperation of regulators, operators and scientific experts in the field, a proposal for new Fatigue Risk Management Systems Standards and Recommended Practices was drafted with suggested applicability in 2011. A fatigue risk management system employs a multi-layered system of defences to manage operational fatigue risk, and can take advantage of established SMS processes. This non-prescriptive approach will allow greater operational flexibility and efficiency while enhancing safety and reducing costs.

19. Understandably, fatigue risk management systems take time to mature, so savings will manifest themselves only in the long run.

20. Let me now turn to the flip side of the safety coin – **security**, using the recent incident of the infamous *underwear bomber* as an example.

21. The attempted sabotage of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on 25 December brought home basic realities about aviation security. One is that a threat against any airliner is a threat against the entire aeronautical community. Second, threats can only be properly addressed through a global strategy based on effective international cooperation. Third, we must be diligent in finding new ways to anticipate and foil emerging threats. And fourth, we must respond quickly and effectively when events do occur.

22. Within hours of the 25 December incident, I was in contact with high-level officials of the States involved and we initiated a series of actions to coordinate and harmonize responses to the terrorist act. We communicated with security authorities in all of our member States to encourage them to conduct risk assessments and implement appropriate screening measures. We have remained in close contact with our Member States since that time to monitor the situation.

23. At the gracious invitation of Giovanni, I met with a number of airline CEOs at IATA headquarters in Geneva on 22 January to review our actions and plans for dealing with this and similar threats.

24. I first commended parties concerned for the rapid response to the situation. The decision to implement emergency measures is never easy because of the enormous impact on overall operations, but they must be taken, to protect the integrity of the system and maintain public confidence in air travel.

25. I emphasized that dealing effectively with security threats requires a commitment to globally-harmonized measures and procedures. A terrorist will quickly locate the weakest entry point in the security net, be it half a world away from his intended target. Our challenge is obviously of gigantic proportions – achieving and maintaining an optimum balance between more stringent security measures and processes that facilitate air travel by 2.3 billion passengers per year.

26. In the long term, it is essential to review existing measures and strategy from time to time, and assess how they need to adapt to remain effective. As we speak, our Aviation Security Panel is meeting in Montreal to produce concrete recommendations on how to prevent incidents such as the attempted sabotage of 25 December. In responding to this and similar incidents, it will be necessary to consider both procedural and technological solutions, including the possible use of imaging technology, or body scanners, as one means of screening passengers, taking into account privacy, data protection and health issues. Profiling, strictly on the basis of behaviour is another option.

27. Through all of this, the added difficulty is that every time a new type of incident arises, we face the prospect of introducing yet another layer of security. To do so when necessary, but without overburdening the industry, it is important to evaluate existing measures at the same time, and eliminating and revising provisions as required. In developing countermeasures to new threats, they must be practical as well as appropriate for the level of threat, with minimum adverse impact on the air transport system.

28. I want to assure you that this and other aviation security challenges have ICAO's full attention, and are being addressed on a proactive basis. Through our panel of security experts, we are striving to identify new ways of anticipating the next threat and implementing practical countermeasures instead of requiring emergency action.

29. Moreover, ICAO has been working to promote closer international cooperation. Ministerial Regional Conferences in various parts of the world have been held to generate global consensus around the development of a uniform, international response to threats to civil aviation. In recent weeks, I have attended regional summits in Mexico and Tokyo, and in both instances participating States and ICAO issued joint declarations on strengthening aviation security. Similar meetings are being planned in Abuja for the African continent and one in the United Arab Emirates for the Arab world.

30. I am confident that these will likewise show their concrete support for effective and globally harmonized action. The strategy adopted must demonstrate our unshakable determination to provide air travellers everywhere with the highest levels of aviation security possible.

31. Let me summarize then by reiterating that ICAO is keenly aware of the challenges you face as operators and recognizes that whatever security measures are put into place, now and in the future, must not unduly disrupt operations or increase the cost of doing business. Our objective has always been to strike the right balance between protecting the safety of passengers while assuring they transit through airports as quickly and as efficiently as possible. We recognize that the health of the air transport industry, and its ability to support economic and social development around the world, are at stake.

32. The third major point I wish to cover today is our ongoing drive to minimize the impact of aviation on the **environment**. When I say we, I obviously include IATA and other industry stakeholders.

33. Our challenge is a particular one. We are all aware of the tremendous efforts we have made over the past forty years to reduce noise and emissions from aircraft but the world seems intent on forever depicting aviation as the dark horse in the race to save the planet. What is not reported is the significant progress we have made in just the past year or so, while the rest of the world seems at a standstill.

34. For example, at the global climate change talks of last December in Copenhagen, the world community, for whatever reasons, did not produce the outcome expected. At the same time, under the leadership of ICAO and the concerted efforts of all concerned stakeholders, aviation could speak to a globally harmonized agreement that to this day remains the first and only agreement created by an industrial sector to address the issue of climate change.

35. Some of you may recall that at a High-level meeting on the environment held at ICAO last October, States accounting for 93% of the world's commercial air traffic, together with the air transport industry, set the following objectives:

a) to reach a global and annual improvement of 2% in fuel efficiency by the year 2050;

b) to develop a worldwide $CO_2$ standard for aircraft ;

c) to develop a framework for market-based measures in international aviation;

d) to establish measures aimed at assisting developing States and facilitating access to financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity-building;

e) to develop and establish the worldwide use of alternative fuels; this could make the aviation industry the first sector to use sustainable alternative fuels on a global scale;

f) to continue work on the reduction of airport noise annoyance and aviation engine emissions which affect local air quality.

36. We lost no time in acting on those bold yet necessary objectives. The eighth meeting of ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection this past February recommended a number of concrete steps. It includes a timetable for the development of a $CO_2$ Standard for commercial aircraft, with 2013 as a target date. This would establish the first global fuel-efficiency standard for any industry sector. CAEP also proposed NOx (Nitrogen Oxides) standards 15 percent more stringent than the current levels, applicable to new aircraft engines certified after 31 December 2013. The new threshold will help ensure that the most efficient technology is used in the production of aircraft engines in the near future.

37. Some have criticized these new initiatives for not being robust enough. I would point out that in addition to the review of the initiatives by the ICAO Council in the coming months, an informal high-level group composed mainly of Directors General of Civil Aviation from State representatives of the ICAO regions, has been created with a view to progressing the work leading to the upcoming 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly in the Fall, at which time Member States may agree to strengthen the provisions even more, based on the proposals of the high-level group.

38. In the meantime, I invite you to keep abreast of issues through our Environmental Colloquium which will be held in May. It will provide a timely opportunity to review progress to date and stimulate further discussion on the material put forward.

39. As for operational initiatives, until recently, the driver for optimizing flight trajectories was the cost of fuel and its load factor onboard aircraft but in the last few years, along with the growing concern over aviation's impact on the environment, is the increasing recognition of the benefits of improved flight routings. With this renewed momentum comes the need to measure environmental improvements using common metrics, and this is an area in which ICAO is now investing resources.

40. An example of an operational procedure helping to reduce aviation's impact on the environment is continuous descent operations which can improve flight predictability and airspace capacity while reducing noise, fuel burn as well as greenhouse gases. Another advantage is decreased ATC-pilot communication which means less chance of error. I recently approved for publication ICAO's Continuous Descent Operations Manual which explains this concept and it is the first document of its kind to strike a balance between ideal environmentally friendly procedures and the requirements of a specific airport or airspace.

41. For the environment and safety to benefit from all types of operations, air navigation service providers need to know the capabilities of aircraft involved. In 2009, ICAO introduced a significant change to the flight plan form and its content to include this information which will allow air navigation service providers to better meet the requests of the operators for optimized routings. Both groups will have to implement the flight plan changes in their automation systems before November 2010 when the changes become applicable to avoid compromising safety.

42. Ladies and gentlemen, there are many more actions and initiatives I would have liked to share with you today on the theme of partnerships for prosperity. Over the coming days, I will certainly have the opportunity to do so. What I would like to leave you with is the message that ICAO relies on the industry to move its work forward on many of the challenges that lie before us. As I mentioned at the outset, we are interconnected in this global enterprise called international civil aviation and it is by working together that we will be able to best serve the global society.

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