



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO),
DR. TAÏEB CHÉRIF,
TO THE 2nd CONFERENCE ON
INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT COOPERATION**

(Seoul, Korea, 10 and 11 May 2007)

It is a pleasure for me to be here today for this world conference on the theme of international cooperation as it relates to major challenges facing global air transport, namely liberalization, safety and security and the future of air travel.

When one looks back at the 20th century, one realizes how effective international cooperation was in addressing some of the biggest problems ever faced by humanity, whether these were of a political, economic or humanitarian nature. In terms of aviation, the creation of ICAO in 1944 was itself an extraordinary vote of confidence in the power of international cooperation. Visionary leaders from government and business realized that air transport had the potential of transforming our global society for the better and that an effective regulatory structure was necessary to ensure the safe and orderly development of this burgeoning industry.

The world was not disappointed! More than 60 years later, air transport is the catalyst for economic, social and cultural development across the planet. It is the lifeline for many smaller countries and supports the world's largest industry, travel and tourism.

In this early part of the 21st century, air travellers the world over can count on a global air transport system that is as safe and secure as it has ever been. This is due to the commitment of the 190 Members States of ICAO and members of the world aviation community to ensure the highest levels of safety, security and efficiency of air operations.

However, as everyone in this room understands full well, we can never rest on our successes. The next accident or attack on an aircraft may be just around the corner. And the anticipated growth of air transport in the decades to come will increase pressure on all components of the air transport sector to remain as vigilant as ever.

Over the next few minutes, I would like to review some of the ways in which ICAO, as the recognized global forum for civil aviation, will continue to exercise its mandate of bringing together all aviation stakeholders in meeting our common challenge: to manage growth in a systematic and timely manner, while ensuring the safety, security, sustainability and efficiency of air transport operations in a rapidly changing environment.

As with all of you, our first priority is aviation safety. ICAO's strategy for ensuring safety is captured in our Global Aviation Safety Plan – GASP. It is a performance-based approach to safety which focuses on activities that provide the highest return for improving safety. A key element of the GASP is the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, or USOAP. USOAP has already improved aviation safety around the world and was considerably enhanced by the Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation held in March of 2006.

In an unprecedented and unanimous decision, participants at the Conference agreed that ICAO should post the results of safety oversight audits on our public website, with the consent of States, by March 2008. I expect that this vote of confidence in the principle of transparency will encourage States to correct deficiencies more quickly and make it easier for States and donors to provide those in need with the required financial or human resources.

Transparency and sharing of information is also a fundamental principle of the ICAO *Unified strategy to resolve safety-related deficiencies*. The Strategy emphasizes the free-flow of safety-related information by everyone involved in air transport, at every level, and across every discipline. This is an essential condition for creating or strengthening partnerships among various stakeholders to resolve deficiencies.

The third pillar of our strategy is Safety Management Systems, or SMS. SMS represent the most effective way of responding to the need for results-based supervision of personnel and functions with a relatively small workforce. We encourage the adoption of SMS by States with concrete assistance in the form of standards and related guidance material, and a model legislation to make it easier to implement SMS. I am happy to note that China has adopted many SMS principles within their aviation system.

The most recent initiative regarding safety came last December with the presentation to ICAO of the second and final part of the industry Global Aviation Safety Roadmap. The Roadmap marks the first time that governments and industry have jointly developed a unified and coordinated approach to reducing accident rates, particularly in developing regions of the world, in accordance with the Global Aviation Safety Plan.

As you can see, the common thread running through these programmes and measures is cooperation and trust. The same can be said of aviation security which, like safety, is solid. Recent statistics indicate a number of actual acts of unlawful interference lower than at any time in the past few decades. We must, as with safety, remain totally vigilant.

Captain Haile Belai, the Chief of our Aviation Security and Facilitation Branch, will provide insight into our strategy and activities on this critical issue later in this Conference. For my part, I want to emphasize that ICAO is committed to rapid, effective and cooperative action whenever a situation arises. The alleged terrorist plot in the United Kingdom last August, potentially involving liquids used as explosives, is a good example. Within days of the event, ICAO brought together States, law enforcement agencies and industry representatives to develop an effective response. We issued a series of interim measures concerning this new kind of explosive for implementation no later than 1 March 2007. And we are currently developing permanent guidelines and a revised list of items which may not be brought on board aircraft. I expect this material to be ready for publication in June.

In the long term, we are dedicated to helping Member States deal with what can be described as a difficult and unenviable task, that of balancing the need for maintaining and encouraging anti-terrorist vigilance, while concurrently putting in place workable security measures that do not compromise the efficiency of the air transport sector. ICAO's Plan of Action for Strengthening Aviation Security is designed to deal with all security issues, though such activities as the Universal Security Audit Programme and guidance on a series of complementary activities. In the long term, we all must diligently assess new and emerging threats and continually monitor and upgrade existing security processes, to ensure they are commensurate with the level of threat identified, while expediting the clearance of passengers and cargo at airports.

The impact of aviation on the environment is also a potentially serious obstacle to the growth of air transport worldwide. ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection, CAEP, held its seventh meeting this past February and adopted several recommendations that address environmental impacts of aircraft engine emissions. The recommendations were approved by the ICAO Council on 15 March and reflect the three primary approaches promulgated by ICAO to limit or reduce emissions, namely: action at source, operational measures to reduce emissions and market-based measures. They will next be submitted to the 36th Session of the ICAO Assembly in September for discussion by ICAO Member States, with input from international aviation organizations.

On a more technical plane, I would like to point to another milestone which will require cooperation in its implementation. It is the approval by the Council of ICAO of a revised Global Air Navigation Plan. This is the latest step in the development of a global air traffic management system that is based on interoperability and seamlessness across regions for all users during all phases of flight, meets agreed levels of safety, provides for optimum economic operations, is environmentally sustainable, and reflects national security requirements. ICAO has already integrated the revised Global Air Navigation Plan into its new Business Plan, which stresses the implementation of harmonized air traffic management systems and performance-based efficiency improvements. With this plan, the world is called upon to work together for the benefit of all.

The last point which I would like to address is the first on your agenda, liberalization. Liberalization is the cornerstone upon which to build the future growth of the air transport industry. The process has been evolving for some 15 years and is now irreversible. As positive as this development is proving to be, we must ensure that it unfolds according to universally accepted principles. These were formulated at the World air transport Conference of 2003 hosted by ICAO which said the aim was to create an environment in which international air transport may develop and flourish in a stable, efficient and economical manner without compromising safety and security.

Along with the trend towards liberalization, the related phenomena of globalization and commercialisation have had a significant impact on the industry. The airline sector has undergone a major structural transformation and will continue to adjust to a dynamic marketplace. For airports and air navigation services providers, the anticipated growth in passenger and cargo traffic generated in large part by liberalization will require significant investments to satisfy demand in an efficient and timely manner. And for regulators, it means adjusting regulatory structures and objectives of international air transport towards more emphasis being given to the enhancement of consumer benefits and competition, without compromising fundamental tenets of a sound air transport system: safety, security, environmental sustainability and financial health.

Ladies and gentlemen, all of the challenges I have addressed this morning and which you will discuss over the next two days can best be met through international cooperation. Of that we are all convinced I am sure. Our actions, individually and collectively, will determine the extent to which air transport generates economic, social and cultural benefits to citizens of this country and the rest of the world.

I thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a most fruitful conference.