Statement from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to the Twenty-third Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)

(Montreal, 28 November to 6 December 2005)

The International Civil Aviation Organization appreciates the opportunity to bring SBSTA up-to-date on our continuing work regarding aircraft engine emissions.

In response to a request from SBSTA, ICAO provided a substantial report[1] at the twenty-second session in May of this year on the results of an exercise aimed at improving the quality of aviation emissions data reported by Parties to the UNFCCC and on the methodology on which this reporting is based.

ICAO is happy to further cooperate in these discussions and this Statement provides an overview of major developments since SBSTA 22.

Air Traffic and Fuel Information

During the data comparison exercise, it was noted that air traffic data is not always easily available or provided in a format suitable for UNFCCC inventory activities. Accordingly, we indicated that we would be exploring the feasibility and cost implications of making available an ICAO database of worldwide scheduled air services in a format that individual UNFCCC Parties could use. We are pleased to report that ICAO has now moved forward in this activity of developing a database which will include air traffic and fuel consumption information that could assist the inventory activities. ICAO intends to consult inventory experts in due course to ensure that the data is responsive to their needs.

Developments in ICAO/CAEP

As many of you know, ICAO's activities in the environmental field are undertaken by the Organization's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP). In the field of aircraft emissions and, in particular, on issues related to climate change, CAEP has continued studying options for limiting or reducing greenhouse gases from aviation, with a focus on technical, operational and market-based options.

CAEP's Steering Group met recently in Montreal from 3 to 7 October 2005. The meeting agreed on the results to be expected by the Committee's next full meeting in 2007, among which are: guidance material on airport air quality; long-term emissions goals for NOx (Oxides of Nitrogen); the development of a framework for assessing the interdependencies of measures to reduce aircraft noise and engine emissions, and its related modelling tools; and the development of studies and guidance on operational and market-based measures to reduce emissions, in particular, guidance for the introduction of international aviation in an open emissions trading system and guidance on local air quality emissions charges focusing on NOx.

[1] Report was submitted to SBSTA 22 as a miscellaneous document. ref: FCCC/SBSTA/2005/Misc.4

Further work is underway on assessing emissions from air transport, on improving the availability of information related to the present and future impact of aircraft engine emissions, and on promoting guidance material on operational opportunities to reduce fuel and emissions. Of note is that some States are successfully using the ICAO template for voluntary agreements and guidance[2] [3] as a basis for establishing voluntary programmes to reduce aviation emissions. A report on these experiences is currently under preparation in CAEP.

ICAO is also continuing to develop tools to evaluate the potential environmental benefits of satellite-based communication, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) systems at the global and State level. The next meeting of All Planning and Implementation Groups (ALLPIRG/5) will be considering the benefits accrued from the modernization of air traffic management.

Cooperation with other UN Bodies

The Organization continued to cooperate closely with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process and to strengthen its relations with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

ICAO has been involved in the revision process of the 1996 IPCC Guidelines which includes an update of the aviation emissions factors and other parameters relevant to aircraft emissions. ICAO also requested the IPCC to include in its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), due for publication in 2007, an update of the main scientific findings of the IPCC Special Report on Aviation and the Global Atmosphere. Of special interest to ICAO are key areas of scientific uncertainty such as the influence of contrails and aerosols on cirrus clouds and the climate impact from oxides of nitrogen and methane.

Concluding remarks

ICAO is conscious of its leadership role on issues related to civil aviation and climate change. In this regard, ICAO will continue to study policy options to limit or reduce aircraft engine emissions, and will continue to cooperate with relevant UN Organizations active in the field of climate change.

Each year, on 7 December, ICAO celebrates International Civil Aviation Day. In 2005, the theme chosen is "***The Greening of Flight*** - maximizing the compatibility between safe and orderly development of civil aviation and the quality of the environment". Also on that day, the President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Assad Kotaite, will provide a statement during the high level segment of COP/MOP1, outlining the achievements and challenges of the Organization in the field of environmental protection.

ICAO reiterates its commitment to continued cooperation with SBSTA and wishes the Body success in its deliberations.

— END —

[2] Available at www.icao.int under key activities/environment/ publications:
http://www.icao.int/icao/en/env/Caep_Template.pdf
[3] Operational Opportunities to Minimize Fuel Use and Reduce Emissions (Circular 303)