



International Civil Aviation Organization

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## ICAO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **2006 INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY FOCUSES ON AVIATION SAFETY AND SECURITY TO PRESERVE GROWING BENEFITS OF AIR TRANSPORT**

**Montreal, 1 December 2006** – *Safety and security — first and always the top priority* is the theme for the 2006 edition of International Civil Aviation Day, celebrated annually on 7 December to mark the creation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on that day in 1944.

The purpose of the annual celebration is to establish and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation in the social and economic development of States. The role of ICAO in promoting the safety, efficiency and regularity of international air transport is emphasized in this context.

International Civil Aviation Day was first celebrated on 7 December 1994 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the charter of ICAO. In 1996, pursuant to an ICAO initiative and with the assistance of the Canadian Government, the United Nations General Assembly by resolution officially recognized 7 December as International Civil Aviation Day and listed it as an official UN day.

Every year, States are encouraged to develop programmes of activities. Flag raisings, award presentations, air shows, exhibitions, tours and symposia can all be part of these programmes throughout the year. A brief description of International Civil Aviation Day, news releases as well as messages from the President of the Council and the Secretary General from previous celebrations can be viewed at the ICAO website: [www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int).

#### **Joint message from the President of the Council**

**Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,**

**and the Secretary General**

**Dr. Taïeb Chérif, on the occasion of**

**the worldwide celebration of**

**International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 2006**

Safety and security are the bedrock of a healthy and growing global air transport system that benefits, directly or indirectly, practically every inhabitant of the planet.

The record of aviation safety is truly remarkable. In 1947, there were 590 fatalities in 34 accidents, at a time when the world's airlines carried some 21 million passengers. Between 2000 and 2005, scheduled carriers alone of ICAO Contracting States transported more than 10.5 billion passengers on some 135 million flights. Still, there were relatively fewer accidents and fatalities annually on average than in 1947. The year 2004, with 203 fatalities and nine accidents, was the safest in the history of commercial aviation.

All stakeholders in civil aviation are committed to further improving the safety of each and every flight. For ICAO, this means ensuring that all of its Contracting States meet the globally harmonized Standards of the Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. For more than 60 years, ICAO has been developing and updating provisions of the Convention, in a spirit of global cooperation and consensus, with regulators, industry, service providers and other interested parties.

Aviation security, or the prevention of acts of unlawful interference against aircraft or installations, was not originally included in the Convention, as it was probably deemed inconceivable at the time that lethal acts of violence would be perpetrated against aircraft or facilities. Eventually, in response to the phenomenon of hijackings and other illicit actions, security standards were adopted in 1974 and designated as Annex 17 (Security) to the Convention.

Following the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States of America, security standards were upgraded and new ones adopted. While vigilance is more than ever the *modus operandi*, the security of aircraft has been improved considerably, through measures ranging from reinforced cockpit doors, tighter procedures at airports and screening of baggage, to the more widespread use of machine readable travel documents and electronic passports. The long-term focus is on new and emerging threats to aviation security worldwide.

The theme of the 2006 International Civil Aviation Day, *Safety and security — first and always the top priority*, pays tribute to the men and women of aviation who protect the well-being of billions of passengers who travel the skies of the world for pleasure or business. It also recognizes the understanding and cooperation of air travellers for the measures put in place to ensure their safety at all times.

ICAO is proud of this unique achievement, based on the singled-minded pursuit of working with its Contracting States and all other partners of the international civil aviation community in providing the citizens of the world with an aviation system that is safe and secure.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 189 Contracting States.

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