



International Civil Aviation Organization

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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY 2009 HIGHLIGHTS ICAO'S HISTORIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

MONTREAL, 1 December 2009 – “65 years of empowering the global community through aviation” is the theme of the 2009 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.

From the outset, the vision has been for international aviation to promote friendship and understanding among peoples of the world, as well as peace and prosperity based on a global air transport system that would be operated soundly and economically, with equality of opportunity for all.

The vision gradually became reality through ICAO securing global cooperation and consensus among its 190 Member States to build and maintain a robust regulatory framework, thereby bringing the enormous economic, social and cultural benefits of air transport to entire populations all over the world.

In keeping with the rapid evolution of air transport through the years, Member States agreed on some 10,000 technical and operational standards, on hundreds of agreements dealing with often complex political and economic issues, and on assistance programmes to help apply the rules and regulations – concrete actions and tangible global results under the auspices of ICAO.

At the same time, States ensured that aviation would develop in an environmentally sustainable manner, by agreeing on stringent engine emissions standards, effective operational measures and comprehensive environmental policies through the ICAO process.

Today, the millions of passenger and cargo flights that criss-cross our skies have become the lifeline of economies on all continents. They provide businesses with access to the global marketplace, especially vital for land-locked or small-island States, and they are an integral component of the world's largest industry, travel and tourism.

Aviation supports tens of millions of direct and indirect jobs in airlines, airports, air navigation services, aerospace companies, and produces a substantial spin-off effect on companies in the air transport supply chain and a host of related industries.

Another valuable contribution of aviation is the host of social benefits it generates, from the enjoyment of leisure and cultural experiences, to the rapid and effective delivery of emergency and humanitarian air relief in many regions of the planet.

The economic and social dimensions of aviation can also contribute to the realization of many of the United Nations Millennium Goals – promoting business development to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, which in turn can sustain other aspects of societal progress. By its very nature, air travel can foster a global partnership among like-minded people dedicated to a common cause.

Looking ahead, the time-honored consensus-building approach of ICAO will play a major role in addressing one of the greatest challenges ever faced by our global community – climate change.

Already under ICAO, the first and to date only globally-harmonized agreement designed to address climate change from a specific sector of the world economy was achieved.

In October 2009, a High-level meeting of States representing 93% of commercial air traffic around the world reached agreement on how governments will further work together and with industry to reduce aviation's impact on climate change.

Member States of ICAO agreed to:

1. A global 2 % annual improvement in fuel efficiency until the year 2050.
2. A global CO2 standard for aircraft.
3. A framework for market-based measures in international aviation.
4. Coordination of plans and activities by all States on CO2 emissions through ICAO.
5. Measures to assist developing states and facilitate access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building.
6. Facilitate the development and deployment of alternative fuels, which can substantially reduce the impact of aviation emissions on the environment and help address issues of economics and supply security.

These recommendations and others will be reviewed by the ICAO Assembly in 2010, as part of the continuous drive for facilitating global agreement towards internationally harmonized solutions for a sustainable aviation sector and a healthy planet for generations to come.

Since its creation, ICAO's role has been consistent, only the challenges to overcome have changed. After 65 years, it remains the global forum where States have and will continue to come together, in cooperation with the industry and other stakeholders, to address any and all issues facing the international air transport sector.

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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 190 Contracting States.