



International Civil Aviation Organization

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ICAO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PIO 12/07

2007 INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY FOCUSES ON BENEFITS OF AIR TRANSPORT AROUND THE WORLD

Montreal, 30 November 2007 – *Global Air Transport – a driver of sustainable economic, social and cultural development* is the theme for the 2007 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 50th 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.

Note to Editors: ICAO has developed guidelines to help States evaluate the contribution of their civil aviation industries to a given local, regional or national economy. Circular 292 – Vol. 2, is available through ICAO's Document Sales Unit at www.icao.int/icao/en/m_publications.html

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.

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**Joint message from the President of the Council, Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,
and the Secretary General, Dr. Taïeb Chérif**

Seeing a giant jet aircraft take off or land still inspires awe in many of us. It also triggers dreams of escapes to distant lands or trips to visit family and friends. As the holiday season approaches, the airplane carries greeting cards and gifts to loved ones who cannot be with us on this special occasion.

Captured by the magic of flight, we seldom stop to think of the enormous benefits of air transport on the economic well-being of millions of people around the world.

In 2006, 2.1 billion passengers traveled on scheduled flights alone. To this must be added charter and other aircraft operations. At the same time, nearly 40 million tonnes of freight were carried by air, from fresh produce for the dining room table to computer equipment for the home and office.

Today, some 32 million jobs are linked to civil aviation. Employment in airlines, airports, air navigation services and aerospace industries (5.5 million jobs), plus indirect and induced multiplier effects, account for about 15 million jobs. Some 17 million additional jobs are supported in a wide range of industries related to trade and tourism such as hotels, restaurants and many more.

Civil aviation's extended global economic impact is estimated in the order of US\$ 3.5 trillion, equivalent to nearly 8 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product.*

All of this has been made possible because air travel today is safe, secure, efficient and accessible. The mission of ICAO and of the other members of the world aviation community is to continuously improve the performance of the global air transport system in all of these areas, so that it continues to provide the immense socio-economic benefits our global society has come to need and expect.

These benefits, however, may be jeopardized if they are achieved at the expense of the environment.

For more than forty years, ICAO has exercised its leadership in developing and constantly updating standards and recommended practices for aircraft engine emissions. Thanks to technological and operational innovations, today's modern aircraft are about 75 per cent more fuel efficient in terms of carbon dioxide intensity than first-generation turbo-jet aircraft, nitrogen oxides emissions have been reduced by some 40 per cent, and soot and hydrocarbons virtually eliminated. Such achievements are quite remarkable, yet not enough to counter the effects of projected traffic growth around the world.

At the last ICAO Assembly in September of this year, delegates recognized that aviation environmental protection is a complex endeavour involving a number of interconnected technical, operational, economic, social and political factors. Delegates requested ICAO, among other things, to continue assessing the impact of aircraft engine emissions on the environment, proposing related policy options, and updating standards and related guidance for Contracting States on the application of measures aimed at reducing or limiting the environmental impact of emissions. The Assembly also called for the creation of a group of senior government officials to recommend, by the end of December 2009, a wide-ranging Programme of Action on International Aviation and Climate Change expected to lead to vital improvements in the environmental performance of international civil aviation.

As we move towards greater sustainability, we must ensure that action is taken in a cooperative and harmonized manner. We all share the responsibility of maintaining an appropriate balance between the development of aviation and environmental protection - governments, industry and individuals, so that future generations can also enjoy the economic, social and cultural benefits of air travel.

* Estimates by the Air Transport Action Group.