



International Civil Aviation Organization

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## ICAO NEWS RELEASE

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### MAJOR SAFETY MEASURES AND RECORD NUMBER OF PASSENGERS HIGHLIGHTS OF 2005

**Montreal, 21 December 2005** – The development and implementation of major safety measures highlight a year when the total number of passengers on the scheduled airlines of the 189 Member States of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) reached a record two billion, a seven per cent increase over 2004.

“The global air transport system is fundamentally safe, yet a number of fatal accidents in August and September of this year focused attention on the urgent need to eliminate remaining systemic deficiencies, so as to further improve aviation safety worldwide,” said the President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Assad Kotaite.

“Accordingly, from 20 to 22 March 2006, ICAO will hold a worldwide safety conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCAs) to assess the current status of aviation safety, identify ways to achieve significant improvements and develop a global strategy for aviation safety,” he added.

The Conference will take into account the following safety measures adopted or initiated in 2005:

- Expansion of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) under a comprehensive systems approach to help States better respond to safety threats. Full audit reports will henceforth be given to all Contracting States, for more concerted action on safety issues.
- New ICAO policies promoting greater transparency and sharing of safety-related information and increased regional cooperation among States and stakeholders in correcting safety deficiencies, as part of the Organization’s new *Unified Strategy*.
- Proposed standards and guidance material for safety management systems (SMS).
- Procedures for the application of Article 54 j) of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* to deal with States having significant compliance shortcomings with respect to ICAO safety-related standards.

Also supporting greater safety was the distribution to all Contracting States of a Runway Safety Toolkit on CD-ROM, produced by ICAO and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the United States, to assist with runway incursion prevention.

#### Security and facilitation

As of today, no hijacking or act of sabotage was reported for 2005. Under the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme, 42 audits were performed this year, bringing the total to 103 since the beginning of the programme in 2002.

To further improve security and accelerate the flow of passengers at airports, a new standard was approved for all Contracting States to issue only ICAO-standard machine readable passports (MRPs), no later than 1 April 2010. Some 110 States currently do so. ICAO provides technical assistance for remaining States to implement the standard. A Symposium on ICAO-Standard Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) and Biometric Enhancement was held in Montreal on 29 and 30 September to assist States in the transition to MRPs and electronic passports.

### **Air navigation**

The minimum vertical distance between aircraft flying in the airspace of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean was reduced by half, from 2,000 to 1,000 feet, resulting in more efficient flight operations and related benefits for airlines, passengers and the environment. The ICAO standard for vertical separation minimum was also implemented in the airspace over Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the High Seas portion of the Russian Federation Rostov Flight Information Region.

### **Environment**

The Council unanimously adopted new standards for nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions which are 12 per cent more stringent than the previous levels agreed to in 1999. These new standards will be applicable to new engines as of 2008.

### **Legal and institutional framework**

The *Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment* and the associated Protocol on Matters specific to Aircraft Equipment received the total number of required ratifications (8) and will come into force on 1 March 2006. This new treaty law aims to facilitate aircraft financing.

A Protocol amending Article 56 of the Chicago Convention to increase the Air Navigation Commission from 15 to 19 members entered into force on 18 April 2005.

Timor-Leste adhered to the Chicago Convention, becoming thereby the 189<sup>th</sup> Contracting State of ICAO.

### **Technical cooperation**

The Technical Co-operation Programme was \$US 158 million in 2005.

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.

**Year-end Message from the  
President of the Council of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization  
Dr. Assad Kotaite**

December 2005

Aviation safety was again our major preoccupation during 2005. Whereas the first half of the year seemed to reflect the performance of 2003 and 2004 as the safest years since the creation of ICAO in 1944, the second half was more reminiscent of 1996, when an unusually high number of accidents prompted global action to deal with a worrisome trend.

Indeed, the series of fatal accidents last August and September focused attention on the urgent need to eliminate remaining systemic deficiencies in the global air transport system, which otherwise remains fundamentally sound. As it did in 1997, ICAO will hold in 2006 a worldwide safety conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCA's) to assess the current status of aviation safety, identify ways to achieve significant improvements and develop a global strategy for aviation safety.

I expect this upcoming Conference to be the most important on aviation safety since the DGCA conference of 1997, which created the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) to assist States in enhancing their respective safety oversight systems. In addition to the USOAP, the Conference will look at other safety measures and initiatives developed in 2005, including recent policies on transparency and sharing of safety-related information, the Organization's new Unified Strategy and the implementation of safety management systems (SMS).

Air transport is an integral component of our global society and a catalyst for the economic, social and cultural development of peoples and nations of the world. At the same time, air transport generates some pollution, primarily in the form of noise and aircraft engine emissions. The most effective way to minimize the impact of international aviation on the global environment is through global cooperation and consensus.

In 2005, ICAO adopted new oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) standards which are 12 per cent more stringent than the previous levels agreed to in 1999. Given the fact that growth of air transport is currently outpacing progress in aviation environmental protection, global cooperation and consensus under the leadership of ICAO is essential now more than ever to ensure timely, concerted and harmonized action worldwide to substantially and progressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions from aviation.

ICAO's on-going work on security, air navigation, air transport and legal issues round out a productive year in promoting the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation.