



**Statement by the President of the Council
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),
Dr. Assad Kotaite,
to the Second Session of the Conference of the Parties
to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

(Geneva, 8 July 1996)

I would like to thank the Executive Secretary of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mr. Zammit Cutajar, for extending an invitation to the Secretary General of ICAO, Dr. Philippe Rochat, to address this meeting. Unfortunately, for medical reasons, Dr. Rochat could not be with us today. As President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, it gives me a great pleasure to address, on behalf of the Organization, the Second Session of the Conference of the Parties.

The main theme of my statement today is the scope for increased co-operation between ICAO and the Conference of the Parties.

I will begin by explaining what ICAO is currently doing. The Organization was originally created in 1944 under the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Today, 184 States work within ICAO towards ensuring the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world.

Much of ICAO's work is based on the need for standardization world-wide. This is achieved through adoption by the ICAO Council of International Standards and Recommended Practices as Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Annex 16 to the Convention contains ICAO's environmental protection Standards, concerning both aircraft noise and engine emissions. Co-operation between States is essential for the application of ICAO Standards on a global basis and unilateral measures should be avoided.

The Standards for emissions were first adopted in 1981 and apply to new aircraft engines. They were originally aimed at improving local air quality near airports and are therefore based on the aircraft's landing and take-off cycle and cover oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons and smoke.

However, as you are aware, the focus of attention regarding aircraft emissions has recently changed, with the emergence of new environmental problems of a global nature to which aircraft emissions may be contributing. These include not only climate change, but also long-range air pollution and depletion of the ozone layer. In all of these cases, the emissions that are most important are those in the cruise phase of flight.

This whole subject of aircraft emissions, both at the local and global levels, is being given considerable attention by ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection.

At the present time, the biggest obstacle to progress is the need for better scientific information. ICAO has therefore been exploring the scope for a more pro-active role with regard to the scientific assessment of the atmospheric effects of aircraft emissions. In the case of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), recent contacts have focused on the possibility of IPCC devoting a special report on aviation emissions, perhaps in 1998. In the case of the Montreal Protocol, a meeting of the parties in December 1995 requested their Scientific Assessment Panel "to work as appropriate" with ICAO on the subject of aircraft emissions.

In addition to the need for closer co-operation with the two assessment processes, there is also a need to ensure that the scientific community is undertaking the necessary research for consideration in the assessments. In order to encourage this research, ICAO has promoted the creation of three-dimensional inventories of aircraft emissions and, in April 1996, co-sponsored a Symposium on the Global Atmospheric Effects of Aviation at Virginia Beach in the United States.

Once there is a clearer understanding of aviation's contribution, ICAO will try to find appropriate solutions as necessary, taking into account the likely costs and benefits. Three kinds of potential solutions are being considered by ICAO.

Firstly, ICAO is considering to what extent technology can help, through improved engine design. Fortunately, the actions taken by engine manufacturers to reduce emissions at airports have helped to reduce emissions at higher altitudes. There have also been considerable improvements in fuel efficiency over the years. However, some of these improvements have come from raising the temperature at which fuel is burnt. This encourages the production of oxides of nitrogen, which also play a role in climate change. Against this background, ICAO has tightened the original Standards for oxides of nitrogen in Annex 16 by 20 per cent and is currently consulting States on whether the Standards should be further reduced. Work is also in progress on how to adapt the Standards so as to include cruise emissions.

Secondly, while the emphasis will remain on what technology can do, ICAO has also started to examine operational measures specifically designed to reduce the amount of fuel consumed or to reduce the impact of emissions. It is also anticipated that the new ICAO satellite-based communications, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) systems that are currently being introduced will have a beneficial effect.

The third category of possible solutions is the increased use of environmental charges. While ICAO policy guidance for noise charges already exists¹, emission-related charges are still being studied. However, it was recently agreed within ICAO² that where emission-related charges are being considered, and it is not possible to await the outcome of future studies, the most prudent approach would be for States to base such charges on certain principles (including no fiscal aims; no distortion of competition with other transport modes; and a relation to costs).

In addition to ICAO's work on charges, it has recently been agreed by the Council that ICAO's existing taxation policies³ should be reviewed in the near future taking into account the environmental impact of aviation.

I would now like to turn to co-operation between ICAO and the Conference of the Parties.

ICAO, in its work on emissions, has of course been aware of the concerns expressed in other United Nations fora. In October 1995, the ICAO Assembly instructed the Council of ICAO to examine all aspects of ICAO's relationship with other United Nations policy-making bodies in the environmental field. The Assembly placed particular emphasis on the Climate Change Convention and was mindful of the decision that was taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first Session on the allocation and control of emissions from international "bunker fuels", in other words international aviation.

In May 1996, the Council of ICAO considered this matter.

Regarding the allocation of international aviation emissions to national inventories, the Council concluded that while the ICAO Secretariat would be available to provide any technical advice that you might request, the choice of allocation methodology was a matter for States to decide within your own forum.

Regarding the control of international aviation emissions, the Council noted that there is a risk that States might find themselves entering into commitments in this forum that may be inconsistent with commitments and policies agreed in ICAO. Nevertheless, it is clear that the concerns raised about aviation's contribution to climate change need to be properly addressed and, if necessary, appropriate action will need to be taken to mitigate the problem. It is therefore essential that States reach a common understanding about how these concerns will be addressed, taking into account the respective mandates of ICAO and the Conference of the Parties, the skills and resources available in each case, and the need to avoid duplication of efforts. Since ICAO is the United Nations specialized agency responsible for international civil aviation and has traditionally dealt with aviation emissions and is also better placed to take into account emission-related problems other than climate change, it follows that ICAO should play a major role. However, ICAO will need to work within a decision-making framework that somehow involves the Conference of the Parties.

Against this background, the Council of ICAO confirmed its willingness to co-operate with the Conference of the Parties and requested the Secretary General of ICAO to liaise with the Climate Change Secretariat with a view to reaching a common understanding on the respective roles of ICAO and the Conference of the Parties.

The Council also recognized the need for more reliable scientific information to assist policy-makers. It expressed its support for IPCC undertaking a special report on aviation and agreed that ICAO should provide inputs to that report as necessary.

In closing, I would like to make an appeal to the States represented here today along similar lines to one that I have made in ICAO. In order to achieve closer co-operation between the Conference of the Parties and ICAO, there needs to be closer liaison at the national level between the government departments concerned. It is important that each State ensures that the views it expresses in this forum and in ICAO are broadly consistent. I believe that increased co-operation between ICAO and the Conference of the Parties is assured. Together, we must make it work.

1. *Statements by the Council to Contracting States on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services* (Doc 9082/4).
2. 31st Session of the ICAO Assembly, September/October 1995.
3. *ICAO's Policies on Taxation in the Field of International Air Transport* (Doc 8632-C/968).