

Statement by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

(COP/3, Kyoto, 9 December 1997)

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a United Nations specialized agency responsible for international civil aviation, with 185 Contracting States. It has been active on environmental matters associated with aviation since 1968.

The ICAO Council first adopted Standards and Recommended Practices for aircraft engine emissions (Volume II of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation) in 1981. These Standards were primarily aimed at improving air quality in the immediate vicinity of airports. In recent years, the focus of ICAO's work on the question of aircraft emissions has changed, with the emergence of new environmental problems of a global nature, including climate change, to which aircraft emissions are contributing. ICAO, in attempting to address these issues, is considering, *inter alia*, the role of possible technological improvements, through improved engine design; operational measures designed specifically to reduce the amount of fuel consumed or to reduce the impacts of emissions; and increased use of environmental charges.

Since the Second Session of the Conference of the Parties, a number of important developments have taken place:

*In view of the need for better scientific information on the impact of aircraft engine emissions (carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, water vapour etc.), ICAO has requested the assistance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), who have agreed to undertake a Special Report on *Aviation and the Global Atmosphere* in collaboration with the Scientific Assessment Panel of the Montreal Protocol and with some technical input from ICAO.

*The Council of ICAO has consulted States on whether the present ICAO Standards for nitrogen oxides, which were tightened in 1993, should be further tightened, but so far a consensus has not emerged. This matter is now being reviewed by an expert group which is expected to report back to the ICAO Council during the first half of 1998.

*In December 1996, the Council of ICAO adopted an interim policy statement on environmental charges and taxes, in the form of a resolution. ICAO is seeking to identify a rational common basis on which States wishing to introduce environmental levies on air transport could do so. The Council strongly recommended that any environmental levies on air transport which States may introduce should be in the form of charges rather than taxes and that the funds collected should be applied in the first instance to mitigating the environmental impact of aircraft engine emissions. The present expectation is that the work on charges which is currently in progress at expert level will be reported to the next session of the ICAO Assembly in September 1998.

Mr President, I take this opportunity to reconfirm that ICAO, in pursuing its work on environmental protection and in accordance with its mandate, is willing to co-operate with the Conference of the Parties and to play its part in addressing the climate change aspects of emissions from international civil aviation.

However, it is essential that States reach a common understanding about how international aviation emissions 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.

Mr President, if States were to agree here in Kyoto that Parties should work through ICAO to address international aviation emissions, this would seem to be a sensible and pragmatic approach. ICAO would be willing to go forward on that basis and to keep the SBSTA and the COP informed of progress.

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