IAIN Officers Meeting and General Assembly  
October 27th, 2009  
Report on ICAO Activities

Since the last IAIN General Assembly, the aviation industry has suffered its severest setback in history, victim of the global recession. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) predicts industry losses of US$11 billion for this year alone, with $16.8 billion lost last year. Adjusting to the significant downturn in travel and revenues has become a number 1 priority for the industry. Some carriers are better equipped than others to weather the storm. Notably those larger carriers which may have accumulated a sufficient war chest will generally have fared better than mid-sized and smaller carriers. Air freight, one the global economies bellwethers has fared especially badly. The numbers of aircraft now permanently parked in the Arizona desert and elsewhere grows daily. New aircraft investment, a key ingredient in reducing operating costs and meeting stringent new environmental legislation challenges has significantly slowed. Interest is growing faster in increasing airline alliances to extend networks, ease competition and reduce operating costs; an issue that comes under close scrutiny in terms of anti-trust (anti-competitive) legislation in US and EU in particular. A somewhat different industry is likely to emerge from the ashes of the past industry. Optimists see some light at the end of the recessional tunnel, but any serious recovery remains a distant prospect.

For ICAO, as always, air safety remains the highest priority. However ongoing initiatives to enhance operational efficiency, reduce industry operating costs, and provide industry leadership in environmental issues are high on the list driven by the prospect of a return to higher priced fuel, and implementation of penalizing carbon taxes on emissions notably through the European Union.

ICAO convene 2 important events this Fall, namely a High Level (Ministerial) meeting on International Aviation and Climate Change to review ICAO’s Plan of Action, and a Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels. The latter topic remains a huge challenge for the industry with, to date, no serious contender to replace fossil fuels in sight. However, significant effort has been put into new operational measures and technology to reduce flight times and fuel consumption, and thereby carbon emissions.

In terms of Security and Facilitation, ICAO continues to take a leading role in the evolution of Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD) and the global mechanisms to share information between its 186 member states through a system know as the Public Key Directory (PKD). This enables border protection agents to rapidly validate passport details through the issuing country. Incorporation of biometric data, including enhanced photographs, finger prints and eye-scans are some of the tools, as are some fascinating enhancements to the passport documents themselves that combine to reduce the potential of forgery. An ICAO MRTD Conference has just concluded.

ICAO has now commenced its preparation for the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) World Radio Conference in 2011. With demand for scarce spectrum growing ever faster in this new world of instant communications, frequency bands allocated to aviation and critical to air safety applications are under constant threat
at national levels. ICAO will seek to ensure continued and harmonized global availability.

Recent topics of significant general interest also under debate and published this year in the *ICAO Journal* include the very important process of enhancing language proficiency between flight-deck crews, air traffic service providers and engineering/maintenance staff. At issue, why ICAO and aviation English education specialists are now working together to support shared (Level 4) implementation and validation objectives. In terms of advancing operational efficiency, the *Journal* reports on the win-win potential of Performance-based Navigation. And in terms of overall planetary priorities, ICAO and aviation stakeholders have opened the debate on our best options for a sustainable air transport future.

In August, Mr Raymond Benjamin of France replaced Dr Taib Cherif as Secretary General of the Organization.

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IAIN Representative at ICAO
7th October 2009