Universally recognized as one of the most prominent and respected figures in the world of civil aviation, Council President Emeritus of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Dr. Assad Kotaite, died on 27th February at the age of 89.

A respected leader and visionary who devoted his life to the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world, Kotaite’s remarkable career mirrored the evolution of ICAO for over half a century. He was also deeply instrumental in promoting the critical role of air transport as a driver of economic, social and cultural development worldwide.

Born in Lebanon in 1924, Kotaite obtained his degree in law from the French University of Beirut, as well as a doctorate from the University of Paris. His prestigious career with ICAO began in 1953 when he was appointed to the Organization’s Legal Committee, a position he held until 1970. Concurrently, from 1956 to 1970, he was the Representative of Lebanon on the Council of ICAO, interrupted for two years in 1963 and 1964 when he served as Chief of Administrative Services for the Directorate General of Transport of Lebanon. During that 14-year period, Kotaite represented Lebanon at all sessions of the ICAO Assembly. In 1970, he was appointed Secretary General of ICAO and then elected President of the Council for eleven successive mandates – from 1976 until his retirement 30 years later in 2006. His tenure is the longest among senior executives in the history of the United Nations system.

A consummate diplomat, Kotaite was inspired and guided throughout his career by the Preamble to the Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944, also known as the Chicago Convention. The Preamble sets forth that international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve peace, friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world. Kotaite was widely recognized as a champion of co-operation and dialogue among ICAO’s Member States and within the world aviation community. He also gained a well-earned reputation as a master conciliator and consensus-builder, steering global aviation through an increasingly complex, competitive and politically challenging regulatory environment.

The recipient of numerous honours and awards during his long tenure, all of which were detailed in his *My Memoirs* (ICAO, 2013), in September of last year Kotaite received the highest honour in the world of civil aviation, the Edward Warner Award. This accolade is bestowed by the ICAO Council on an
individual or organization in recognition of outstanding contributions to the safe
and orderly development of civil air transport.

After retiring from active service with ICAO, Kotaite established the Assad
Kotaite Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Fund. This scholarship
programme acknowledges the importance of assistance and co-operation in the
field of specialized aviation training, with the objective of advancing the safety
and development of civil aviation by strengthening the capabilities of national
civil aviation personnel.