MESSAGE FROM DAVID F. MELCHER

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The year 2016 has been monumental for aviation and the environment. This February, ICAO's CAEP recommended an ambitious CO_2 emissions standard for commercial aircraft. This standard resulted from six years of committed work by a task force of experts from governments, industry and NGOs. In addition, we are hopeful that a global market-based measure is passed in order help solidify future industry commitments.

The aviation sector came together in 2009 and did something unprecedented and meaningful—voluntarily agreeing to significant cuts to CO_2 emissions, including carbon-neutral growth beginning in 2020 (CNG2020). Until that time, the aviation community had agreed to reduce emissions by 1.5 percent annually and to halve them by 2050 (as compared to 2005 levels). Fuel efficiency drives our industry, but environmental sustainability is also critical to customers and our membership.

The CAEP-endorsed CO_2 certification standard aims to reduce these emissions by encouraging the integration of fuel-efficient technologies into aircraft design and development. It is part of a broader set of actions aimed at tackling aviation's environmental impact. They include improvements in flight operations, deployment of biofuels and the reduction of noise and other emissions, together with the development of a carbon offsetting scheme for international aviation.

ICCAIA manufacturers have made great progress toward reducing our carbon footprint and will continue to achieve through continuous fuel efficiency improvements. Our industry is 80 percent more fuel efficient today than when the first jets were introduced. And the new standard will make certain that this impressive trajectory continues. The advanced technology that manufacturers incorporate in aircraft is a large part of the equation when it comes to reducing emissions from the aviation sector. We will ensure the technology will be ready.

Airlines, operators and governments across the globe are also key pieces to reducing our environmental impact. Operational procedures, incorporation of new satellite technologies into our air navigation system and other infrastructure improvements are critical to making sure airlines and other operators are as efficient as possible.

The continuous testing and deployment of biofuels is another ingredient to emissions improvement that will move us forward. There are now several possible sources of alternative sustainable jet fuels that have met rigorous safety standards for use as a jet fuel replacement. The technology is there, but we need to see more progress in developing scalability of biofuels before they can gain more traction in the commercial market and make a big difference.

Although aviation is a small contributor to climate change (only 2 percent of man-made CO_2, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), we continue to produce major improvements. We will also continue to make strides in reducing noise and other emissions, with the development of a non-volatile particulate matter (nvPM) standard under CAEP, and further the work done on supersonics. Policies and progress are continuing the correct way at ICAO – balancing environmental benefit, technological feasibility, economic reasonableness with consideration of interdependencies. ICCAIA has made lasting contributions to CAEP in setting global environmental standards on aircraft noise and emissions for over 40 years and will continue to do so.