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CANADA AND ICAO

The International Civil Aviation Organization is one of 13 inter-governmental organizations linked with the United Nations through special agreements arranged by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly and by the organizations concerned. The Specialized Agencies of the United Nations are expert in their respective fields: labor, health, education, food and agriculture, finance and banking, civil aviation, postal matters, telecommunications, meteorology, international development and maritime matters.

Need for International Action

Civil aviation offers to the world a means of moving people and goods at great speed and over long distances, but it is an activity that has a peculiar need for international collaboration. Increasingly more advanced aircraft make new demands on communications, weather forecasting, air-traffic control, radio navigation and landing aids, safety standards and airport passenger and cargo facilities. Together they form a tightly-integrated aviation system requiring experience and skill to operate. Civil aviation, in its present state at least, is predominantly a means of long-range transport; in most parts of the world, air-routes must cross international borders to meet customer demands and to ensure economic viability. Air services must be both safe and regular. Safety and regularity require that ground services be of a high order and that high standards be established in such matters as qualifications for pilots' licences and air-worthiness specifications for aircraft. Regional disparities in aviation development and available resources demand close international co-operation and standardization.

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History

These fundamental facts regarding civil aviation received recognition as early as 1919, when a number of nations attending the Peace Conference at Versailles established the International Commission for Aerial Navigation. This body operated mainly in Europe, where rapid progress in aviation and a multiplicity of national frontiers combined to make the need greatest. Until 1939 there was no serious need for organization on a worldwide basis because the great oceans imposed formidable barriers to the largest aircraft of the day and made inter-continental air services uneconomic, if not impossible.