

ICAO EMBLEM AND ITS HISTORY

by Albert Pelsser

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a Specialized Agency of the United Nations (UN) and was the first UN Organization to have its headquarters in Montreal, Canada. ICAO was established in 1944 by 52 nations whose aim was to assure the safe, orderly and economic development of international air transport. This article outlines the history of the emblems which have been used by ICAO until the present time. The origins of the UN emblem are also provided hereafter, as it constitutes the basis of the ICAO emblem.

HISTORY OF THE UN EMBLEM

The story of the United Nations emblem started with the symbol created by the Presentation Branch of the United States Office of Strategic Services in April 1945 in response to a request for a lapel pin to be designed for the "United Nations Conference on International Organization" to be held in San Francisco. Among the various designs that came out, an azimuthal equidistant projection of the world map centred on the North Pole and showing all countries in a circle with a softening touch of crossed branches of olive was retained as the unofficial emblem (Figure 1) and appeared on the original copy of the UN Charter signed on 26 June 1945 and on early UN documents. The projection of the map extends 40° South Latitude and includes four concentric circles. It should be noted that the 100th meridian west of Greenwich was made the vertical axis of the projection.



Figure 1

The first Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Trygve Lie, submitted a report to the First Session of the UN General Assembly held in 1946, which suggested the adoption of an emblem for the United Nations. The Sixth Committee, responsible for legal questions, brought several modifications to the original design which had been used at San Francisco to include all the countries to the sixtieth parallel and to make the Greenwich meridian as vertical axis in order to avoid the truncation of countries and

to represent them as far as possible in their proper relationship to the cardinal points. The present distinctive emblem of the United Nations was approved (Resolution 92-(I)) on 7 December 1946 by the First Session of the UN General Assembly, held in New York. Figure 2 shows the UN official emblem on a souvenir sheet issued by Equatorial Guinea (Michel BL200) on 24 October 1975 for the 30th anniversary of the UN; it also displays several emblems used by other Specialized Agencies of the United Nations System, including that of ICAO.

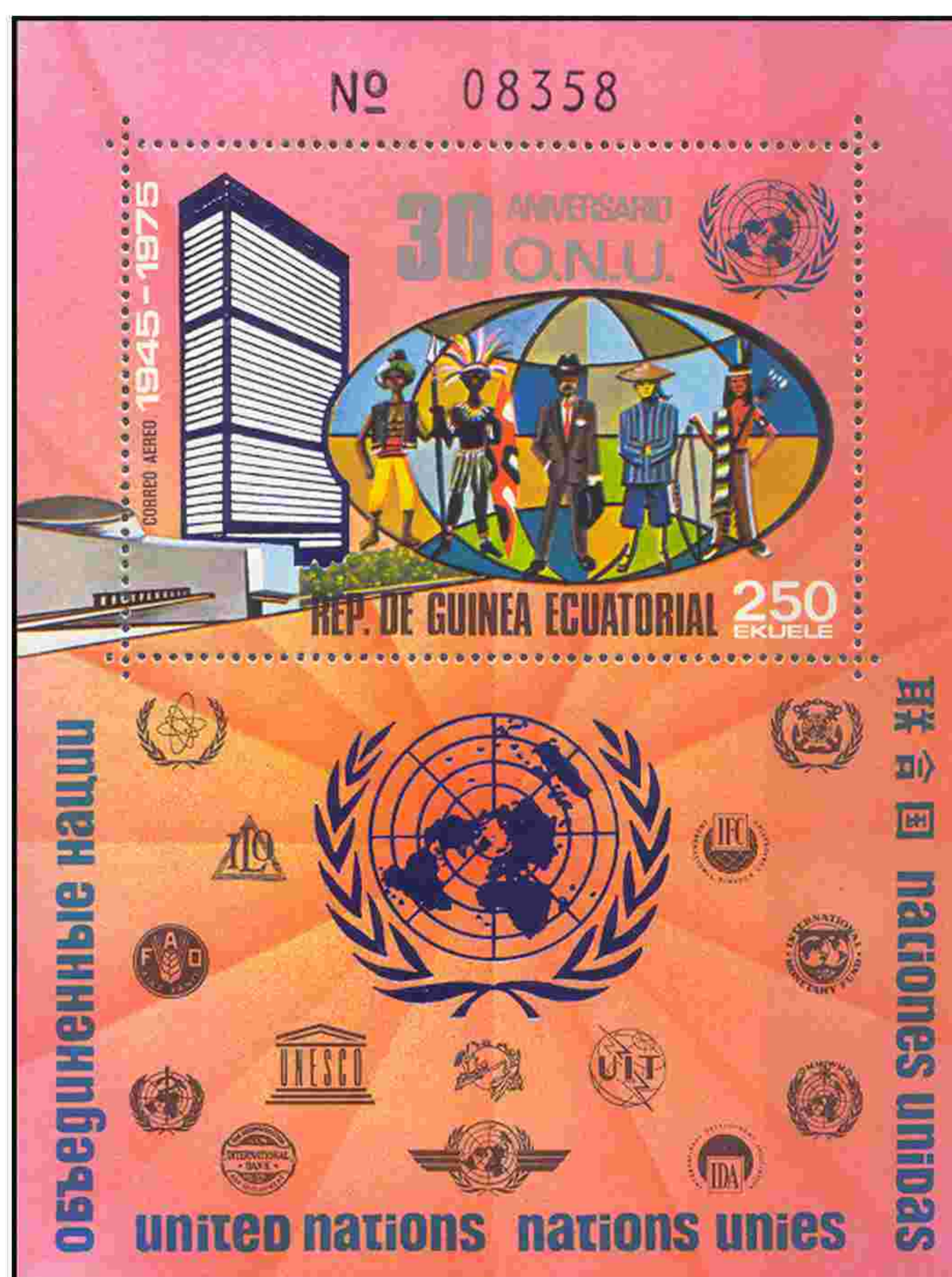


Figure 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE UN EMBLEM

The design adopted for the UN emblem may be described as follows: a map of the world on a north polar azimuthal equidistant projection inscribed in a wreath of crossed conventional branches of an olive tree; the projection extends to 60 degrees south latitude and includes five

concentric circles, all except the central circle being divided into octants, with the Greenwich meridian as the lower vertical axis. The two symbols composing the UN emblem are the *olive branch* which can be traced back to ancient Greece as a symbol of peace and the *world map* which depicts the area of concern to the United Nations in achieving its primary intended purpose of maintaining international peace and security. The map projection, occasionally referred to as Guillaume Postel's projection, represents the world somewhat as a round stadium in which all nations are assembled. The design possesses the essential requirements of simplicity and dignity, as well as an aesthetic quality, which have enabled it to survive with a considerable measure of success as an effective international symbol enjoying global acceptance.

ICAO EARLY EMBLEMS

Since 1946, two versions of early emblems (Figures 3 and 4), with a design showing the eastern and western hemispheres between a pair of wings, were used by ICAO on conference badges and publications. The design of Figure 3 was also embodied in the seal of the Organization (Figure 5).

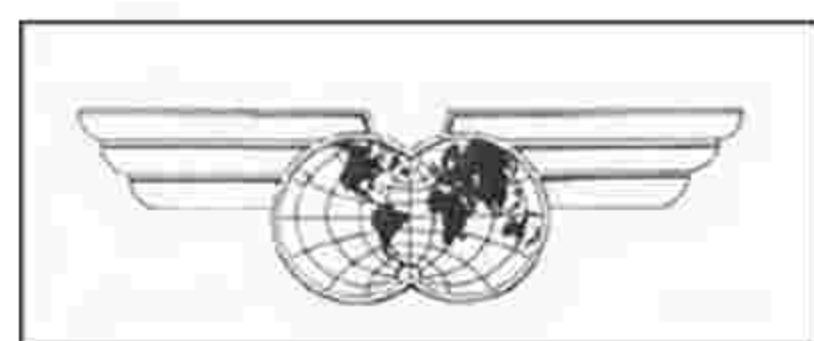


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

In October 1950, these early designs were substituted by other similar emblems (Figures 6 and 7), which were a combination of the early designs with four concentric circles, all being divided into octants, inscribed in a wreath of crossed conventional branches of olive tree, and therefore show similarities with the emblem of the United Nations.



Figure 6



Figure 7

Further to a request from ICAO to standardize the emblems of the Specialized Agencies, the Preparatory Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, at the 4th meeting of its 21st session, on 10 July 1952, agreed that, when new Agencies were considering the adoption or changing an emblem, they should bear in mind the desirability of basing their design on the United Nations emblem.

Starting in July 1953, ICAO's second early emblem was used as slogan on the Headquarters meters (Figure 8); as regards ICAO's Regional Offices, this second design was used only by Paris Office postage meters beginning on 23 September 1954 (Figure 9).



Figure 9



Figure 8



Figure 10

The early emblems had been occasionally subject to criticism with respect to their design and also to the value of their symbolism; it was also felt that ICAO's emblem should follow more closely the pattern of the United Nations, putting an additional accent on the idea of unity of the United Nations family of international organizations.

In 1954, the two hemispheres between the wings were removed from the ICAO emblem and the polar projection of the world was shown as in the UN emblem; it displayed longer wings set lower on the globe than on the current emblem. Some first day covers (Figure 10) produced commercially on the occasion of the issue of ICAO commemorative stamps (Scott #31-32) by the United Nations Postal Administration on 9 February 1955 bore this emblem.

superimposed to serve as the official emblem of ICAO. On 1 June 1955, the emblem was also reproduced on some of the first day covers commemorating ICAO's 10th anniversary by Canada (Scott #354); the one displayed by Figure 12 is of particularly poor quality.



Figure 11

FIRST OFFICIAL EMBLEM

A modified version of the emblem, with the wings relocated slightly higher on the globe for better balance (Figure 11, Syria Scott #1024, issued for the 40th anniversary of ICAO), was approved by the Secretary General of ICAO on 6 January 1955; at this stage, he decided that steps should be taken towards adopting an ICAO emblem, as none of the prior emblems had ever received formal recognition by the Council or the Assembly. On 21 February 1955, the Secretary General of the United Nations authorized the use of the United Nations emblem with the design of the wings

In August 1955, the new emblem as approved by the United Nations was submitted for formal approval by the ICAO Council. When considering the design of this new emblem, the Council felt that the incorporation of the initials "ICAO" and "OACI" would identify it more clearly with the Organization; these acronyms would refer to the English, French and Spanish denominations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, as the original text of the Convention on International Civil Aviation had been drawn up in those three languages.

Further to the Council's request to present additional proposals for approval by the 9th Assembly, members



Figure 12

of the Secretariat were invited to submit further designs for an official emblem; the invitation had inadvertently omitted the specification to include the acronyms ICAO and OACI, so that the ten different designs submitted by six staff members did not comply with the direction from the Council. One of the five designs submitted by Mr. Maurice St. Onge, Canadian, Cartographic Draftsman, in the Aeronautical Information Section of the Secretariat, was selected by the *ad hoc* Committee on ICAO emblem. Moreover, Mr. St. Onge was requested to revise his selected design (Figure 13) and to work out a sketch portraying a suggestion made by one member of the Committee (Figure 14). Mr. St. Onge was granted an award of \$50 in recognition of the extremely careful and painstaking work done.



Figure 13

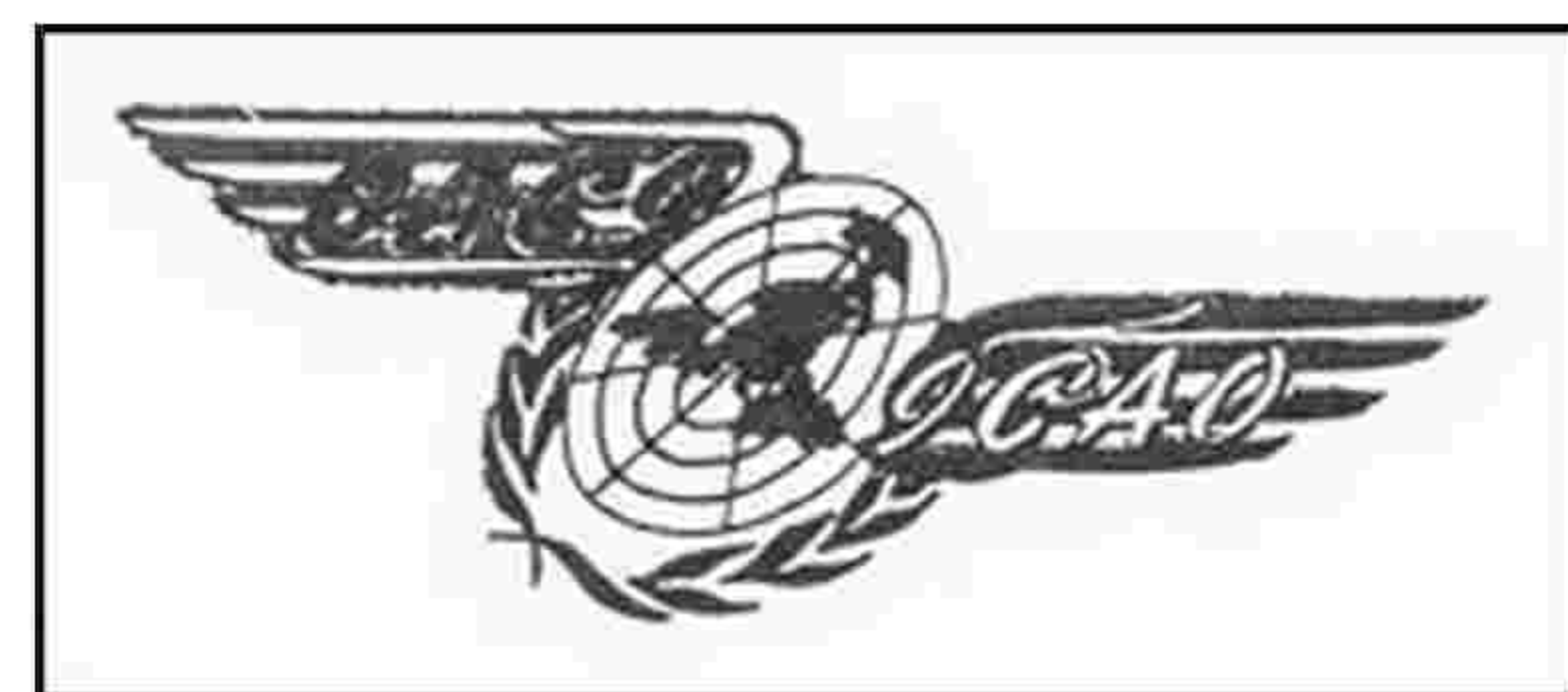


Figure 14

As none of the revised designs was judged to be superior to the basic design in use since 1951, the emblem as per Figure 15 (Korea, Scott #376, issued on 11 December 1962 for the 10th anniversary of Korea's entrance into ICAO) was eventually selected to maintain the practical advantages of retaining a visible sign of ICAO's relationship with the United Nations, as a radically different ICAO emblem would have taken many years before achieving the currency which had been attached in many countries of the world to the widely-recognized "UN crest".

ICAO Council agreed to recommend to the Assembly this first official emblem (Figure 15), which was adopted by the 10th Session of the Assembly, held in Caracas in July 1956 (Resolution A10-11).



Figure 15

SECOND OFFICIAL EMBLEM

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) deposited its instrument of adherence to the Convention on International Civil Aviation on 15 October 1970 and became the 120th member of ICAO on 14 November 1970. Further to a request of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on 30 October 1970, the Assembly decided at its 18th Session in 1971 to proceed with the introduction of the Russian language in ICAO. In October 1972, the Secretary General of ICAO agreed to introduce a revised ICAO emblem (Figure 16) incorporating the initials of the Organization in Cyrillic alphabet in recognition of the introduction of Russian as a fourth language of the

Organization. The Council recommended to the 21st Session of the Assembly the adoption of the new official emblem (Resolution A21-4). It should be noted that the Cyrillic characters adopted for the emblem do not correspond to the initials of the Organization in Russian, but rather the transliteration of the English ICAO. ICAO became also the only UN Specialized Agency to include more than two acronyms in its emblem.

INTRODUCTION OF ARABIC AND CHINESE LANGUAGES

In 1974, the 21st Session of the Assembly approved the use of Arabic in correspondence between ICAO and the Arab States and interpretation at the Assembly Sessions and Regional Meetings for the Middle East. The use of Arabic in ICAO had been on a pragmatic and reasonable approach taking into account the real needs of the Arab Contracting States and the conditions at ICAO. The 26th Assembly held in 1986 approved Arabic as a working language at ICAO.

In 1977, the 22nd Session of the Assembly had decided to adopt the Chinese language as one of the working languages of ICAO. In accordance with the decision to



Figure 16

extend the use of the Chinese language in ICAO, the Chinese Unit was established in October 1994.

THIRD OFFICIAL EMBLEM



Figure 17

In May 1995, a revision to the ICAO emblem (Figure 17) was made to recognize the introduction of Arabic and Chinese as working languages of the Organization. In view of the difficulty in accurately reproducing the Chinese characters, it was initially proposed to limit their number in the emblem and to show only "Civil Aviation Organization" in Chinese. A further proposal for the amendment of the Chinese-language inscription to be used on the emblem (Figure 18), reflecting more accurately the full name of the Organization, was submitted by China.

Despite the fact that the Arabic inscription appearing in the emblem was not an Arabic word but a transliteration from the English, the new emblem was adopted (Resolution A31-1) at the 31st Session of the Assembly held in 1995. The possibility to review the choice of the Arabic acronym for the name of the Organization could be considered later.

VARIATIONS OF THE ICAO EMBLEM



Figure 19

Occasionally, variations of the emblem had been used by ICAO to mark some of its anniversaries. Special meter slogans at ICAO Headquarters have been observed for the 20th, 30th, 40th and 50th anniversaries and were different for each of these anniversaries; among these, the one for the 20th anniversary in 1964 (Figure 19) was of excellent quality.



Figure 18



Figure 20a

At the invitation of the ICAO's Secretary General, staff members were invited in February 1993 to submit designs for a logo to mark the 50th anniversary of ICAO, commemorated in 1994. Seventy submissions were received from 28 staff members and the selected official versions for use by ICAO and Contracting States, are reproduced in Figure 20a (Egypt Scott #C207) and 20b (St. Vincent Scott #2151). The original design was submitted by Mr. Brian Darling, Canadian, Systems Procedure Writer in the Office Automation Section of the Secretariat, and is shown at Figure 21.



Figure 20b



Figure 21

CONCLUSION

The compilation of the various emblems used by ICAO since its inception has shown a consistent evolution of the design according to the languages used by the Organization, with however the accent put on having a pattern close to the emblem of the United Nations, embracing the world through the spirit of cooperation to achieve the safe and orderly development of civil aviation.

CHECKLIST

Egypt	C207	1994 Sep 16	50th Anniversary of ICAO
Equatorial Guinea	7675 (MiBL200)	1976	30th Anniversary of the United Nations, ICAO Logo in Margin
Korea	376	1962 Dec 11	10th Anniversary of Korea's Joining ICAO
St. Vincent	2151	1994 Dec 01	50th Anniversary of ICAO
Syria	1024	1984 Oct 27	40th Anniversary of ICAO
United Nations-New York	31-32	1955 Feb 09	10th Anniversary of ICAO

REFERENCES

- De Henseler, Max C. *The United Nations Emblem and Flag. Handbook on United Nations Heraldry.* ECLAC Library, Santiago, Chile, 1986.
 Macalister-Smith, Peter. *The United Nations Emblem and Flag.*
 Rossetti, Roberto. *Heraldry at the United Nations.*

