

## ICAO CELEBRATES ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

By Albert Pelsser

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), at the time of its founding, became the only UN body to have its headquarters in Montréal, Canada. ICAO was created with the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation in Chicago on 7 December 1944. ICAO embodies the spirit of cooperation and dedication of 193 countries to achieve the safe and orderly development of civil aviation throughout the world.

ICAO works with the Member States and industry groups to reach consensus on international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and policies in support of a safe, efficient, secure, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible civil aviation sector.

Collecting a specific topic on stamps generally isn't restricted to a single country. One example of topical collection, for which a wealth of material is available, is that of ICAO-related stamps and covers, which were issued either officially or privately to commemorate ICAO meetings or anniversaries, anniversaries of the United Nations or its Agencies. Moreover, ICAO topical collection also covers forerunners to ICAO, referring to stamps and covers related to inter-governmental meetings or bodies dealing with international civil aviation prior to the birth of ICAO in 1944. This collection is pretty interesting, especially when one realizes that each item tells a story related either to the Organization or to aviation and its history.

The 166 stamp issues, along with the great variety of covers, have shaped the mainstay of what is called *The Postal History of ICAO*, available at the web site address listed at the end of this article.

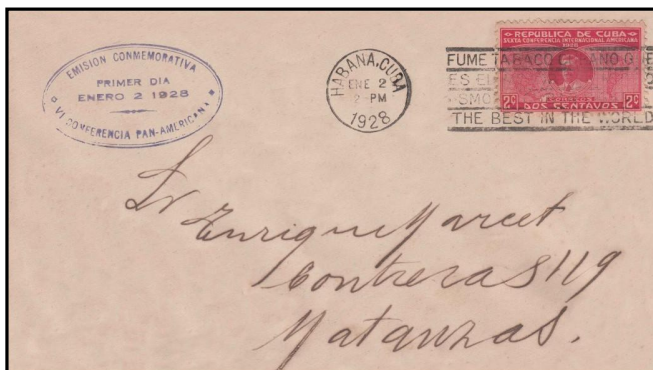
The commencement of the regular service of international air transport after WWI in 1919 rendered apparent the urgent need for some kind of international regulation of aviation. Since then and before ICAO came into being, three international conventions have marked the sphere of air navigation.

The forerunner to ICAO was the International Commission for Air Navigation (ICAN), established by the 1919 Paris Convention Relating to the Regulation of Aerial Navigation (see Figure 1) which is historically the first multilateral instrument of international law relating to air navigation. One of the legally important duties of ICAN was the amendment of the technical Annexes to the Paris Convention that contained more detailed provisions of the standards to which Member States were bound under the terms of the Convention.

The Paris Convention never achieved universal acceptance. Two other attempts at international legal regulation of civil aviation on a regional basis were initiated firstly in 1926 by Spain motivated by political rivalry with ICAN (known as the Madrid



Figure 1: Souvenir cover issued by Romania in 1994 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the signature of the Paris Convention which established ICAN.



Convention, which was never registered with any international body), and secondly in 1928 by the Commercial Aviation Commission of the Pan-American Union (known as the Havana Convention; see Figure 2).

Figure 2: First Day Cover issued on the occasion of the Sixth Pan-American Conference held in 1928 at Havana, Cuba during which the Havana Convention was signed.

The years between the two World Wars were marked by a continuous growth of civil aviation in both the technical and the commercial fields, even though flying remained a rather exclusive means of personal transport. During World War II, large numbers of people and goods were transported over long distances and ground facilities had been developed to permit this in an orderly and expeditious manner; moreover, the technical and operational possibilities of aviation significantly advanced for a world which would eventually find peace again.

Therefore, on 11 September 1944, the President of the USA invited the representatives of 55 States or Authorities to meet at Chicago (see Figure 3) from 1 November at an International Civil Aviation Conference; fifty-four States attended this Conference which ended on 7 December 1944. The resulting Convention on International Civil Aviation (also known as the Chicago Convention; see Figure 4) superseded the Paris Convention of 1919 and the Havana Convention of 1928. It represented a major landmark in the development of inter-



Figure 3: Postcard showing the Stevens Hotel (in the mid-1940s) where the Chicago Conference was held.



Figure 4: Stamp issued by El Salvador in 2017 making reference to the signature of the Convention on International Civil Aviation at Chicago in 1944, which established ICAO.

ommended Practices were grouped into Annexes to the Convention; they are thus not an integral part of the Convention and do not have the same legal force as the Convention itself.

Because of the inevitable delays in the ratification of the Chicago Convention, the Conference signed an Interim Agreement, which foresaw the creation of a Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO) of a technical and advisory nature with the purpose of collaboration in the field of international civil aviation (see Figure 5). This Organization was in operation from August 1945. After ratification by 26 states, the Chicago Convention came into being on 4 April 1947 and established the International Civil Aviation Organization. The change from PICAO to ICAO was little more than a formality.



Figure 5: Cover issued in Egypt on the occasion of the Regional Air Navigation Meeting of the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO) held in Cairo in 1946; it is the only stamp issued during PICAO's lifetime, which was the result of a overprint of two lines of text in French and Arabic.



ICAO has accomplished the most impressive work in the adoption and constant updating of the nineteen Annexes to the Convention, the subjects of which cover vastly different spectra of technical subjects of civil aviation, such as Rules of the air (see Figure 6), Aeronautical charts, Operation of aircraft, Facilitation (see Figure 7), Environmental protection, Security, Safety Management, etc.

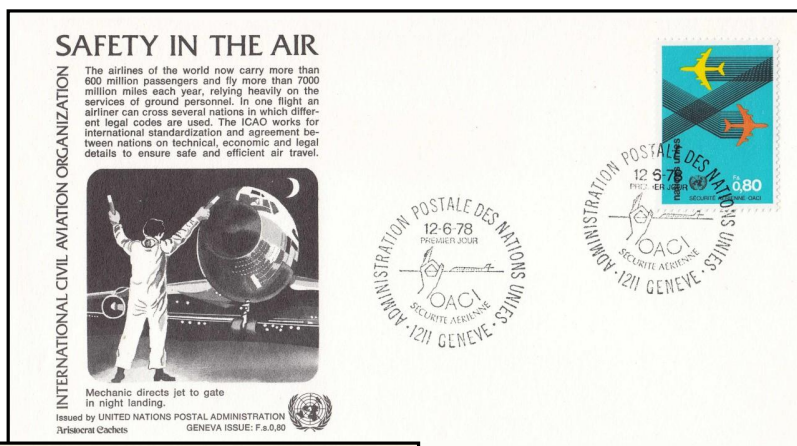


Figure 6: First Day Cover issued in 1978, the cachet of which shows a ground marshaller directing the plane to the gate.

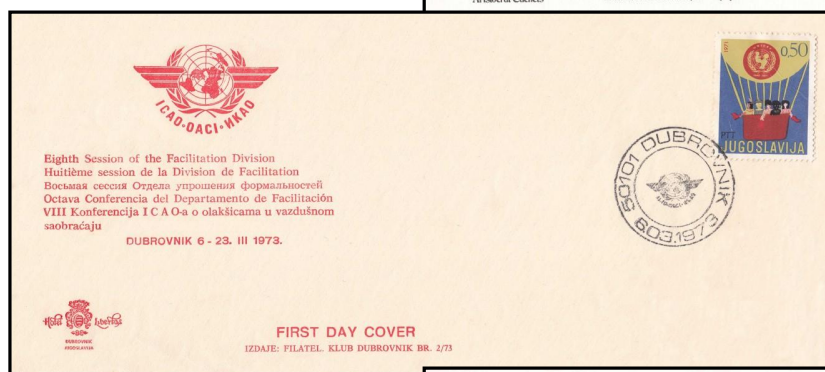


Figure 7: Souvenir cover issued in 1973 on the occasion of the Eight Session of the Facilitation Division held in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia.

As a Specialized Agency of the United Nations (UN) since 3 October 1947, ICAO works closely with the UN (see at Figure 8), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and particularly with the Economic and Social Council. Moreover for its technical activities, ICAO works closely too with other UN Specialized Agencies and International Organizations dealing with aviation, such as ACI, CANSO, FAI, IAOPA, IATA, IFALPA, etc..



Figure 8: Postal Stationery postmarked in 1969, the cachet of which depicts the world of United Nations.



ICAO has become the international forum for high-level government officials, international organizations, financial institutions and the industry sector responsible for transport and infrastructure, finance, economy and tourism to meet, discuss and decide on various issues related to air navigation, air transport, and any related legal framework (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: First Day Cover issued on the occasion of the Diplomatic Conference on International Air Law held in Roma in 1952.

ICAO is composed of an Assembly, its sovereign body, which meets not less than once in three years, (see Figure 10), a Council, the executive body, (see Figure 11), a Secretariat, and such other bodies as may be necessary. Among those, the most important is the Air Navigation Commission (ANC, see at Figure 12), tasked by the Council to manage the technical work programme of ICAO; since its establishment, the Commission has considered and recommended, for the safety and efficiency of international civil aviation, Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) comprised in 16 out of the 19 Annexes to the Chicago Convention and Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS). Those SARPs and PANS are adopted or approved by the Council.

Among the other Annexes, Facilitation and Security are under the purview of the Air Transport Committee (ATC), whereas Environmental Protection is under the purview of the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP).

Over the years, ICAO established seven Regional Offices and one Sub-Office in Beijing, China. Although never very large in terms of staff and under the supervision of Headquarters, the Regional Offices play an important role in helping ICAO Member States implement the Organization's standards and procedures and acting as a kind of information liaison between local governments (i.e. civil aviation officials) and the Headquarters. The Regional Offices also help in the planning and implementation of technical cooperation projects. See Figure 13.

ICAO's Technical Cooperation (previously named Assistance) Bureau provides in-depth technological assistance to States with their aviation projects, supports ICAO's Strategic Objectives and contributes to the global and uniform implementation the SARPs. The ICAO Technical Cooperation Programme (see Figure 14) has been in operation since 1951; it has made invaluable contributions to



Figure 10: Souvenir cover issued on the occasion of ICAO's 39th triennial Session of the Assembly held in 2016.

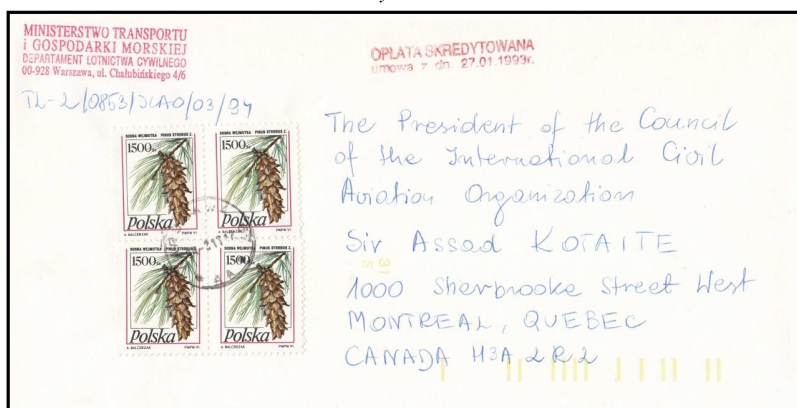


Figure 11: Service cover sent in 1994 by the Department of Civil Aviation in Warsaw, Poland to Dr. Assad Kotaite, President of the ICAO Council.

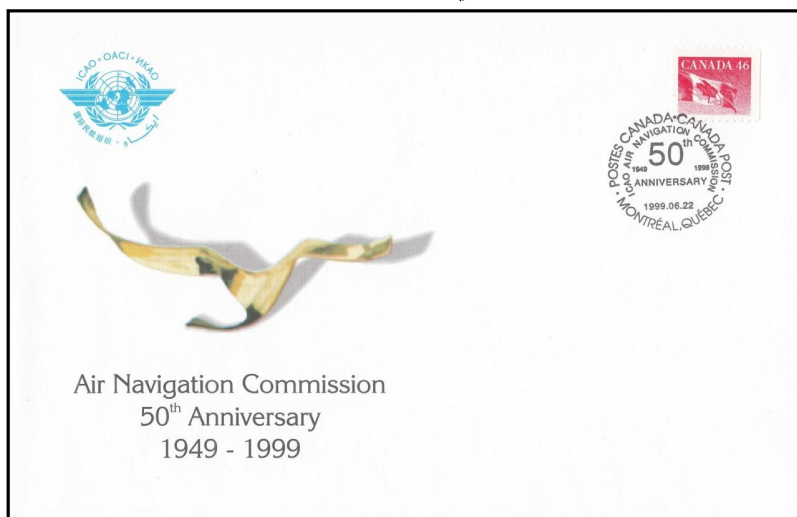


Figure 12: Souvenir cover commemorating in 1999 the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Air Navigation Commission.



international civil aviation and remains a permanent priority activity of the Organization.

ICAO should not be confused with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), a trade organization for airlines, also headquartered in Montréal.

While ICAO is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention this year, some South American States had already marked this anniversary on stamps issued between 1978 and 1980. Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay inadvertently confused the 75th anniversary of the Wright brothers' feat with that of ICAO. After numerous glider tests, it was finally on 17 December 1903 that Orville Wright made

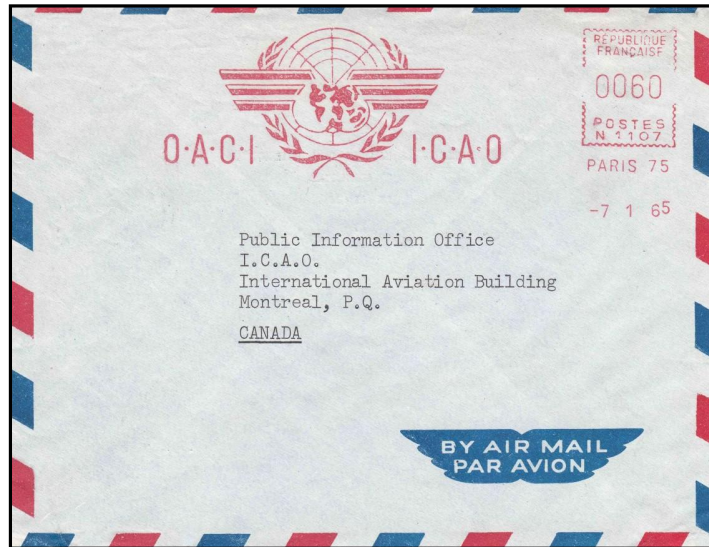


Figure 13: Service cover sent in 1965 by the ICAO Regional Office in Paris to Headquarters in Montréal.

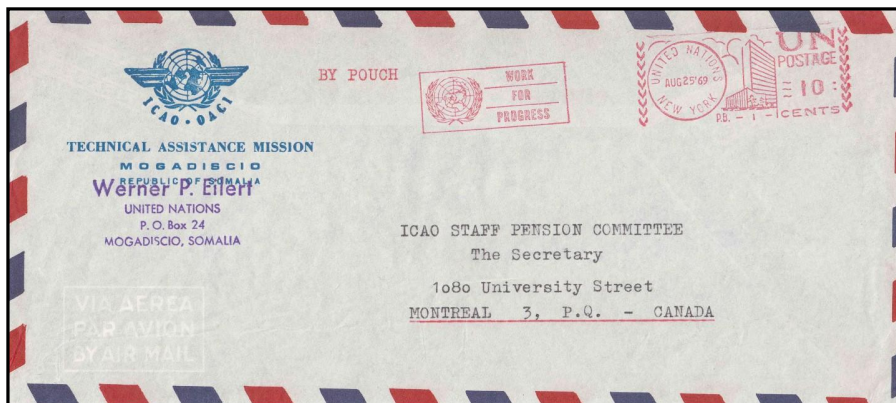


Figure 14: Service cover sent by ICAO's Technical Assistance project in Mogadiscio, Somalia to the Headquarters in Montréal, via the pouch in New York.

the first motorized and controlled flight of all time thanks to the Flyer I. This historic 12-second flight marks the beginning of aviation. See Figure 15.

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 emphasis put on having a pattern close to the emblem of the United Nations. ICAO is the only UN Specialized Agency to include more than two acronyms in its emblem; in fact, ICAO's six official languages are represented in the emblem of the Organization. See Figure 16.



Figure 15: Stamp issued by Belize in 1979 commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Wright brothers' achievement with that of ICAO.

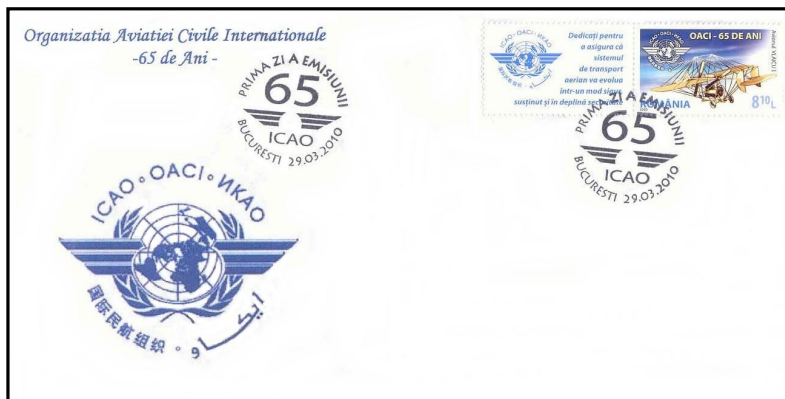


Figure 16: Cover issued by Romania in 2010 for the 65th anniversary of ICAO and showing the current emblem.

The International Civil Aviation Day was established in 1994 as part of ICAO's 50th anniversary activities. In 1996, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, which officially recognized 7 December as the International Civil Aviation Day in the UN system. Every five years, coinciding with ICAO anniversaries, the ICAO Council establishes a special theme for the International Civil Aviation Day. For 2015-2018 inclusive, the Council has selected the following theme: *Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind*. See Figure 17.



Figure 17: Souvenir cover highlighting the single theme for the full four-year period 2015-2018 for the International Civil Aviation Day: *Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind*.



For the celebration of its 75th anniversary, ICAO will use special emblems symbolizing 75 years of connecting the world by a continuously twisted platinum ribbon; a model of this emblem is presented here in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Special emblem marking ICAO's 75th anniversary (continuously twisted platinum)

The web site on *The Postal History of ICAO* (hosted at [www.icao.int/secretariat/postalhistory/index.html](http://www.icao.int/secretariat/postalhistory/index.html)) is a source of current reference for the philatelic material pertaining to ICAO. This thematic exhibit, arranged in the form of chapters, tells ICAO's story, or the story of its historical events through the use of postal artifacts; it is also intended to preserve history for future generations. In addition to the historical side which remains the main objective of the site, an extensive list of the postal issues relating to ICAO, with complete background information, is displayed in the last chapters, so that any philatelic collector could start a new hobby or complete available information.

### UNP Special Auction #53

Amount Realized \$758.80 Lots Sold 45/76 (59.2%)  
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Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price
1	15	13	4	23	6	33	9	48	25	70	10
2	11	14	11	24	2	34	3	49	13	74	5
3	27	16	4	25	11	35	3	50	12	75	10.8
4	34	17	5	27	11	36	6	51	8	76	5
5	10	18	3	28	14	37	21	52	13	77	3
6	15	19	11	29	2	38	10	58	5	82	11
10	75	20	3	30	2	40	55	64	125		
11	4	21	3	31	6	41	21	65	25		
12	4	22	11	32	9	44	5	68	42		

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