

ICAO Philately - The Firsts

By Albert Pelsser

The *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (also known as *Chicago Convention*) was signed on December 7, 1944. Pending ratification of the Convention by 26 States, the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO) was established and functioned from June 6, 1945 until April 4, 1947. In October 1947, ICAO became a Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Its headquarters are in Montreal since 1945.

The topical collection of ICAO-related stamps crosses aviation and United Nations themes and consists of a total number of stamps/miniature sheets amounting to 450. Along with the great variety of covers, the stamp issues, have shaped the mainstay of what is called *The Postal History of ICAO*, available at the following web site address: <https://applications.icao.int/postalhistory/>. The purpose of this story is to highlight just a few firsts in ICAO's philately.

Cairo was the host of the first Middle East Regional Air Navigation Meeting of the Provisional International Civil Aviation (PICAO), which was convened on October 1, 1946. King Farouk, an avid stamp and coin collector, ordered that Egypt's most popular airmail stamp be overprinted to commemorate the historic event. Accordingly, supplies from the existing stock of the 30-millème deep green stamp issued on March 18, 1941 were overprinted with two lines (Figure 1): the first line reads *The International Air Navigation Conference for the Middle East* in Arabic, and the second line *Le Caire 1946* in Arabic and French. It's the only stamp issued during the lifetime of the Provisional ICAO.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

On November 22, 1977, the Air France and British Airways Concorde airplanes departed from Paris and London respectively for the inaugural passenger service to New York; the two aircraft crossed the Atlantic in tandem to make a joint arrival in New York. The original stamp from Comoros was issued for the 25th anniversary of the UN Postal Administration on November 23, 1976 and was diagonally overprinted in gold, silver and red with *Paris-New-York - 22 nov. 1977* (Figure 2), to commemorate the first commercial flight of the Concorde between Paris and New York. This stamp-on-stamp issue pictures the UN stamp issued on February 9, 1955 for the 10th anniversary of ICAO.

In recognition of the outstanding contribution of Ing. Roberto Kobeh González for the benefit of national and international civil aviation, the Mexican Postal Service, Correos de México, issued on November 29, 2016 a commemorative postal stamp (Figure 3) in which its image is appreciated at the highest level, as he served aviation for 50 years. Mr. Roberto Kobeh González served as President of the Council of ICAO from August 1, 2006 until December 31, 2013. He was elected to the position after serving eight years as the Representative of Mexico on the Council. It's the first time that a leading figure who served ICAO is pictured on a stamp.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

El Salvador issued a set of four stamps highlighting the beginnings of aeronautics in El Salvador. These stamps were released on December 7, 2017, thus celebrating the International Civil Aviation Day. One of these stamps (Figure 4) refers to the 70th anniversary of the ratification of the Chicago Convention by this country and its admission to ICAO. It's also the first time that a Member State mentions specifically the Chicago Convention (Figure 5). It's to be noted that the word *Civil* is missing in the text related to the Chicago Convention and should be written: *Convenio de Aviación Civil Internacional*.



Fig. 5