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Speaking Notes

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**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION**

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AT THE

**6TH TRIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL AIRCRAFT FIRE AND CABIN SAFETY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

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Canada

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Good afternoon,

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. As I look around the room and see the large number of people in attendance, it is evident that the subject of Aircraft Fire and Cabin Safety continues to be one of international importance. This is a significant area of discussion that requires our continued focus, so I am pleased to be here in Atlantic City to participate in this conference.

It has been over a hundred years since the first heavier-than-air, powered aircraft took flight. While the aircraft might have only flown for a few seconds, it changed the face of aviation forever. An industry was born and a new way of life was formed.

These pioneers of aviation took risks. They had a vision – a dream that guided them to build a contraption and have it take flight. They couldn't know then if an aeroplane would even lift off the ground, let alone stay in the air. But their perseverance paid off.

The same holds true for the decisions we take today. It seems that in our industry, we are always looking toward tomorrow. We must, because it is how we endure. It is how we stay ahead of the game and it is how we see success.

We need to maintain the momentum by:

- Testing conventional approaches
- Exploring new options
- Be increasingly innovative

The aviation industry is ever-changing. Since I began my career in 1972, I have seen incredible advances in just about every sphere of aviation. The requirements have evolved significantly in response to both the changes in technology and the unfortunate, but significant, lessons we learn from aircraft accidents.

In our own efforts to rise up to many challenges, Transport Canada Civil Aviation has been making a move towards being more strategic and planning for where we see our organization in the future.

We are well along in the development of our newest 5-year strategic plan. It will review what we accomplished and what we believe should be carried forward for the coming years. The theme is one of continuous improvement and being ready to adapt and make changes when and where they are required. Change is in fact the only constant. Our goal is to offer the best value for Canadians today and future generations of Canadians.

The last decade has seen a shift toward our vision of an integrated and progressive civil aviation system that promotes a proactive safety culture. Air travel is safe and we want to keep it that way. To do that, we must continually seek out ways to further improve safety. The strategy that we have chosen is to adopt a systems approach for the proactive identification of risks to safety.

It is how we manage risk and what we do to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place that becomes even more important and is yet, increasingly difficult. Industry growth and globalization have become catalysts to challenge our past practices, providing us with opportunities today to make improvements for the future.

The tragedy that occurred on September 2nd, 1998 off the coast of Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, made the world sit up and take notice. The Swissair 111 accident claimed 229 lives and is one of the most tragic aviation accidents to take place in Canada.

The loss of a Swiss operated, U.S. built aircraft in Canadian airspace reminds us that aviation is inevitably international in so many ways.

The recommendations that came from the investigation into this accident were directed to aviation authorities in Canada, the United States and Europe. As is often the case, it required international cooperation to address the issues identified during the investigation. This tragedy also resulted in considerable improvements to aviation safety worldwide.

Since the accident, collectively we as aviation authorities have improved safety in the areas we regulate. More notably, we have improved fire safety aboard aeroplanes by, for example:

- Mandating the removal of the most flammable insulation material on aircraft;
- Establishing clear emergency procedures on landing without delay in the event of smoke or fire; and
- Establishing clear action plans to improve in-flight firefighting standards.

Design certification standards also include several measures to minimize the likelihood of on-board fires and to counteract fires in areas that have been identified as being the most vulnerable. These measures are based on a thorough assessment of fire risks and conditions.

The standards require the provision of fire and smoke detection systems, as well as suppression and extinguishing systems, the isolation of ignition sources, and the means to prevent, through design, the accumulation of flammable fluids and vapours.

Ongoing collaboration among regulatory authorities is essential for improving standards for other materials, technologies and evolving risks.

Significant fire safety improvements have already been made all around the world. Through the work of the Cabin Safety Research Technical Group Civil, aviation safety continues to be enhanced as we work cooperatively to resolve current and unforeseen safety issues.

These partnerships are of great importance, as harmonized regulations and standards are not really possible without cooperative research. Solid research helps to explain the cost benefits and ensures that the regulations put in place are defensible, fair and achievable. Past collaboration has had a significant positive safety impact on the aviation industry.

Looking at what has been achieved all over the world in aviation safety, I am reminded of the power of persistence and imagination. All of those involved have risen to the challenge in making the business of flying safer than before.

Without your technical expertise, foresight and skills to back us up, this wouldn't have been possible. You should all be proud of what we have achieved together.

Aviation as it we know it will continue to evolve as new materials and bigger, more complex aircraft are designed. It is important that we do not stay static and that we continue to push forward with new initiatives, so that the future of aviation remains at its highest possible level of safety worldwide. Progress is about growth, development and continuous improvement. It is about letting our collective ideas take flight. Our challenges today may be more complex, but I believe that we still show the same spirit as those early aviators.

I wish you every success in the work of your conference and I look forward to hearing some of the speakers.

Thank you for your attention.