International Civil Aviation Day is observed globally and commemorated to provide global cognizance about the contribution of civil aviation to social and economic development. Guyana joins the rest of the world and the International Civil Aviation Organisation in observation of International Civil Aviation Day, December 7, 2021.

Guyana became a signatory to the Chicago Convention 1944 on February 3, 1967, and has remained steadfast in its commitment to ensuring its obligations are fulfilled and that our rich aviation history continues to evolve. The International Civil Aviation Organisation established under Article 43 of the Chicago Convention is the UN Aviation Specialised Agency that developed the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fostered the planning and development of international air transport. This Organisation provided the foundation for States to meet the aviation needs of the people worldwide and ensure that the air transport system is safe, regular, efficient and economical.

In preparation of its celebrations, the ICAO Council chooses a special anniversary theme which is kept for a period of four years. In 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the aviation industry and the challenges that underpin the assurance of air connectivity for sustainable development and humanitarian efforts, called for an appropriate theme to take us through and beyond this pandemic. The Council therefore aptly themed the anniversary celebrations for the period, 2020-2023, as, “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development”.

The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented. The role of aviation in our world today is quite different to that of 1918. Aviation is a key driver for socio-economic development. We have seen the effect of the closure of borders to protect citizens’ health, the loss of jobs and revenue and the many setbacks on social, cultural and economic structures that require dependable air connectivity.

The world has also recognised that innovative strategies are needed for us to collectively navigate the corridors of this pandemic to help re-build post pandemic aviation and to help us prepare for, and become resilient to, future threats so that the industry continues to meet the needs of the peoples of the world through dependable and sustainable air connectivity. The International Civil Aviation Organisation has been working assiduously with every Member State to provide guidance and recommendations through its Council Recovery Task Force (CART) to encourage and help countries to respond and ultimately recover from COVID-19. Guyana has been working closely with CART, the Regional Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System and our national agencies towards these objectives.

Guyana has shared a close partnership with ICAO since its accession to the Chicago Convention in 1967. Despite our fledgling aviation system, Guyana has been recognised, through Guyanese contributions, for the advancement of innovation in aviation development, both at the national and international levels.

More particularly, during the ICAO’s 50th anniversary celebrations, two Guyanese, Stanley Jhagroo and the late Allim Mohaboob more popularly known as Bill received the 50th year Anniversary Medal for the establishment of the Guyana School of Aviation. Another Guyanese, the late Col. Charles Hutson was also inducted in the ICAO Regional Hall of Fame for his stellar contributions to aviation in Guyana in the field of aircraft engineering.

In keeping with ICAO’s Strategic Objectives of safety, security, efficiency, economic and environmental sustainability of international civil aviation, technology and innovation have always been the hallmarks of the industry, and have been the drivers for global performance improvements. To this end, Guyana continues to harmonise with the theme of “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development” with the more recent implementation of Aeronautical Surveillance Services using Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) allowing for increased safety of airspace operations, improved capacity and efficiency, the commissioning of the extended runway at CJIA, supported by a new Instrument Landing System and related charts, facilitating larger and more modern fleets of aircraft.

On my behalf and that of the Board of Directors we commit to continue our collaboration with ICAO and other stakeholders to ensure that safe and workable measures are established within our industry. In effect bringing families together, especially as we approach the holidays, protecting those persons whose livelihood depend on air transportation and continuing to promote the theme - “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development”.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to our rich aviation history and to wish everyone a Happy International Civil Aviation Day. Keep safe!