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Agenda Item 2 Statements by delegations of Contracting States and of : Observers

STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AT THE 35TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF ICAO

28 September to 8 October 2004

(Presented by the Republic of Armenia)

SUMMARY

This paper sets forth the events which have taken place in the field of civil aviation in Armenia over the last three years and contains a number of proposals for the improvement of the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme and the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme.

Mr. President of the Council of ICAO,
Mr. Secretary General,
Officers of the Assembly,
Distinguished Delegates of Contracting States and international organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, I have the honour to greet all the participants in the 35th Session of the Assembly of ICAO, and to express my confidence that the international aviation community will successfully sum up at this high-level aviation forum, the progress of global civil aviation over the last three years, and will also plan and approve the main trends in the development of international civil aviation for the 2005 to 2007 period.

On 7 December 2004, we shall all mark the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention and the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization. The words of the Preamble to the Chicago Convention still continue to sound current today: “the future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world, yet its abuse can become a threat to the general security.”

Over the last three years, significant changes have taken place in the civil aviation sector of Armenia. In May 2002, the Aviation Act of the Republic of Armenia was adopted, after which the process of developing Armenia's aviation legislation in accordance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices and procedures was initiated and continues to go on to this date. Under a Memorandum of Cooperation, signed in 2003 between the General Department of Civil Aviation of Armenia and the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States of America, work was conducted which resulted in the establishment of aviation regulations and guidance procedures on Personnel Licensing, Operation and Airworthiness of Aircraft. Training courses were also carried out for technical personnel in appropriate fields. In June 2004, Armenia became a candidate member of the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) and will also become a member of EUROCONTROL in the near future. Armenia is successfully cooperating with the ICAO Regional Office in the implementation of the Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM) system, intended for March 2005. In June 2003, Armenia had the honour to host the ICAO Regional Preparatory Seminar for the Eleventh Air Navigation Conference, which was attended by approximately 60 participants from 20 countries and international organizations.

The aviation industry of Armenia also underwent significant changes over the last three years. The national State airline of Armenia, "Armenian Airlines", which has been in existence for the last ten years, gave way to private airlines, such as Armavia, Armenian International Airways, Air Armenia and Atlantis European Airways, which have been successfully performing international passenger and cargo air services using aircraft, such as the A320, in competition and partnership with European airlines, such as British Airways, Austrian Airlines and Czech Airlines. In 2001, the Government of Armenia initiated a gradual liberalization process of the air services market, the first step of which was the creation of an airline, owned primarily by foreign investors.

In 2001, the management of Armenia's main international airport "Zvartnots" was transferred over to the Argentine-American company "Corporation America" for a period of 30 years, in accordance with a franchising agreement signed by the Government of Armenia. The Agreement foresees an investment in the amount of US \$80 million, aimed at re-equipping existing airport infrastructures and establishing new infrastructures, including a runway, a lighting system, and the construction of a new passenger terminal with a capacity of 3 million passengers per year. The volume of passengers carried at the "Zvartnots" airport in 2003 was 889 300. It is expected that this figure will reach around one million passengers in 2004.

The Republic of Armenia fully supports the Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to the safeguarding of international civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference, which is to be discussed by the Assembly under Agenda Item 14 of this Session, and the Aviation Security Plan of Action, adopted by the Council of ICAO in June 2002, and the subsequent implementation of 13 projects contained in the Plan of Action. I consider that, in the interests of the international aviation community, accelerating the adoption of the Amendment 11 to Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention would contribute significantly to the successful implementation of the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP), aimed at ensuring the implementation by Contracting States of the aviation security Standards and Recommended Practices contained in Annex 17. I also consider that specific and immediate work should be carried out to approve the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Session of the Facilitation Division and to include new Standards and Recommended Practices in Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention for the provision of protection, security and integrity to passports and other travel documents, the inclusion of biometric data, and the use of new types of state-of-the-art technology. Armenia will also welcome the

signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between ICAO and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) on the implementation of joint aviation security audits in ECAC Member States.

As an indispensable mechanism for conducting audits and ensuring flight safety within Contracting States, the viability and importance of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme have already been confirmed today. In accordance with the ICAO Assembly Resolution, audits with respect to Annexes 1, 6 and 8 have currently been implemented in nearly all Contracting States, which has significantly contributed to increasing flight safety by determining the main deficiencies in critically important components of safety oversight and developing corrective action plans to be implemented by States for the effective elimination of the deficiencies.

The Republic of Armenia fully supports the proposal of the Council of ICAO for the transition to a comprehensive systems approach to conducting safety oversight audits as of 2005, under the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme. In my opinion, no doubts can be raised on this approach's validity since it covers all the Annexes to the Chicago Convention that are directly related to flight safety, considering the fact they are internally interconnected and that the appropriate level of flight safety can only be achieved if all the provisions of the Annexes are implemented. It can be said with certainty today that this Programme is one of the most important Programmes ever developed by ICAO for the purpose of increasing flight safety, and it is necessary to take all steps to ensure the long-term financing of this Programme, under the Organization's regular work programme.

The successful implementation of the proposed comprehensive systems approach to conducting safety oversight audits depends directly upon the Flight Safety Enhancement Programme, which is to be discussed under Agenda Item 24.3 of this Session. A large number of working papers on this matter have been proposed to Contracting States, which contain a number of useful and practical proposals on the Programme's main features for providing assistance to States in the elimination of deficiencies identified as a result of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme. Armenia supports the Assembly Resolution proposed by the Council of ICAO in working paper WP/7, and also supports the proposals submitted for discussion at this Session by the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the European Civil Aviation Conference.

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