



ASSEMBLY – 35TH SESSION

PLENARY

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

STATEMENT

(Presented by Cuba)

On behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Cuba, I would like to extend to all of you the best wishes from Cuban civil aviation.

This meeting is being held under very complex international economic circumstances. We, the Contracting States of ICAO, have to provide our full support for the Organization in the exercise of its functions and mandate as the highest authority in international civil aviation.

Cuba continues modestly to develop its civil aviation, directing its main effort towards the preparation and training of all of its personnel who represent our main strength.

Compliance with the action plans resulting from the safety and security audits has been the highest priority.

Our country has attended and taken an active part in all of the events convened by ICAO and LACAC and the meetings of the Directors General of the Central Caribbean, although this year we were not able to attend the meeting of the Directors General of the Central Caribbean since our delegation was denied visas to enter Puerto Rico.

In the Council of ICAO, the Republic of Cuba, together with other Member States, has made its greatest efforts and it is providing its most frank collaboration for the proper functioning of this body and to defend the interests and integrity of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

There are many topics that will be the subject of our attention at this Assembly. One that we must carefully analyse is the matter of the measures proposed to be applied to States with difficulties in complying with their financial obligations. This type of action only brings with it an increase in the exclusion of the developing countries and it makes it even more difficult for them to participate in the work of the Organization.

The budget of the Organization must also be subjected to careful consideration. It must correspond to the real necessities, be directed towards completing projects already started and take into account criteria that make it possible to achieve higher levels of efficiency in the work of the Organization through the reduction, as far as possible, of its costs.

The Republic of Cuba, a founding State of ICAO, respects and complies with the principles of the Chicago Convention and the obligations derived therefrom. Unfortunately, there is a signatory country to this Convention, the United States of America, which does not respect the objectives or spirit of the Convention.

In frank violation of the Preamble to the Convention and Articles 44, 77 and 79 of the Convention, the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba affects the normal development of Cuban civil aviation.

In this regard, for example, our country is prevented from acquiring aircraft that have United States' components, including those manufactured in other States.

We are also prevented from having access to technology that has been developed in any field of aviation.

Its transnational fuel companies are also prohibited from selling their products to Cuban airlines in any part of the world.

This unjust, unilateral and discriminatory policy has meant, in the area of air transport, a loss in terms of additional costs and income that we have stopped receiving, which amounts to millions of dollars over 44 years.

Cuba has presented a working paper that gives details of the effects of the blockade on its civil aviation, an issue that is becoming even more acute, with the worsening of the measures banning citizens of the United States of America from exercising the right to travel to Cuba. This has practically eliminated the flights that had been performed by the airlines of the United States of America to our country.

This, the 35th Session of the Assembly, brings all of us together as Member States to address fundamental measures of civil aviation that would increase its safety, security and effectiveness, as well as to elect a new Council.

In this context, I am obliged to denounce an action that is offensive to this worthy Organization.

As recently as 25 August, the then President of Panama, Mireya Moscoso, proceeded in a complicitous and shameful manner to pardon by decree four terrorists of Cuban origin who were detained, tried and sentenced in Panama, one of whom is Luis Posada Carriles who is directly responsible for blowing up an aeroplane of Cubana de Aviación in full international flight, when 73 people lost their lives. Because of this occurrence, Resolution A22-5 which specifically condemns criminal sabotage was approved in a Plenary like this one.

I shall mention one of the aspects that this Resolution covered:

“Urges the States which are in a position to do so to prosecute and punish with the greatest severity those criminals who committed this deed, so that the penalty may correspond to the magnitude of the crime and constitute a deterrent for the future.”

Resolution A22-5 which was approved unanimously at that Assembly is more valid today than ever. Let us apply it and we shall then be confronting the criminal actions against civil aviation. Each one of our States clearly knows how to act and what to do with respect to these occurrences.

We are signatories to many agreements. ICAO has laid down very good rules and regulations for civil aviation security and we have confidence in it.

We have before us several days of hard work that must conclude in agreements that strengthen safety, aviation security and the efficient, gradual and orderly development of air transport.

Our Resolutions must guide the work of a strong and united ICAO during the next three years and lay the foundations for a future that will consolidate equality of opportunity for all.

To achieve this, Cuba undertakes to continue to honour its commitments in the area of international civil aviation. ICAO can count on us and we hope that ICAO will also be supported by all of the authorities present here.

Thank you very much.

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