



ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY MR. LUI TUCK YEW, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, SINGAPORE

(Presented by Singapore)

President of the Assembly, Mr. Michel Wachenheim,
President of the Council of ICAO, Mr. Roberto Kobeh,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. On behalf of the Singapore delegation, I congratulate Mr. Michel Wachenheim for being elected President of the 38th ICAO Assembly. Let me assure you of our full cooperation for a successful Assembly.
2. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank President Kobeh for his inspirational leadership and unwavering dedication to international civil aviation, including serving as the ICAO Council President since 2006. President Kobeh's firm hands on the throttle have steered and guided ICAO steadily forward. As President Kobeh steps down as the ICAO Council President after the 38th ICAO General Assembly, I wish him fair winds and blue skies.

Gearing for Growth

3. We meet at a time when aviation is at the threshold of an era of unprecedented growth and development. Already, air traffic has rebounded strongly from a series of setbacks, propelled largely by strong growth in the emerging economies of the Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Of note, the Asia Pacific will soon become aviation's busiest region. Singapore is very much a part of this growth. Passenger traffic at Singapore Changi Airport passed the 50 million mark in 2012, and our Air Navigation Services Provider served a record 600,000 aircraft movements in the Singapore Flight Information Region.
4. But with strong air traffic growth come crowded skies, and strains on system capacity, human capital and environment, among other challenges. The aviation community must plan now, and act expeditiously to address these challenges, for the sake of future generations. Allow me to share briefly what Singapore thinks are the critical areas of focus.

Crowded Skies

5. First, as the skies get more crowded, risks of accident increase. While the safety record of international aviation has improved by leaps and bounds, a single accident is one too many. Global efforts to ensure safer skies must continue to progress beyond regulations. The collective commitment and active participation of all stakeholders are essential. **The sharing of safety information is particularly critical. It provides greater situational awareness, leading to new discoveries and insights on safety hazards, and prompting action to tackle the risks.**

6. Another key thrust to address the challenge of crowded skies is to transform Air Traffic Management (ATM). This will not only enhance aviation safety, but also efficiency of air traffic flows and consequently, reduce the carbon footprint as well. Today, many airspace arrangements do not provide sufficient flexibility and seamlessness to respond optimally to the increasing volume and complexity of air traffic.

7. In this regard, Singapore shares ICAO's vision of a seamless ATM system. An incremental, piecemeal approach to developing ATM is not good enough. We need a holistic and comprehensive approach led by ICAO to develop ATM solutions for the future.

8. **In order to truly transform ATM and realise the vision of a seamless sky, all States should work together to harmonise the air navigation framework, and collaborate on airspace and air traffic services arrangements from the operational and technical perspective of ensuring first and foremost, the safety and efficiency of air traffic.**

Stresses on Human Capital

9. Secondly, the shortage of trained and skilled aviation professionals is likely to be the single most acute constraint to the sustainable growth of aviation. Shifting demographics, skills gaps and waning interest in the aviation profession are making it difficult for the aviation sector to develop the human capital needed to meet growing air travel demand.

10. ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative to address the challenges in aviation manpower development is thus timely. While each of us must put in place our own programmes, ICAO's leadership and efforts will complement and supplement our efforts. **I also urge Member States of ICAO who have more resources and capabilities, to do even more to help fellow Member States in the training of their aviation professionals. Singapore will continue to play our part, and further enhance the quantity and quality of our training programmes for fellow Member States.**

Stresses on the Environment

11. Thirdly, perhaps the most difficult challenge that we will have to confront as air traffic continues to grow is the impact on the environment.

12. I do not think there is any disagreement amongst us, that we should grow international aviation in a manner that is sustainable for our environment. Our current differences lie in when and how to bring this about, primarily because many countries, including developing countries, are concerned about the impact of environmental goals and measures on their airlines and on their economy. These are legitimate concerns, and we should not brush them aside.

13. **To address them, the ongoing impact study that the ICAO Secretariat is undertaking should be completed expeditiously. That will give all countries an objective assessment of the likely economic impact on them, and with this knowledge, enough confidence to commit firmly and unequivocally to the environmental goals and measures we discuss here in ICAO.**

14. Another challenge we face in addressing the issue of aviation emissions, is in achieving a balance between the principles of the Convention of International Civil Aviation, upon which global cross border air services are founded, with the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention and Climate Change (UNFCCC) that recognise the unequal level of capability and special circumstances of States, arising from their different stages of development.

15. **If we are to bridge these differences, pragmatism must prevail. It requires us to give and take, and find a way to recognise both principles equally. Within the context of ICAO, this would mean giving some assistance to States more lacking in capabilities and resources, such as in the form of access to funds, knowledge and technology transfers, while at the same time providing all air operators a fair and level playing field to avoid market distortion and unfair competition.**

Conclusion

16. Let me conclude. The future of aviation will be determined by how well we work together to meet the challenges. Our actions today will enable us to realise our dreams of tomorrow. We need to find pragmatic solutions to the various challenges, so that we can move forward.

17. Singapore is privileged to have had the opportunity to contribute to ICAO's work in advancing international civil aviation. We are committed to continue working with ICAO and fellow Member States to address the challenges, and realise the opportunities that aviation offers. Together, we can bring international aviation to a higher plane.

Thank you.

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