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Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY UKRAINE

(Presented by Ukraine)

Madam President,

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation. It is expected that every delegation during this Assembly reports on key achievements of their states over the past three years. Indeed, Ukraine's aviation industry was showing very optimistic indicators. We experienced consistent traffic growth (15-20% annually) along with substantial improvement in ICAO SARPs compliance. In fact, it was recognized yesterday, when Ukraine was awarded ICAO Council President Certificate.

However, brutal military invasion by the Russian Federation of Ukraine makes us talk about entirely different things today: what shall we do to protect civil aviation from complete destruction and how we all guarantee that it will never happen again elsewhere.

Dear Colleagues,

Russian unprovoked military invasion of Ukraine is a total disrespect for the rules, standards and procedures laid down in the Chicago Convention. The invasion started with attacks on civil aviation infrastructure and continues now. Just the other day one more airport and its runway were destroyed, becoming another civil aviation target among many others in Ukraine.

It is essential to note that Russia's disregard of international law caused endless grief not only to Ukrainians, but to the citizens of other countries as well. Let us all recall the downing of the MH17 flight in 2014, which took the lives of 298 innocent people.

Only proper actions and risk mitigation measures undertaken by Ukrainian civil and military coordination system allowed avoiding similar tragedy on February 24, 2022, with the civil aircraft performing flights at that time in the Ukrainian airspace.

Distinguished Delegates,

We all agree in this room that development of civil aviation, its safety, security, innovation, and climate agenda, should be based on common rules and ground, and Chicago Convention is the basis for that. These rules were established back in 1944 with no exceptions for any country, regardless of its size, economic development, geographical position, aviation fleet. And future development of civil aviation is determined now on our joint ability to address major violations of the Chicago Convention by one of the ICAO Member States.

Destroyed Ukrainian airports, runways, aviation facilities, navigation infrastructure, closed airspace – these are the outcomes of breaching the basic articles of the Chicago Convention by Russia.

The unique and the heaviest cargo aircraft ever to take to the air - Antonov 225 “Mriya” (Dream in English) was destroyed on February 27, 2022 at Hostomel Airport near Kyiv as a result of the Russian Federation’s unprovoked full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. It had its first flight in 1988 and many of you may remember how indispensable this aircraft was in transporting medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All Russian infractions were clearly defined at the 226th Session of the Council and submitted to all Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The effect of these infractions goes far beyond Ukraine. Apart from closure of the entire Ukrainian airspace for civil aviation operations on February 24, many countries of the region suffered losses in traffic (including transit). The closure has led to significant changes in flight patterns between Europe and Asia. These disruptions resulted in additional fuel costs, additional CO2 emissions, scheduling and staffing constraints. Altogether, this has put additional pressure on the sustainable development of civil aviation in the region, especially during the post-COVID-19 period.

Such disrespect of the Convention and the established ICAO rules cannot be left without proper response from the world aviation community. If we allow ourselves to overlook such violations, then we should be prepared to have more of them to come.

We call upon all Delegations to support the adoption of the ICAO Resolution regarding the infractions to the Chicago Convention by the Russian Federation to be presented by the Secretariat during this Assembly.

Dear Delegates,

The sky is not safe today in Ukraine.

Yet even now, under these circumstances, Ukrainian airlines continue to operate abroad. Our Civil Aviation Authority continues to fulfil all of its obligations under the Chicago Convention. Our manufacturers continue to design and build aeronautical products. Our passengers are waiting to start flying from their homeland as soon as the security situation allows and our sovereign borders are restored. There is no doubt that Ukrainian aviation will further develop despite all the challenges posed by the actions of the aggressor state.

We invite all members of the civil aviation community to join our efforts to build back safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation operations in Ukraine in every way possible.

Madam President,

In conclusion, on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I would like to voice our support of ICAO efforts aimed at the development of global civil aviation, reassure the Assembly of Ukraine's commitment to strictly adhere to the norms and principles of international law and follow ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

Thank you, Madam President.

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