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Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY ISRAEL

(Presented by Israel)

Madam Secretary General,
Mr. President of the Assembly,
Mr. President of the Council,
Ministers of Transport and Heads of Delegations,
Distinguished Delegates

Regulation and Innovation are the core pillars for providing value to the Industry

This year, Israel celebrates the 70th anniversary of its joining to ICAO – less than a year after its birth as a nation. Hampered by a tiny airspace, and facing vast security and economics challenges, the Israeli civil aviation has developed gradually in order to achieve sustained economic growth.

The aircraft manufacturing industry was the first to develop, urged by the twin needs to provide employment for the nation's available workforce, and to support the country's foreign exports trade. This aviation manufacturing sector was one of the first major contributors to Israel's transformation into its modern incarnation as the "Start-Up Nation", globally known for its unique culture of entrepreneurship and innovative capacity.

The commercial air transport sector has also developed tremendously. The last decade has seen a significant growth in the international air traffic to and from Israel, growing at a rate almost double the global average growth in the last 6 years, since the signing of the open skies agreement between Israel and Europe.

Maintaining safety of such intense growth could only be assured through adherence to international standards, improving our Air Traffic Management system's performance and strengthening our aviation oversight capacity. Our major efforts to build an effective, sustainable oversight organization were recognized by a significant progress in the level of effective implementation, and Israel has been awarded the *Council President Certificate* at the 39th ICAO Assembly.

Encouraged by these achievements, Israel was eager to share its practices, experience and important lessons learned with other states. Over the past three years, the State of Israel has had the honour of participating in three technical assistance activities in different ICAO regions across the globe, in the framework of the ICAO EUR/NAT *No Country Left behind* Technical Assistance Program.

Another sector to receive necessary development is Aviation infrastructure. Facing the challenge of such intense and steady growth in aviation activity and the resulting increased pressure on infrastructure and services, Israel has renovated and expanded its main airport - Tel Aviv/Ben-Gurion International airport, and established a new International airport in its southern region - Eilat/Ramon International airport, which has achieved operational status this year. In addition, planning activities for the third international airport are in progress.

As part of a modern and busy aviation environment, we face the same challenges as most other states. However, our unique, tiny, congested airspace, and our proximity to conflict zones intensify those challenges and motivate us to constantly seek for innovative solutions to meet our stakeholders' needs. These solutions can be achieved only by balancing between innovation in a rapidly changing environment and the establishment of a responsive and flexible regulatory structure. We channel the Israeli innovative spirit to implement creative solutions to new challenges in aviation. In that sense we perceive Innovation and regulation as "both sides of the same coin", and keep in our minds the need to provide value for the aviation industry.

As a small country with a lean CAA we realize that lack of resources is the mother of innovation. We struggle to maintain our own regulations and keep it up-to-date ourselves, adopting foreign regulations and practices where possible, since we believe that this is the most appropriate approach to support the innovative culture of our country. This approach allowed us to complete, for the first time, a special certification process of an autonomous small UAS which has recently begun to operate routinely in Israel and subsequently in various locations worldwide.

As a small community it is easier for us to develop close working relationships with entrepreneurs, as well as with other authorities. These close relationships with the industry players allow them to be much more familiar with the applicable regulatory framework, and for us to better understand the challenges from the regulator's perspective and how the regulations should develop to.

Close relationships with other state authorities allow us to approach new, complex challenges much more efficiently and effectively. A good example for such relationships is the recently signed unique agreement between the Israeli Civil Aviation Authority and the Israeli National Cybersecurity Directorate. This agreement forms the basis of our national oversight approach for cybersecurity in aviation, and enables the industry and the authorities to start working together effectively even before the enactment of Aviation Cybersecurity regulations.

The sharing of information with colleagues worldwide is a major factor for success in meeting the Cyber threat. Therefore, we encourage the ICAO Council to adopt schemes and methods to further enhance the sharing of information in this area among ICAO member States and stakeholders.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. President, Madam Secretary General and the ICAO Secretariat for your endeavour and hard work involved in preparing this event, and I wish the success of the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly.