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ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY THAILAND

(Presented by Dr. Chula Sukmanop, Director General
of the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand)

Mr. President,
Madam Secretary General,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my greatest honor and pleasure to address at the 40th Session of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly. And on behalf of the Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand, please allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Canada, the President of the Council and also the Secretary General for your warm hospitality. I am truly honor to be in the presence of all ICAO member states and participants who share the same goal of achieving the sustainable growth of the global civil aviation system as stated in the ICAO's vision.

This year's assembly is very special as ICAO celebrates its 75th Anniversary. As one of the member states, Thailand would like to reaffirm our commitment to support and promote different aspects of ICAO's operations not only as the host country for the Asia-Pacific Regional Office but also as the member state that is ready to promote the safe, secure, efficient and sustainable development of international civil aviation.

Aviation industry has always played an important role in serving public and driving Thailand's economy. For the past 10 years, the growth in air transport is evidently illustrated through the 2.8-time increase in the number of passengers, which is the equivalent of 162 million passengers. This is approximately 10.8% growth per year, higher than ICAO's forecast for air transport growth in Asia that was predicted to be 7.3%. From this rising demand, Thailand now has 30 certified air operators and 38 airports. Moreover, with the growing of our air transport, this led to the increased in related activities such as aircraft parts manufacture, aircraft maintenance and aviation training. Therefore, this will present both economic opportunities and safety challenges and Thailand has to be prepared to keep up with the fast changing aviation industry.

As you might be aware, Thailand's civil aviation has its ups and downs during the past five years. In January 2015, the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA) audit of the country led to 33 Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) with the pinning of "the red flag" and the country's overall Effective Implementation (EI) score was at 34.20%. With accelerated efforts from the government and relevant stakeholders, we were able to lift the red flag within 2 years and 3 months and the latest Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) carried out by ICAO in May 2019 showed that the country EI has improved to 65.83%, surpassing ICAO's target of 60%. We can proudly say that we have now come back to international standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our notable achievement was a result of significant developments that have been made. Thailand by the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) undertook regulatory reform of the safety oversight system through the amendments of the primary regulation, introduced ICAO standard regulations, recruited new qualified technical staffs and provided appropriate trainings to enhance and maintain their competencies. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to ICAO and our partners; Japan, UK CAA, DGAC, EASA and FAA; for their kind assistance and collaboration, which played a crucial role as we were going through this major transition.

Although lifting the red flag is a significant turning point for our aviation industry, Thailand needs to carry on its missions to improve the aviation safety standards and becomes one of the world's forefront. For this reason, the next chapter in our aviation journey will be on improving and maintaining the effectiveness of aviation safety. Thailand is in the process of developing our State Safety Programme (SSP) and aims to effectively implement it by 2025 as committed in the Beijing Declaration.

Thailand, as ICAO member state, are bounded by the Convention on International Civil Aviation in compliance with the standards and agreements on aviation safety. Thailand by CAAT has the responsibility to prepare SSP and in order to set the foundation and strengthen the country's safety management; "the National Civil Aviation Safety Policy" was therefore announced. Our State Safety Policy, in line with the Integrated State Safety Programme outlined by ICAO, consists of:

- 1) developing safety standards
- 2) overseeing civil aviation activities
- 3) resolving safety issues
- 4) promoting data collection
- 5) ensuring adequate financial and qualified technical human resources

In addition, Thailand encourages stakeholder engagement and positive safety culture in a sustainable manner for the successful SSP implementation.

However, various challenges remain ahead. Given the size and complexity of Thailand's civil aviation system, our task in developing the SSP will not be an easy one and we graciously welcome any best practices and recommendations from our fellow member states and technical assistance from international organizations. With closer collaboration and the willingness to create a safe environment in air transport, we will certainly step up our effort to fulfill our commitments to enhance aviation safety, capacity, and harmonization together with ICAO and all member states.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

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