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Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY THAILAND

(Presented by H.E. Arkhom Termpittaypaisith,
Minister of Transport of Thailand)

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

It is a great honour for me to address on the occasion of the thirty-ninth session of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly today. On behalf of the Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Canada, the President of the Council and the Secretary-General for a very warm hospitality. I am really delighted with the friendly atmosphere among all ICAO Member States and participants as we gather here at this Assembly to show our further commitment to the Organization and our efforts for strengthening and promoting the sustainable growth of the global civil aviation system, as stated in the Organization's vision.

Thailand became an ICAO Member State in 1947 and it is very proud of us to be selected as the location of ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office since 1955. As the host country of a regional office, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to continue to fully support and contribute to the regional office.

Regarding the international civil aviation developments in Thailand, two largest international airports are now in services in our capital city of Bangkok, i.e. the 58-year-old Don-Mueang International Airport and the 10-year-old Suvarnabhumi International Airport with total capacity of nearly 60 million passengers per year. Overall, Thailand now has 38 public airports, of which 28 are custom airports. 11 Of the custom airports are currently having scheduled international flights. There are 38 certified commercial airlines including low cost operators which are playing vital role both domestic and international air transport markets.

Civil aviation plays a crucial part in the economic and social development of Thailand. Today, air transport industry in Thailand is growing more rapidly than originally planned and expect to grow at an accelerated rate in years to come due to number of tourists and travelers from around the world

and especially from within Asia. The number of passengers originated from, destined to or transferred through Bangkok and other cities has constantly increased every year. Also as part of global supply chain, a large volume of cargoes and parcels using Thailand as a distribution center as well as value added industries for transferring into the region and outside are also increasing faster and faster. All these are the advantages of having a good infrastructure, highly qualified workmanship and safety practices which keep up with the international standards and recommended practices.

As you may have known, in January 2015, an ICAO USOAP CMA audit of Thailand led to a Significant Safety Concern or SSC related to Aircraft Operation which called for Air Operator Certificates or AOCs to be reissued through a more comprehensive, well-structured and documented certification process. The SSC was followed by the US FAA downgrading the former Department of Civil Aviation or DCA from a “Category 1” to a “Category 2”.

And as a result, the Thai Government decided to restructure its safety oversight arrangement by separating the former DCA into two organisations, a new Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) and a Department of Airports (DOA) with an aim to clearly separate the regulator from the service provider.

Mr President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to resolve the SSC within the next 6 to 12 months, the key tasks undertaken by CAAT are as follows; firstly to prepare regulations, procedures and guidance for the recertification of AOCs for air operator which operate on international routes; secondly the issuing of rules and regulations for the transportation of dangerous goods and supporting the AOC recertification programme; thirdly the training of CAAT inspectors and technical staffs, and; fourthly the assessment and reissuing of AOCs by CAAT staffs in close supervision of experts and inspectors from foreign organization. Throughout the recertification process, CAAT staffs have been trained both in theory and on-the-job from the international experts. The goal is for Thailand to carry out a detailed internal audit in February 2017 and then request for an ICAO ICVM as soon as the CAAT is able to demonstrate a more systematic work process according to the Corrective Actions Plan to resolve the SSC that was endorsed by ICAO.

The new Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand not only aims to resolve the SSC, but takes the opportunity to develop sustainability and enhance its overall safety oversight capacity. In addition to the re-allocated staffs from the former DCA, new staffs have been recruited to ensure having sufficient technical and operational staffs, commensurate with the scale of activity in Thailand. Having the highly competent staffs, a comprehensive training programme has been developed and implemented for flight operations, airworthiness, dangerous goods and cabin safety and other areas accordingly. Furthermore, the new Civil Aviation Act which is in line with the ICAO Model primary legislation is being enacted and supporting regulations are being developed to pave the way for speeding up the legislative process for adopting ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS).

Thailand will develop its national safety oversight system based on the amended and future updates of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan or GASP. Thailand also aims to achieve an effective implementation of SARPS above 60% and anticipates for a fully capable safety oversight system being in place within the next 12 months. In addition to the safety aspect, Thailand is also giving high priority to the environment protection. According to the Royal Decree on Thailand’s Civil Aviation clearly states that CAAT will issue regulations, laws and orders to stipulate qualification, rules, standards

and practical guidance for environmental protection. The Aviation Environmental Division has been established to be responsible for this. Regarding aviation security, Thailand believes that this is also one of the most important elements of the international civil aviation system. We are now preparing to be audited under ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme next year.

Furthermore, I would like to highlight that Thailand strongly supports member States to ratify the Montreal Convention 1999, we are now on the process of promulgating national law to implement the said convention and after it entered into force, Thailand will submit the instrument of accession to ICAO as soon as possible. We are expecting this to be no later than the first quarter of next year.

Mr President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion, Thailand would like to express our appreciation for ICAO both Headquarter in Montreal and Regional Office in Bangkok, EASA, FAA, Japan and all friends and partners who render their assistance to us. We are delighted to be a part of international aviation community and strongly believe that friendship and cooperation amongst all of us will be fostered and become even stronger in the years ahead. The SSC has been catalyst for creating and enhance safety oversight system in Thailand. Please be assured that Thailand aviation systems will come back and ready to roar in the near future.

Thank you very much for you attention.

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