



## ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### Agenda Item 22: Other high-level policy issues to be considered by the Executive Committee

#### AIRSPACE MODERNIZATION AND CRISIS RESPONSE: EGYPT'S ROLE IN ENSURING AVIATION CONTINUITY AMID REGIONAL CONFLICT

(Presented by Egypt)

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the recent regional crisis involving missile exchanges between Iran and Israel, Egypt played a pivotal role in maintaining aviation continuity by keeping its airspace open, fully operational, and safe. Egypt provided critical support to international air traffic, accepting rerouted and emergency-diverted aircraft while ensuring uninterrupted flow within the Cairo flight information region (FIR).

In light of this experience and Egypt's growing regional aviation responsibilities, the State calls on ICAO and international partners to support an urgent and strategic modernization of Egypt's airspace management infrastructure, consistent with the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and ICAO's aviation system block upgrade (ASBU).

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- acknowledge Egypt's contribution to global aviation continuity and safety during the recent regional conflict;
- support Egypt's airspace modernization program through ICAO technical assistance and development partnerships; and
- promote regional collaboration on crisis-resilient airspace management in politically sensitive flight information regions (FIRs); and
- endorse increased collaboration between States in the ICAO MID Region for flexible and secure air traffic management (ATM) system upgrades.

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Strategic Goals:</i>        | This working paper relates to <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> .                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Financial implications:</i> | To be addressed through ICAO development programs and partnerships with donor States and regional organizations.                                                                                                         |
| <i>References:</i>             | Doc 9750, <i>Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP)</i><br>Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBU Framework)<br>ICAO MID Region Air Navigation Strategy<br>Doc 9971, <i>Manual on Collaborative Air Traffic Flow Management</i> |

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Egypt occupies a central geographical location at the intersection of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, serving as a vital hub for global air transport.

1.2 In April 2024, during a period of heightened geopolitical instability marked by active missile exchanges between Iran and Israel, Egypt demonstrated operational leadership and regional solidarity by maintaining open and secure airspace for civil aviation.

## **2. EGYPT'S RESPONSE DURING THE CRISIS**

2.1 While several neighbouring States closed their airspace during the hostilities, Egypt ensured that the Cairo flight information region (FIR) remained fully operational, allowing for continued overflights, safe rerouting, and emergency support.

2.2 Egypt accepted diverted aircraft from multiple international carriers, ensuring rapid coordination across military and civil aviation stakeholders.

2.3 All Egyptian international airports, including Cairo, Alexandria, Sharm El Sheikh, Hurghada, Luxor, and others, remained fully operational and capable of handling emergency landings, technical stops, or humanitarian needs.

2.4 A national aviation emergency response protocol was activated under the supervision of the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) and the Egyptian Air Navigation Services (NANSC), ensuring seamless service provision.

2.5 Due to regional FIR closures, over 1,500 flights per day were handled within Egyptian airspace a significant increase over normal traffic volumes.

2.6 Egypt's air traffic controllers managed the situation with exceptional professionalism, situational awareness, and technical resilience, demonstrating capacity to lead regional aviation continuity in crisis.

## **3. LESSONS LEARNED, AND MODERNIZATION CHALLENGES**

3.1 The crisis highlighted both Egypt's strengths and infrastructure limitations. Despite the successful management of increased air traffic, future challenges require urgent modernization of:

- a) surveillance systems (radar, ADS-B);
- b) communications, navigation, and surveillance/air traffic management (CNS/ATM) infrastructure;
- c) digital air traffic control (ATC) communication and data-sharing platforms;
- d) contingency coordination; and
- e) operation training.

3.2 Egypt is committed to full alignment with ICAO's aviation system block upgrades (ASBUs) and the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), and to investing in national and regional resilience frameworks.

3.3 The need for integrated regional airspace contingency planning is evident, and Egypt offers to host or coordinate such initiatives under ICAO guidance.

#### **4. REQUEST FOR ICAO SUPPORT**

4.1 Egypt calls on ICAO and international partners to support its airspace modernization program, including:

- a) technical and operational assessments of current ATM systems;
- b) financial and developmental assistance;
- c) capacity-building for ATC staff and planners; and
- d) facilitation of regional collaboration on crisis preparedness.

4.2 Egypt welcomes ICAO MID Office engagement and the development of a regional crisis coordination mechanism for FIRs affected by political or military tensions.

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