



## **ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION**

### **PLENARY**

#### **Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States**

#### **STATEMENT BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

(Presented by the Russian Federation)

Mr. President of the Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of the Russian Federation, I am pleased to welcome all participants and observers of the 42nd Session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization and to express the hope that our work will be carried out in the spirit of shared understanding, cooperation and mutual support.

As a member of ICAO and a party to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the Russian Federation has always consistently supported the harmonious technological development of international civil aviation with the participation of all ICAO Member States.

Russia, being the largest aviation power with a history of civil aviation reaching back more than a hundred years, has a developed air transport system with an extensive network of interregional and international routes. Air transport plays a key role in the interconnection of various parts of the territory of our country and, for some remote areas of the Far North, Siberia and the Far East, it is the only means of ensuring transport accessibility.

It should be recalled that the controlled airspace of the Russian Federation has an area of more than 26 million square kilometres, including 9 million square kilometres over the Arctic Ocean, and within the borders of this airspace lie the shortest routes connecting the countries of Europe and North American with those of South-East Asia – the world's centre of economic growth. The unified air traffic management system of the Russian Federation serves more than 1.5 million flights a year; at any one time it manages more than 1,000 aircraft and it has a staff complement of about 27,000 people. The system includes one main centre and 14 regional centres, interacts with 21 neighbouring States and provides air traffic services on 928 air routes with a total length of over 870,000 kilometres.

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<sup>1</sup> Russian version provided by the Russian Federation

Of the 225 airports in the Russian Federation, 82 are international, and Russian airlines carry more than 110 million passengers a year and regularly fly to 27 countries around the world.

The development of a number of long-haul and regional passenger aircraft is nearing completion. Over the period from 2019 to 2024, 35 air hubs were renovated. The upgrading of airports in Russia continues and, by 2030, a further 75 airports will be constructed or refurbished, 29 of these in the Far East.

Despite the unilateral restrictive measures introduced by a number of ICAO Member States in violation of the provisions of the Chicago Convention and other rules of international law, the Russian civil aviation industry continues to develop actively, Russian and foreign airlines are increasing their volumes of air traffic and expanding their route networks, thereby demonstrating the interest shown by foreign States in cooperating with the Russian Federation in air transport.

The Russian Federation is open to innovations in civil aviation and is introducing advanced technologies in the areas of flight safety, air navigation, protection of civil aviation from acts of unlawful interference, search and rescue, certification of aviation equipment and training of aviation personnel. Russia is successfully carrying out a national project on uncrewed aircraft systems, the purpose of which is to ensure technological independence and create new markets for such systems.

The Russian Federation is convinced of the enduring importance of the preambular provisions of the Chicago Convention that "the future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world, yet its abuse can become a threat to the general security". In this regard, our country is open to cooperation with the international aviation community so that "international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically".

Thus, since 2012, the Russian Federation has been making its global navigation satellite system – GLONASS – available free of charge to the world aviation community. Moreover, during the assessment of the current operational characteristics of the GLONASS system, it was confirmed that, in terms of its accuracy and reliability, GLONASS fully meets the requirements of ICAO standards and recommended practices.

The Russian and Chinese segments of the Russia-China Consortium, which is the designated global centre for information on space weather, have been in operation since 2018. Similarly, information on space weather is provided free of charge to aviation users by this consortium.

The Russian Federation has a historically well established and comprehensive system of training aviation specialists, including for many developing countries.

Virtually since the establishment of the ICAO Aviation Safety (SAFE) Fund in 2010, the Russian Federation has regularly paid voluntary contributions to the Fund, demonstrating yet again the commitment of our country to the further development of international cooperation in the interests of the safety of international air navigation. The Russian Federation is also one of the main contributors to the regular budget of ICAO and, among the States that are not members of the ICAO Council, the largest contributor. At the same time, the processing of these contributions has recently been seriously hampered by the unlawful unilateral restrictive measures imposed by a number of States in the banking sector.

Given its leading role in the field of international civil aviation, the Russian Federation has decided to put forward its candidacy for election to the ICAO Council for the next three-year term, with a

view to making an even greater contribution to the sustainable development of the global air transport system, in full cooperation with other ICAO Member States and on the basis of mutual respect for equality of opportunity.

As is common knowledge, last year marked the 80th anniversary of the signing of the Chicago Convention, which became the constitutive instrument of ICAO, a universal international intergovernmental organization of the United Nations system. No one can deny that, over the entire period of its operation, ICAO has managed to achieve a great deal in terms of enhancing the safety and efficiency of international air navigation and achieving the uniformity of rules, standards and procedures related to the functioning of international civil aviation. The Organization's global leadership has been fully demonstrated in its vigorous efforts to sustain and rehabilitate international aviation during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the lost vitality and sustainability of the industry were recovered thanks to the unity of action manifested by the Contracting States, brought together by ICAO, a unity enshrined in the Declaration of the 2021 High-level Conference on COVID-19. It is all the more surprising that, since 2022, the activities of ICAO have come up against an unprecedented challenge, characterized by a counteractive and extremely negative impact on the current development of international civil aviation.

Notwithstanding the noble goals and objectives set for ICAO by its founders, the Russian Federation is currently observing with extreme concern and dismay dangerous trends at work in the activities of ICAO under the influence of a certain group of States, which are threatening the very existence of ICAO as a forum of the international aviation community that serves the interests of strengthening friendship and mutual understanding among the nations and peoples of the world. A policy of "double standards" is being politicized and propagated in the work of the constituent bodies of ICAO, a specialized agency of the United Nations designed, first and foremost, to perform technical tasks in the field of aviation.

Unfortunately, in a situation where a certain group of States constitute a prevailing majority in the key ICAO bodies, many of the mechanisms of the work of ICAO activities that are provided for by the Chicago Convention and which are aimed, primarily, at strengthening inter-State cooperation, resolving differences and establishing the truth, are being exploited by this group of States in their opportunistic interests to punish out-of-favour States that are pursuing an independent policy. The rules of procedure of ICAO bodies are ignored, and the rights of certain States are violated during meetings.

ICAO safety monitoring mechanisms, which should be primarily aimed at enhancing flight safety and preventing accidents, are also being unscrupulously used to satisfy the political interests of a certain group of States.

Thus, notwithstanding all the existing ICAO mechanisms, programmes, Standards and Recommended Practices, guidelines and other guidance materials on ensuring the application of aviation safety measures at the global and regional levels, artificial restrictions are being imposed on some States through assignment of the ICAO status of significant safety concern (the so-called SSC) solely for political reasons, which constitutes a de facto form of deterrence, and through attempts to create obstacles to free and fair competition in the world air transport market. The political subtext of such SSCs is based on the absence of any actual safety audits in the State in question.

There is a clearly indifferent and even disdainful attitude by the ICAO bodies to the interests of those countries against which certain groups of States have introduced unlawful unilateral restrictive measures in the domain of civil aviation. Despite the fact that the introduction of these restrictive measures obviously has a negative impact on the functioning of the entire system of international civil aviation, adversely affects the environment and undermines the very foundations of the ICAO Global Air Navigation

Plan and the concept of seamless air navigation, the ICAO bodies are making no attempt to counteract the measures.

The Russian Federation resolutely opposes attempts to use ICAO as an inter-State platform for political pressure on countries pursuing an independent policy, and as an instrument by which the fundamental goals and objectives of the Organization are selectively distorted in relation to those States against which biased decisions are adopted or on which sanctions are imposed for purely political reasons.

The Russian Federation is submitting working papers on this very sensitive and topical issue and we expect that these will be supported by the Assembly in order to strengthen the Organization, uphold international security and ensure the development of peoples.

Serious concern is occasioned by the steady diminution of the language services at ICAO. There are instances of blatant linguistic discrimination, in violation of the fundamental principle of multilingualism, when a number of ICAO international meetings, symposiums, seminars and expert group meetings are not furnished with language services and many of the important documents considered in ICAO bodies are not translated into all the working languages of ICAO, including Russian.

At the same time, the Organization's mandate is constantly being expanded without any justification to include secondary issues that have nothing to do with the safe, efficient and orderly development of air transport. Against the backdrop of budgetary constraints, this expansion of the competence of an international aviation organization cannot but cause concern.

We would very much like to hope that ICAO is able to eliminate the aforementioned negative trends in its activities for the benefit of the entire international aviation community. Once again, I wish the participants of the 42nd session of the ICAO Assembly effective and fruitful work in the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

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