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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY SENEGAL

(Presented by Yankoba DIEME, Minister of Infrastructure and Land and Air Transport)

Minister for Air Transport of Canada
Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,
President of the Assembly,
President of the Council of ICAO
Secretary General of ICAO
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great honour and profound respect that I address you today, on the occasion of our 42nd Assembly, to share with you Senegal's strengths and prospects in the civil aviation and air transport sector.

Senegal's political and social stability in conjunction with responsible governance by the country's highest authorities, headed by President Bassirou Diomaye Diakharr Faye and Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, make it a favourable environment for investment and strategic partnerships.

Strategically located at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and the Americas, it is a key hub for regional and international air transit.

Senegal's modern infrastructure, exemplified by Blaise Diagne International Airport, is well equipped to handle the sustained growth in air traffic, while strengthening links with the rest of the world.

Blaise Diagne International Airport is now a key driver of the economy, facilitating not only the movement of people but also of goods, and helping to position Senegal as a fast-growing regional hub.

The combination of quality infrastructure and a commitment to safety, security, facilitation and compliance with international standards, creates an attractive environment for airlines and foreign investors.

In addition, our country is resolutely committed to sustainable development, respecting global environmental standards while building up capacity to manage increased passenger flow at our airports.

¹ French version submitted by Senegal

As part of this drive, we have launched numerous projects to modernize our airport facilities by improving safety and promoting greener aviation, in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century with regard to carbon and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Our ambition reflects the National Transformation Agenda for 2050, which aims to make Senegal a sovereign, just and prosperous nation rooted in strong values.

This ambitious programme promotes development of resilient infrastructure, economic diversification and the promotion of an aviation sector geared towards innovation and sustainability, in line with our commitments to sustainable development.

The 2050 Agenda will underpin our efforts to develop the aviation sector, with constant investment to modernize facilities, improve safety, reinforce security and comply with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

The aim is to position our country as a prime regional air hub, capable of attracting more foreign airlines and boosting our continent's connectivity.

At the same time, tourism, a major component of our socio-economic development strategy, is enjoying remarkable growth, fuelled by our rich cultural and historical heritage and natural diversity, which attract increasing numbers of visitors every year, generating positive economic spin-offs for our entire aviation sector.

Thus the tourism sector in Senegal benefits from the performance of aviation and air transport. Consequently, we are working hard to implement facilitation Standards and Recommended Practices, so as to ensure the smoothest possible flow of people and goods through our high-performance, reliable aviation system.

It must be said, however, that many countries, particularly in Africa, still face major challenges in implementing ICAO's strategic goals.

Firstly, in terms of civil aviation safety: ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme - Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP - CMA) audits show that more needs to be done in Africa to bring the level of effective implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices up to the world average. Senegal supports the ICAO's No Country Left Behind initiative and hereby declares its willingness to share its experience, following the excellent results obtained in the ICAO audits in 2024.

As to security and risk management, in the face of threats that take so many forms and that are increasingly linked to cybersecurity, our countries need to adapt if they are to mitigate risks. International organizations such as ICAO and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) must appeal to governments and financial institutions to mobilize resources to address equipment shortages.

In air transport regulation, the African Union has launched the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), but regulatory differences between Member States, lack of harmonization and economic and political issues are holding back regional integration and enhanced connectivity between African cities.

As regards human resources and training, there is an acute shortage of qualified pilots, air traffic controllers and maintenance and navigation technicians in Africa and worldwide. We need to find synergies to encourage a more resilient training policy for the new generation of aviation professionals (NGAP).

In terms of financial resources and investment, most modernization projects for Africa's international airports find themselves struggling to mobilize funds. Usually, a public-private partnership will overcome a certain number of obstacles, but it has become clear that there is a need for steady financial support and detailed planning by governments. It is up to ICAO to create opportunities for exchanges with financial institutions to support the development of aviation infrastructure.

Similarly, the delay in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area is also affecting air mobility.

Turning lastly to political and social conflict and instability, the difficult security situation in some African countries is impacting regional air traffic management and limiting the ability of those countries' aviation authorities to pay proper attention to implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The aforementioned challenges show that the issues are complex, but also point to opportunities for cooperation, funding and exchange of best practices to overcome these obstacles.

I therefore wish to emphasize the need for multilateral cooperation, notably through ICAO technical assistance and the mobilization of innovative financing to speed up the modernization of the African aviation sector.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that Senegal, through the National Agenda for Transformation 2050 and its unwavering ambition to develop modern infrastructure, is resolutely committed to innovation and sustainability and to making its aviation sector a vector of shared progress.

We intend to pursue our efforts to make our country an example of sustainable development and connectivity, in partnership with the entire international community.

Thank you for your kind attention and your interest in our shared ambitions. I hope that this 42nd ICAO Assembly will be a fruitful opportunity to strengthen international cooperation for the sustainable development of aviation worldwide.

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