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PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY TUVALU

(Presented by Tuvalu)

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu, I extend warm greetings and appreciation for the opportunity to address this Assembly.

For Tuvalu, aviation is not a matter of convenience. It is a matter of survival. With our population scattered across nine islands in the vast Pacific, and with only a few flights each week linking us to the outside world, air services are our lifeline. They connect us to medical care, education, trade, and essential services.

Yet this lifeline is fragile. Our single runway in Funafuti lies just metres above sea level. Rising seas, stronger storms, and saltwater intrusion threaten the very infrastructure that sustains our nation's connection to the world.

Mr. President, Tuvalu approaches this Assembly through three lenses: connectivity, climate change, and collaboration.

First, connectivity as a right.

For small island developing States, air services are essential to human security. ICAO policies and global measures must safeguard, not undermine, this connectivity.

Second, climate change and resilience.

Tuvalu stands on the frontline of a crisis we did not cause. We support the Long-Term Aspirational Goal of net-zero aviation emissions by 2050. But ambition must be matched with justice. A just and equitable transition means ensuring that the costs of compliance — whether through sustainable aviation fuels, offsets, or new technologies — do not fall disproportionately on small and remote States.

We therefore call on this Assembly to commit not only to ambitious climate targets, but also to dedicated financing and technical assistance for climate-resilient aviation infrastructure in vulnerable States.

Third, collaboration across scattered States.

The Pacific is vast and fragmented, and most of our island nations cannot sustain aviation systems at scale on their own. To address this, the Regional Aviation Ministers of the Pacific have established a dedicated Working Group to explore practical ways our members can collaborate and share resources. We call on ICAO to support this endeavour and to promote cooperative solutions — from joint fleets and harmonized regulations to pooled training, remote air traffic control, and digital border management — so that small island States are not left behind.

Mr. President, aviation safety and security demand the broadest possible cooperation. In this regard, Tuvalu believes that all parties operating significant aviation networks should be able to share their expertise and contribute to ICAO's work. Taiwan manages one of the busiest aviation hubs in Asia, and its exclusion from ICAO processes limits the exchange of critical information. We therefore encourage ICAO to explore practical and inclusive arrangements that allow Taiwan to participate meaningfully, for the benefit of global aviation safety.

Finally, Tuvalu reminds this Assembly that “No Country Left Behind” must remain more than a slogan. It must be a principle that guides every decision we take. That means:

- Recognizing the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS in all climate and environmental measures;
- Establishing a dedicated ICAO mechanism for SIDS aviation resilience;
- Embedding equity into the implementation of the LTAG; and
- Ensuring that global connectivity is preserved for every State, no matter how small or remote.

Tuvalu's voice is small, but our message is clear: we need ambition — but ambition with fairness. We need transformation — but transformation that carries all of us together. The skies that unite our world must not leave behind those who are most exposed.

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