



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

A42-WP/614¹

P/25

18/9/25

(Information paper)

English and Spanish only

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY SPAIN

(Presented by Spain)

Dear President, Delegates,

It is an honor for me to address this Assembly today on behalf of the Spanish delegation, as Minister in charge of transport.

I would like to begin by congratulating the President of the Assembly and wish him every success in this significant endeavor at the head of ICAO.

In addition, I would like to point out that this Organization founded in 1944 when, at a crucial moment in history, cooperation was chosen over discord.

This is no trivial matter nowadays, when serious doubts are being cast on the rules-based multilateral system. A system which, through ICAO, for instance, has allowed for the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation.

This is the reason why Spain wished to attend this event at the highest level. And this was not just a wish; rather, we felt it was our duty to do so.

When it comes to questioning the international multilateral system, we must not yield an inch. We have a duty to preserve it and continue to develop it.

In places like this Assembly, we must raise our voices and speak clearly: the rules-based multilateral system is the only effective way for countries to engage in dialogue and address global challenges. There is no alternative.

Advocating for a return to international relations as a “clash of pool balls” is as naive as it is irresponsible.

As such, ICAO can count on Spain’s support to continue leading the safe and sustainable development of aviation, as it has been doing for the past 80 years.

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by Spain

In this regard, we need to commend the fact that, for the first time, ICAO has a long-term Strategic Plan.

This plan will help guide international aviation in the following decades and address the main challenges the industry faces, such as air traffic growth, decarbonization, and improving safety.

As for the latter, safety, we have unfortunately been witnessing a series of tragedies unfolding in the airspace of armed conflict areas.

The use of weapons against civil aircraft, the launch of ballistic missiles, interference with satellite positioning systems, and inadequate civil-military coordination are putting civil aviation in serious risk.

We cannot tolerate these actions, and we strongly condemn them.

We deem it essential that ICAO coordinate the necessary measures to prevent or mitigate these accidents and casualties. Here, I would like to emphasize the major relevance of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families for Spain.

Furthermore, in the coming years, traditional aviation will have to safely and orderly coexist with an increasing number of unconventional air operations.

It must do so both at the lower limits of airspace, as in the case of urban air mobility and drones, and at high altitude, with high-altitude operations or, in the not-too-distant future, with commercial space operations.

Therefore, ensuring the safe integration of these types of aviation into the airspace is essential, with ICAO leading and coordinating these efforts and allocating the necessary resources to this end.

A good example to follow would be the Organization's work to achieve the ambitious goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

In 2022, we approved a global framework to achieve this goal and set an interim reduction target of 5% by 2030, which I am confident we will reach thanks to sustainable fuels and other clean energies, as well as the development of new technologies and the optimization of aviation operations.

Climate change is a reality. We are all witnessing and experiencing the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

We must not only fight against global warming, but also assess the impact of these phenomena on civil aviation safety, and improve the resilience of our transport systems. The work of the various ICAO expert groups in this area is vital and must be prioritized and given due attention.

Finally, to achieve the proposed objectives, we need to have the right professionals. Currently, there is a shortage of specialized and adequately trained personnel, which could have negative consequences for the future development of the sector.

That is why we support ICAO's work to enhance the appeal of the aviation sector and achieve greater recruitment and talent retention, especially female talent.

For all the reasons I have just mentioned, I would like to once again reaffirm our commitment to ICAO and multilateralism. We intend to continue working to defend the Organization's objectives and tackle future challenges through our representation on the ICAO Council, which, with your support, we hope to renew at this Assembly.

And also through the many international cooperation programs in which we participate. We are certain that only by working together, jointly, can we face the significant challenges of international civil aviation.

Thank you very much.

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