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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

(Presented by the United Kingdom)

UK Opening Statement to the 42nd ICAO Assembly

President of the Assembly, President of the Council, Secretary General, Ministers and distinguished delegates, it is an honour to address you at the opening of the 42nd Session of the ICAO Assembly.

This Assembly convenes at a pivotal moment. Geopolitical tensions continue to challenge the rules-based international order upon which ICAO and the broader UN system were founded.

At the same time, our global aviation sector is expanding rapidly, alongside new technological innovation from AI to UAVs, and emerging threats such as cybersecurity vulnerabilities and GNSS interference.

In this challenging context, ICAO's role is clear.

Ensuring that aviation remains a unifying force for global cooperation and friendship is more vital than ever. We must rise above our differences, seek compromise, and work together to shape a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for our sector.

Effective and principled multilateralism is essential. Just last year, we celebrated ICAO's 80th anniversary – a testament to the enduring vision of its founders. Today, we must build upon their legacy and reaffirm aviation as a force for good. This also requires this Assembly to take the necessary steps to protect the Chicago Convention and ensure that those who violate it, are called to account.

In these challenging times, ICAO must efficiently deliver its core principles: safety, security and sustainability:

- On **safety**, we must protect aviation's status as the safest mode of transport. As the sector grows, integrating new technologies such as Drones, eVTOLs, and AI into our complex systems will be increasingly demanding. ICAO must build the frameworks that enable safe and fair adoption of these transformative technologies for all.

- On **security**, our collective responsibility is to protect the travelling public. This includes holding accountable those who endanger lives. ICAO must respond decisively to emerging threats, such as GNSS interference, cyberattacks, and managing safety effectively near conflict zones.
- On **sustainability**, we all agree the path to long term growth lies in decarbonising aviation. ICAO has made historic progress – from the Long-Term Aspirational Goal agreed at the last Assembly to the global SAF framework adopted at CAAF/3. Our focus shifts now to implementation: monitoring progress, deploying sustainable fuels, supporting CORSIA as the sector’s global market-based measure, and enabling implementation support for all states. The UK is pleased to have supported ACT-CORSIA, ACT-SAF and the Finvest Hub in the last triennium and remains committed to progress in this area.

To achieve these goals, **we must invest in ICAO and our people**. At the heart of aviation are the passengers who use its services and the millions who work across the industry. Key to our success will be attracting the right people, with the right skills in the right places. The Next Generation of Aviation Professionals programme offers a powerful platform to inspire long-term careers and strengthen our work force. We must continue offering this programme our full-throated support.

Finally, the UK remains fully committed to the principle of **“no country left behind”**. Over the past triennium we have supported states across ICAO’s work: from developing sustainable fuel markets to advancing regional safety initiatives. The work to build a safe, secure and sustainable sector rests on all our shoulders.

The challenges before us are significant, but so too are the opportunities. By embracing the spirit of the Chicago Convention, we can build a faster growing, more advanced and more inclusive sector that leaves no one behind.

Thank you.

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