



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States

STATEMENT BY BELIZE

(Presented by Belize)

Mr. Chairman of the 42nd ICAO assembly; Mr. President of the ICAO Council; Mr. Secretary General of ICAO; Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Members of the ICAO Council; Directors General of Civil Aviation; Chiefs of Delegations, delegates, and other guests, good morning.

Mr. Chairman, congratulations on your appointment as President of the 42nd ICAO Assembly, an important signal of ICAO's commitment to more significant inclusion of all states at all decision-making levels.

Belize wishes to take this opportunity to remind this honorable assembly of the significance of aviation to the global economy. Aviation consistently continues to fuel the world by bringing people together, promoting business, and uniting families. In Belize's case, Tourism plays a significant role in our socio-economic welfare and given that in Belize, aviation is one of the pillars of tourism, as a state we are keen on ensuring that aviation receives the level of importance it merits.

Understanding the importance of civil aviation, Belize has now dispatched a Permanent Mission to ICAO. This is a historic fete for a small but thriving nation. Understanding the need for inclusivity, we have ratified Articles 50(a) and 56. We continually seek to engage partner states via the signing of bi-lateral air service agreements.

Mr. Chair, as a country defined by connectivity – geographically poised between the Caribbean and Central America, an important region that bridges North and South America Belize continues to collaborate with its partners in both regions with the intent of improving oversight capacity as improved provision of services. At home, we clearly understand the need to ensure a sustainable flow of aviation professionals and as such we have partnered with local learning institutions to help produce the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals. My government, understanding the importance of aviation, has recently negotiated a \$250 million dollar upgrade program for the Philip Goldson international airport. This as we look forward to exponential growth of our tourism product. We continually see increased connectivity to Belize and in particular, I am proud to say that as of December 8 you will be able to fly direct to Belize from ICAO's home Montreal. Understanding the growth, Belizean airlines, in 2025 have invested significantly, we are expecting that by the end of 2025 our aircraft registry will have grown by 15%. In response, the Government of Belize has started and advanced planning for the development of two new airports, both capable of accommodating transport aircraft.

As a part of one of the regions that is most vulnerable to climate change, our priorities align with ICAO's long term aspirational goals. Belize has since 2021, took part in the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation on a voluntary basis. We are about to start a feasibility study for the future production of Sustainable Aviation Fuels and along with our COCESNA partners we have worked to create efficiencies in air navigation routes.

As per the COCESNA rotation agreement we also can vie for a seat within the ICAO Council. This is a unique opportunity but also as huge responsibility to represent not only ourselves but also the 6 other countries of Central America namely: El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama. In addition, Mr. President, as a member state of the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, we received the endorsement of all 12 member states of the CARICOM during the COFCOR meeting held on 9th May 2025 in St. Kitts and Nevis. Without a doubt, Mr. President, an important mandate to be a voice for our small nations on the ICAO council ensuring that we are "not left behind." Today, Belize steps up to take its place on the global platform to be heard. We are convinced that when offered the opportunity small nations can contribute significantly to the sustainable and innovative growth of the global aviation industry.

Mr. President, today I am truly honored and proud to address this 42nd Assembly on behalf of the Government and people of my country, Belize. A small but thriving nation that on September 21st celebrated its 44th Independence Anniversary. Civil Aviation is a vital lifeline for Belize. It sustains our tourism sector, bolsters trade and economic development and links our people. Our government, recognizing the importance of civil aviation to our economic growth, especially to our Tourism Industry, declared aviation a national priority. In so doing our Prime Minister, Honorable John Briceño, made the bold decision to place the Ministry of Civil Aviation under his responsibility. As Minister of Civil Aviation, the Hon. John Briceño is leading the modernization of aviation in Belize. This sign of strong political will at the highest level is to ensure that aviation-based initiatives receive adequate support for successful implementation. My government is proud to provide an enabling environment which moves aviation to the forefront of our economic agenda and development.

Belize, a signatory to the Chicago Convention since December 1990 and a member of ICAO since 1991 fully supports ICAO's 2026-2050 Strategic Plan. Our government embraces guiding principles of greater inclusion, innovation, economic growth, and sustainability in aviation. With the support of important partners such as COCESNA, LACAC and ICAO Belize has made significant strides in modernizing air navigation systems, implementing efficient border and passenger processing and integrating environment safeguards into aviation planning. Our primary international gateway, the Philip S.W Goldson International airport is presently implementing a 265-million-dollar expansion project to accommodate larger aircrafts and more visitors to Belize. Mr. President, we see ourselves as an important partner in the achievement of Long-Term Aspirational Goals for international aviation, the Global Aviation Safety Plan, Global Air Navigation Plan, Gender Equality, Strengthening Aviation Security, promoting sustainability and the spirit of reconnecting aviation. Without a doubt an under-taking that will only be possible if our joint vision and efforts are given priority.

Mr. President would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the support received for Belize's Candidature to the ICAO Council. This candidacy has reflected our deep commitment to the values of ICAO and our desire to contribute meaningfully to the future of global aviation. Belize brings a record of regional cooperation, a strong commitment to ICAO's strategic objective and a collaborative spirit for multilateralism. We can assure you, that granted our wings, we will soar high as an example that small nations can be tremendous success stories.

I thank you; Mr. President and I thank you, all present today!