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## **ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION**

### **PLENARY**

#### **Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States**

#### **STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE**

(Presented by the Honorable Minister of Transport and Aviation of Sierra Leone,  
Kabbineh Moinama Kallon)

The ICAO President Dr. Benard Olumuyiwa Aliu,  
the Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu,  
Colleague Ministers and Director Generals of respective States,  
distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you greetings from the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio who has a long lasting relationship with the aviation community dating as far back in the early 90s as a young military officer trained by the UN in Aviation Security. This brief history about our President tells you the level of political support given to the development of Civil Aviation in Sierra Leone under the New Direction administration.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, please permit me to highlight some of the key issues relating to the state of Civil Aviation in Sierra Leone today, with specific reference to the New Direction manifesto of President Bio. Let me begin with a quote from the President:

*“Enforcement of regulations by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) continues to be weak and the CAA is not economically sustainable given its inability to generate revenue and its low level of competence and capability.”*

*This is an extract from the policy statement delivered by President Bio at the State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, in May 2018, barely a month upon assuming office from his electoral victory in the National Elections.*

This was not a mere political statement (laugh), but one that required specific policy actions because our President is nicknamed “Talk and Do” meaning - when he says something, he does it.

Today, I am proud to report to you that we have an autonomous Civil Aviation Authority (The SLCAA) with strong political support from the President and the government of Sierra Leone.

For the first time in the history of our country the development of the Aviation industry has been given such prominence by making the SLCAA financially autonomous and including the enhancement of Global Aviation Safety and Security in our National Development Plan (2019 -2023).

Noting the fact that International *connectivity in our country is served by the Freetown International Airport only and according to report of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), we are far below the 60 percent safety threshold commonly referred to as the “Abuja Safety Targets” and also below some of the global targets under the Windhoek Declaration for aviation security and facilitation.*

*In light of the above, President Bio, on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2019, reconvened the House of Parliament for the Repeal and Replacement of the Civil Aviation Act 2017 to provide a strong legal framework that is in compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) in both Aviation Safety and Security Oversight for the state and also Ratified certain Protocols and Conventions. As I speak, I am proud to announce to the Aviation family that the state of Sierra Leone now has a robust Civil Aviation Primary Legislation (Civil Aviation Act, 2019). Again, this was the first time in the history of Sierra Leone – for a government agency or SOE to push government to reconvene parliament. Reconvening Parliament from recess had only been done once in the last two decades and that was during the Ebola outbreak which was considered a Global and National Public Health Emergency. I am recalling these events for you Ladies and Gentlemen to lay bare the facts that aviation in Sierra Leone is in a different trajectory and not the business as usual. Against this backdrop, I wish to reaffirm Sierra Leone’s strong commitment to upholding the Ideals and Principles of ICAO under both Chicago and Montreal Conventions and also in the spirit of ‘No Country Left Behind’.*

Sierra Leone is also one of 28 African Countries that have subscribed to the full implementation of Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). As a signatory to SAATM, we have made significant progress in its implementation.

In addition, tremendous efforts have been put in place by the Bio led administration of Sierra Leone to settle Outstanding Arrears regarding International Obligations to ICAO, AFCAC, BAGASOO, BAG etc. Further still, this makes the Bio Administration the first Sierra Leone government to embark on such International Commitments in two decades. The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Finance and the CAA have paid \$260,000 USD to ICAO as arrears, remaining a balance of \$40,000 USD, which will be settled next year.

All of these efforts are a clear demonstration of strong political will in Sierra Leone in the push towards attaining a Safe and Secure Civil Aviation System and thus contributes our share of value towards the enhancement of Global Aviation Safety and Security by ICAO and other development partners.

At this juncture, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, may I humbly request that you join me in thanking ICAO, particularly the Regional Office in Dakar, for their continued support towards the enhancement of Global Aviation Safety and Security in Sierra Leone. The provision of Technical Assistance by the Regional Office, particularly under the Safe Fund Project and other Mission Visits in Aviation Safety, Security and Facilitation visits have been very helpful to the State. Other partners’ contributions to Sierra Leone worth recognizing include: Nigeria CAA, IATA, BAGASOO, AFCAC, ACI, UKCAAi, Singapore and East African School of Aviation.

In conclusion, let me assure this Global Aviation family of our government’s commitment to provide the enabling political environment as required by ICAO to support the Civil Aviation Authority in the process of regulating and implementing Aviation Safety and Security Standards in Sierra Leone without political interference.

Hon Kabineh Moinama Kallon,  
Minister of Transport and Aviation  
Republic of Sierra Leone

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