



## ASSEMBLY – 35TH SESSION

### PLENARY

#### **Agenda Item 2: Statements by delegations of Contracting States and of Observers**

#### **STATEMENT**

(Presented by Niger)

Mr. President of the Council of ICAO, Mr. Secretary General of ICAO, Honourable Ministers and Chief Delegates, distinguished aeronautical experts,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Niger our heartfelt thanks and warmest congratulations to the Government of Canada and the Government of the Province of Quebec for the facilities made available to us, which are typical of Canada's legendary hospitality, so that this 35th Session of the Assembly of ICAO can take place under the best possible conditions.

I would also like to heartily congratulate you, Mr. President, for your unanimous support from all delegations, which once again have elected you to the prestigious post of President of this 35th Session of the Assembly of ICAO. Your competence, your availability and your patience in leading the work of this 35th Session in an orderly and productive manner testify, judging by the significant progress made during the first day of work, to the qualities for which you enjoy our confidence. I would also like to recognize the Secretariat of our august Organization, which, in these and similar circumstances spares no effort in ensuring that our esteemed Organization functions smoothly and meets with complete success in everything it undertakes with a view to adapting to the ever-evolving world of aeronautics in the 21st century.

The Government of the Republic of the Niger, convinced of the eminently important and vital role of air transport, which is directly related to its integration policy as a land-locked country, and aware that air transport is an essential aspect of development for the well-being of mankind, has always played an active and constructive role in strengthening the International Civil Aviation Organization.

For that reason tremendous efforts have been made and great sacrifices have been accepted in order to bring our airports into compliance with international security and safety standards. In addition to the international airport of Niamey, the capital of my country, which, as I mentioned earlier, is land-locked, and which covers a surface area of 1 286 676 km<sup>2</sup>, each of the eight regional capitals has an airport. Furthermore, the Supervisory Committee of Ministers of the Agency for Air Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA), at a meeting in Ndjamena from 12 to 14 July 2003, adopted a resolution designating two of our regional airports as international airports after they met ICAO Standards. Major construction, renovation and personnel training programmes have also been undertaken in recent years. This momentum will be maintained through a master plan developed in the context of the 5th Games of la Francophonie which the Niger will have the honour of hosting in December 2005 in Niamey.

In the area of security, since the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States, we have adopted concrete measures at our airports and accelerated training for our staff. The Niger congratulates ICAO for implementing the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme and for proposing the expansion of that programme with a view to including all safety-related provisions in the Annexes and related documents. Our country is endeavouring to address the failings identified in the 2001 ICAO audit. The audit follow-up mission organized by ICAO from 12 to 15 January 2004 similarly helped us evaluate the progress made in implementing the corrective action plan.

Furthermore, with the technical assistance of ASECNA, the Directorate of Civil Aviation is actively preparing for the next audits in order to comply with ICAO international civil aviation safety Standards.

Mr. President, as you can see, the Niger, like many other countries, is making a real effort to comply with ICAO Standards and develop airport infrastructures. Unfortunately, however, we very often have inadequate resources and our ability to act is limited; the difficult economic situation in our countries often keeps us from making progress..

That is why, Mr. President, I believe it is important to strengthen the International Financial Facility for Aviation Safety (IFFAS) in order to meet the expectations of States. I would also like to call for support and intervention on the part of ICAO, as well as the economically developed States and the development banks in order to assist the less well-off States to improve their airports and equip them with adequate safety and aviation security facilities.

Above all, let us not forget that safety and aviation security concern us all.

I wish the 35th Session of the Assembly of ICAO every success in its work.

Thank you.

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