



## **ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION**

### **PLENARY**

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

#### **STATEMENT BY GUYANA**

(Presented by Hon. Bishop Juan Edghill, Minister of Public Works, Guyana)

Mr. President congratulations on your election as President of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly. Excellencies, it is my distinct honour to address this 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly. ICAO as a United Nations agency must be commended for its leadership over the last three years – in my assessment, three of the most difficult years in the aviation industry. ICAO has led well through the times of great uncertainty and challenges.

ICAO has the aviation mandate to establish global policies, programmes, standards, and to facilitate the mechanism for Governments and industry to collaborate and achieve results. Mr. President, the leadership mantle is therefore with ICAO and Guyana is here to work with the organization and Member States to advance the development of aviation and to play our meaningful role in reconnecting the world.

This 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly is important in setting the stage for reshaping global aviation strategies to face off against unprecedented challenges. The pandemic has changed the global aviation landscape; the last two years have seen catastrophic economic decline in the global economy – every sector has been affected. We face increasingly severe common challenges in the form of rising fuel costs, supply chain disruptions, climate change and food security issues.

The data from ICAO showed an annual global air passenger traffic decline of 60% in 2020, followed by 49% in 2021 (as against 2019), and by between 21% - 24% in the first half of 2022 (also benchmarked against 2019). In Guyana, international traffic was similarly affected. There were significant declines by 72% in 2020 and 47% in 2021. Freight (cargo) traffic, however remained relatively unaffected during the last two years of recovery.

Mr. President and Excellencies, now is the time, for us to fly together and be united on a single agenda of reconnecting the world. My favourite statement is “we are better and stronger together”.

In July this year, Mr. President, I was given the honour to Chair the ICAO High Level Meeting on the feasibility of a long-term aspirational goal for international aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions. I wish to commend my colleagues for us reaching consensus. Excellencies, we must continue to work together to achieve the collective long-term global aspirational goal (LTAG) for international aviation of net-zero

carbon emissions by 2050, in support of the Paris Agreement's temperature goal while recognizing the special circumstances and capabilities of every State.

Mr. President, while the LTAG is non-binding on States, let me state clearly that the manifestation of the impact of climate change appears 'binding' on us all unless we take decisive action to change narrative of climate change. We are all affected by the negative impact of climate change more so in developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SID).

I am pleased to announce to this Assembly that Guyana has a Low Carbon Development Strategy to transform the economy of Guyana. 18 million hectares of forest in Guyana stores 19.5 Giga ton of CO<sub>2</sub> and the aim is to maintain 99.5% of this forest as a global asset. Mr. President and Excellencies, it does not require high science for us to understand that Guyana has to be part of dialogue on solutions for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions offsetting and reduction from aviation activities.

Recognizing this, Guyana has continuously sought to support ICAO's environmental protection initiatives. Despite our negligible international CO<sub>2</sub> emissions level from Guyana-based carriers, Guyana formally opted to participate in the CORSIA Pilot Phase. We have also engaged in the State Action Plan initiative with development and submission of both the first and second iteration of our State Action Plan for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Reductions.

Excellencies, Guyana continues to make strides in our effort to comply with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Guyana is number four in the CARICOM region in terms of ICAO compliance level. Guyana's compliance level increased to 76.96% in 2020 after an ICAO ICVM Audit, which is an improvement of 11.76 percentage points from 65.22% in 2016. This has now placed Guyana well above the global average of 65%.

Guyana's safety record is serving as a springboard for further investment in the aviation industry. Notwithstanding the global economic challenges, Guyana remains a bright spot, as economic growth is projected at 47.5% in 2022, due largely to the country's growing oil and gas industry. Investment in the industry will further enable aviation to be a driver of GDP growth, employment, trade and tourism.

Mr. President, Guyana may be a small developing State, but we want to assure our colleagues that we are resolute and serious about our responsibilities towards ICAO. At this 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly, Guyana is presenting five (5) working papers address matters dealing with capacity building in the areas of aircraft accident investigation, cybersecurity, Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and Unmanned Aircraft Systems. In addition, Guyana is recommending that ICAO review its policy on charging for access to the provision of aviation statistics with the aim of providing free access to States.

Excellencies, despite the presence of existing and emerging challenges; together – let's arise and build, so we can recover and reconnect the world better than yesterday. I wish to remind you today, that hope comes from Action and not just Words! The time for action, is now! Can we do it? Yes we can! Yes we can!

Thank you and God bless you!

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