

**Statement by H.E. Ahmed A. Jawad,  
Representative of Sri Lanka to the ICAO  
at the 39<sup>th</sup> Assembly of ICAO, Montreal, Canada  
01<sup>st</sup> October 2016**

Mr. Chairman

Mr. President of the Council

Madam Secretary General

Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Delegates

Ladies & Gentlemen.

At the outset I have the honour to convey the best wishes of His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, his government and the people of Sri Lanka for the success of the deliberations of the 39th Assembly. I am glad to congratulate the President, Vice President and Committee Chairmen on their well-deserved election to this Session. We are confident that under their stewardship this Assembly will achieve all its agenda objectives.

My delegation is honoured to join those of other member states in addressing the goals and expectations of international civil aviation provided by the opportunity afforded by this Assembly to discuss both current and emerging issues; to share knowledge, experiences and new ideas in our collective efforts at finding solutions to make the global aviation industry safer, convenient and increasingly ecofriendly. The extensive deliberations that would take place here at this Assembly will hopefully lead not only to refining existing standards and practices but also to the development of new standards and procedures for identified gaps through coordination, collaboration, consultation and consensus.

As we all know, Air Transport in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become an increasingly indispensable component of the economic development aspirations of member states, in addition to ensuring safe and seamless connectivity between communities. It is certainly so for Sri Lanka which is in the midst of a series of multifaceted measures aimed at fast tracking economic development. We are already on course to receiving an estimated 4.5 million tourists by 2020. The Financial City Project and

the Western Megapolis Project are but two important ventures that are bound to draw a large number of visitors to the country.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka has more than a century of modern civil aviation history, going back to the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1911, with the arrival of the first aircraft "Bleriot" in the country. A debut flight on 07<sup>th</sup> December 1912 inspired a series of private flying in the next few years. Sri Lanka inaugurated its first international airport at Ratmalana in the suburbs of Colombo in 1938. A decade later, in 1948, Sri Lanka, as an independent nation, became a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Ever since becoming a member of the ICAO, we have consistently strived to conform to the expectations of the principles and objectives enshrined in the Chicago Convention and technical specifications in its various annexes and related documents. Sri Lanka has maintained an exceptionally high safety record over the last decade with zero aircraft accidents. We have modernized our aviation legal framework in full conformity with ICAO standards. The regulation of civil aviation affairs in Sri Lanka is a function of the Civil Aviation Authority, an autonomous institution in regard to administrative, operational and financial matters. The Government recently decided to divest aircraft accident investigation functions from the Civil Aviation Authority and to vest such responsibilities on an independent Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau. This was in pursuance of the recommendation of ICAO for separation of aircraft accident investigation functions from civil aviation regulatory functions.

I am pleased to report that Sri Lanka has demonstrated a very high percentage of achievement in the effective implementation of respective international standards relating to both aviation safety and security at the last audit conducted by ICAO. We would not rest on our laurels but would continue to take all necessary steps to consistently sustain our Safety and Security Oversight System. We will be reviewing our Safety Oversight System in all Eight Critical Elements and upgrading where necessary. The Government will rigorously pay attention and take concerted action towards the effective implementation of the State Civil Aviation Safety Programme with the active participation and contribution of all industry stakeholders.

As part of its environmental obligations, Sri Lanka will support the adoption of a single global carbon offsetting scheme, as opposed to a patchwork of State and regional MBMs. This will be done as a cost effective step to complement a broader package of measures including technology, operations and infrastructure initiatives.

Sri Lanka underscores the need to strengthening both preventive and counter measures at civil airports - both airside and landside and air navigation facilities - in response to current and emerging security threats. At the same time, Sri Lanka wishes to highlight the need for striking a proper balance between security and other important aspects of air travel such as convenience of travel, passenger privacy, the protection of personal data and other operational factors.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka acknowledges that air services agreements which couple increased market access with other open-skies elements, including provisions that eliminate government involvement in airlines' commercial decisions on capacity and pricing, and establish pro-competitive elements on user charges, doing-business matters and cooperative arrangements, deliver broad economic benefits to States and aviation industry stakeholders. In this context, Sri Lanka will soon be moving towards a fully open skies regime in regard to market access on the basis of reciprocity.

In keeping with the consistent support extended by Sri Lanka to the activities of the International Civil Aviation Organization, my government is glad to host the 10<sup>th</sup> ICAO Air Services Negotiation meeting (ICAN) in 2017, in Colombo

I am pleased to report that Sri Lanka will be taking effective measures for the full implementation of Performance Based Navigation (PBN) in respect of all international runways in the country before the end of this year in conformity with the ICAO target.

Furthermore, having understood the vital importance of civil aviation for economic development, we have already mainstreamed the subject of civil aviation into the government programs for the accelerated development of the national economy. A

series of measures will be taken in the field of civil aviation in this regard. They relate to; the expansion of the terminal building at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) to handle 15 million passengers by 2020; the overlaying of the existing runway at this airport; the installation of a ADS-B Surveillance System by 2017; the development of domestic airports including construction of two new airports; the development of Jaffna airport as a regional airport, are some of the key activities which are being pursued. Sri Lanka has opened a new international airport at Mattala, in the south of the country and expressions of interests have been called for its operation on a Public Private Partnership basis.

We endorse the value of the ICAO's Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) program. Accordingly Sri Lanka has launched a program called NGAP – Sri Lanka with a view to promoting awareness on the potential of civil aviation and to prepare the next generation not only to replace retiring staff but also to fill the gap generated by significant developments in the sector.

In conclusion, Mr President, I wish the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly all success in bringing about meaningful and sustainable results arrived at by consensus. I hope that what emerges from our deliberations will ensure greater security, regularity and efficiency in international civil aviation.

Thank you.