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Subcommittee on Transportation Security
“Strengthening International Cooperation on Aviation Security”
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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, ladies and gentlemen, the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, is very pleased to participate in today’s hearing on “Strengthening International Cooperation on Aviation Security”. Thank you for this opportunity to provide an overview of ICAO’s Aviation Security Programme and international cooperation in the field of aviation security in the company of distinguished international partners.

By way of background, ICAO was established by the 1944 *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, also known as the Chicago Convention. ICAO is the specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international civil aviation. As the global forum for cooperation among its 190 Member States and with the world aviation community, the organization sets standards and recommended practices for the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. In fulfilling its mission to foster a global civil aviation system that consistently and uniformly operates at peak efficiency and provides optimum safety, security and sustainability, ICAO has established three Strategic Objectives:

1. Enhance global civil aviation safety;
2. Enhance global civil aviation security; and
3. Foster harmonized and economically viable development of international civil aviation that does not unduly harm the environment.

Activities under ICAO's Aviation Security Programme focus on: the development of international Standards, Recommended Practices and guidance material to establish a single international aviation security performance baseline; the conduct of audits of State aviation security and oversight systems to identify deficiencies and provide recommendations for their resolution; and assistance and capacity-building activities to further help States resolve deficiencies and in other ways strengthen their aviation security programmes.

The regime of international Standards and Recommended Practices for aviation security is contained in Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention. This international regulatory framework, applicable to all Member States, sets out the accepted minimum level of aviation security, and covers such matters as the objectives of aviation security, allocation of responsibilities for aviation security, international cooperation, quality control, access control, aircraft security, passenger and baggage security, cargo security and the management of acts of unlawful interference. Annex 17 was first adopted by the ICAO Council in 1974. The twelfth amendment of Annex 17 is on track to become applicable on 1 July 2011, with important new provisions to strengthen air cargo security and other areas of risk.

ICAO's Universal Security Audit Programme provides for regular, mandatory, systematic and harmonized audits of the aviation security and oversight systems in all ICAO Member States. The Audit Programme was launched in November 2002, as a key outcome of the High-level, Ministerial Conference on Aviation Security convened by ICAO in the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11. The first cycle of the Programme was designed to determine the degree of compliance of a State in implementing Annex 17 Standards. The audits also assessed the sustainability of each States aviation security system through the establishment of appropriate legislation, national policies, and an appropriate aviation security authority provided with inspection and enforcement capabilities. Currently in its second cycle, the Audit Programme now focuses on the critical elements of States' aviation security oversight systems.

ICAO recognizes that aviation security cannot be successful without implementation. This is why an increasing measure of ICAO's resources is being directed to a range of assistance and capacity-building activities throughout the world. These include:

1. A global network of 20 ICAO-endorsed Aviation Security Training Centres – centres of excellence for training aviation security professionals on a number of key topics;
2. Direct, in-country assistance to States to help them address deficiencies;
3. Assistance to regional organizations to establish priorities and action plans for aviation security enhancement; and
4. Collaboration with other international organizations, like the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, to leverage resources to enhance aviation security.

The common thread through all of ICAO's aviation security activities is international cooperation. In the aftermath of the attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines flight 253 on 25 December 2009, ICAO convened a series of regional aviation security conferences in Mexico City, Abuja, Tokyo and Abu Dhabi to build consensus on the priorities for further aviation security enhancement. These events culminated in the unanimous adoption of a Declaration on Aviation Security by the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly in October 2010.

The Declaration urges ICAO Member States to enhance international cooperation to counter threats to civil aviation in nine areas, including strengthening security screening procedures, strengthened and harmonized measures and best practices for air cargo security, and the provision of technical assistance to States in need. ICAO was very pleased by President Obama's statement on 9 October 2010 commending ICAO for adopting the Declaration and for noting "The extraordinary global collaboration ... to bring about a truly 21st century international aviation security framework that will make air travel safer and more secure than ever before."

There is obviously much more work to be done. ICAO is leading a second round of regional conferences, this time focused on implementation of the Declaration. The first of these was held in New Delhi in February and resulted in 14 ICAO Member States in that region adopting a roadmap of specific actions to further strengthen aviation security. Building on this success, similar conferences are being planned by ICAO and host States for this year in other Regions.

ICAO's successes in leading international civil aviation security enhancements are due in large part to the partnerships it enjoys with Member States, other international and regional organizations, and industry. Among these is the strong relationship ICAO has with the United States and the Transportation Security Administration.

ICAO and international civil aviation security continue to benefit from U.S. leadership and cooperation in many ways: invaluable support through the sharing of technical information and experience; the voluntary contribution of financial and in-kind resources used to supplement ICAO's own capacity, thereby extending our reach and impact; support of consensus-building and excellence in international policy development; and concrete projects to assist States in need to strengthen their aviation security programmes. ICAO looks forward to further deepening and strengthening this important and timely relationship.

Thank you.