



Maldives Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of Maldives

International Civil Aviation Day – 7 December 2022

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER

Honourable Aishath Nahula
Minister for the Maldives Civil Aviation Authority,
Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

I would like to extend warmest greetings on the occasion of International Civil Aviation Day to His Excellency the President and Madam First Lady and the people of the Republic of Maldives. I would also like to express greetings of the day to ICAO Council President and Secretary General and also ICAO Member states and industry partners.

Whilst we continue our work on aviation development, we are glad to note that the government target of achieving 1.6 million tourist arrivals to our country would Insha Allah be achieved by the end of the year. In addition, the numbers are returning to pre Covid-19 levels in 2019. As of September 2022, international flight movements are at 97% of 2019 values and domestic values are above 90%. Transit passenger numbers have by passed 2019 values and have increased to 71%. Insha Allah we would continue to achieve more next year.

It is a strategic policy of the government to connect our island nation with an air transport network. Currently we have 18 aerodromes, 5 of them international, in our country. I have no doubt that we would achieve the government goal of establishing access to air transport within 30 minutes by sea from any populated centre of the country. The most important highlight of aviation infrastructure development work is the upgrading project of Velana International Airport, our main gateway to the world. We have opened a new Code F runway and started using the previous runway as a parallel taxiway and also expanded apron space, increasing the number of aircraft that can be served in a given block of time, bringing ease into the operations. State of the art international passenger terminal would be operational next year insha Allah.

Whilst we expand our domestic network, we also continue to develop our international connections. In 2022, we have signed an Air Services Agreement with Rwanda and an MoU on air services with Kazakhstan. This makes it a total of 35 Air Services Agreements and 15 MoUs. By virtue of those agreements currently we have 43 international airlines operating into our island nation.

The inseparable connection between Aviation and Tourism industries is an established fact. We must celebrate achievements in the travel and tourism sectors, reflect on those and make plans to sustain such accomplishments. On this point, I am very grateful that we have achieved “World’s Leading Destination” award three years in a row and also Trans Maldivian Airways, one of our airlines and the world’s largest seaplane operator won the “World’s Leasing Seaplane Operator” award this year. In my humble opinion the dedicated work force of travel and tourism industries are behind these achievements. Therefore, I would like to thank them on this jubilant occasion and advise them to keep up the good work.

It has been the government policy to develop aviation with due regard to the environmental impact. We have moved to a next level on this policy implementation. We informed ICAO in May 2022 our decision to voluntarily take part in Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) from 2023 albeit it is not mandatory on small nations like ours. We have also offered our unwavering support, at the high-level meetings, to ICAO’s environmental programmes combating climate change.

We have been continuing our work to expand aviation in the country with new activities. The CAA Regulations on unmanned aircraft systems would be ready by the end of this year and we would insha Allah be able to issue drone operating approvals next year.

In order to achieve sustainable aviation development, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) needs to be provided with adequate resources. Especially the provision of competent technical staff. To combat the challenges of human resource availability we have launched a scholarship programme in 2019 under the “Aviators NextGen” initiative. I am very pleased to note that all the candidates who studied under the 2019 scholarships have completed their education and training and are currently serving the CAA. As a result, have increased our pool of Air Navigation Inspectors and enhanced type ratings for our Flight Operations Inspectors. It is

our plan to continue the scholarship scheme among other work to develop the CAA workforce.

The development in aviation including economic and social progress have been achieved due to the strong policies of our President. The visionary focus on objective achievement with a clear view of the big picture on national issues. Therefore, on behalf of the CAA, the aviation industry and on my own behalf, I would like to sincerely express my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

With greetings of the ICAO Day, I would like to thank our international partners for their support and cooperation in the development of aviation in the Maldives.

The achievements in the aviation sector are with fair share of our industry partners with their commitment and cooperation to implement government policies on aviation. Therefore, I would like to thank our industry partners.

I would like to highlight the work of the CAA with a vote of thanks to the Board of Directors, the Management, and the staff, on their work in partnership with the industry to regulate and improve aviation safety.

Reeling from a global pandemic, we are tirelessly working to achieve our development objectives in aviation. We would insha Allah continue our work to bring economic prosperity and social harmony to our nation. May Allah subhaanahu wata'aalaa bless our work and bring prosperity to our beautiful nation and facilitate a better tomorrow for the aviation industry, Amin.