President of the Council of ICAO, Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu
President of the 40th Session of the Assembly, Mr Nari Williams-Singh
Secretary General of ICAO, Dr Fang Liu
Honourable Ministers of Member States

Ladies and Gentlemen

The dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 heralded the birth of a young nation, which rightfully occupied her position among the nations of world, embracing her new responsibilities and obligations with renewed energy and vigour. South Africa was first elected to Part II of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) during the 34th Extra Ordinary Assembly in 2003. Since then, we have actively served the international community as one of the 36 member states that constitute the Council. We have been honoured to serve on the Council and we remain resolute in our commitment to advance the objectives of the ICAO.

ICAO remains a strategic Agency of the United Nations, not only because it brings us together as nations of the world through aviation, but also because of the critical role it plays as an instrument of trade diplomacy and multilateralism. Our commitment to multilateralism as a nation is unwavering and we believe that ICAO is exemplary in finding solutions to intractable challenges through collaboration.

Mr President, South Africa continues to play her role in contributing to ICAO programmes such as the No Country Left Behind initiative, through technical co-operation and support we provide to other member states within the broader African Continent and the Southern African Development Community. In seeking another mandate from the 40th Session of the Assembly to serve on the Council under Part II, we re-affirm out commitment to playing a meaningful role in ushering in a new world order in aviation. This finds expression in new challenges characterised by the disruptor effect of the 4th industrial revolution, proliferation of remotely piloted aircraft systems and new safety and security challenges, amongst others.
Our contribution to global civil aviation has been through various leadership roles played within ICAO and other international organisations. We remain ready to continue being of service in whatever capacity entrusted upon us. We are humbled by the election of our Director of Civil Aviation, Ms Poppy Khoza, as a second Vice President of the 40th Assembly.

We continue to provide expert Air Traffic Control and Management solutions for 10% of the world’s airspace, which enables seamless linkage of major air routes from east to west and north to south.

South Africa took a lead by committing to advancement of women’s rights and hosted the first ever Global Aviation Gender Summit in Cape Town, on 08 – 10 August 2018. The event was organized in collaboration with ICAO, UNESCO and UN Women. We encourage Member States to develop action plans towards the achievement of the proposed programmes emanating from the Global Aviation Gender Summit. Women empowerment is a central tenet of our democracy, and we call on the nations of the world to join us in creating opportunities for and empowering women and the girl child.

South Africa continues to play a leading role in supporting the environmental protection work under ICAO. This encompasses the voluntary contributions by South Africa to the Assistance, Capacity Building, Training and the work of the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection. The strategic approach for South Africa’s response to climate change is guided by our National Development Plan (NDP) which proposes movement towards a low carbon economy.

South Africa supports the ICAO Universal Safety and Security Audit Programmes. We are confident that our aviation safety and security systems are amongst the best in the world.

In shaping the new world order in aviation, skills development must be at the centre of our agenda. South Africa actively supports the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) in the effort to mitigate the gap between the young and the senior aviation professionals who are facing retirement. We are actively participating in efforts to reshape the Human Resources Development Fund, which is aimed at addressing skills shortage in Africa.

South Africa commits to continue working together with the progressive world in the advancement of civil aviation. We continue to provide assistance to our fellow brothers and sisters in all areas of civil aviation within our capability. The goal of South Africa is to see all AFI States to be above world average in the effective implementation of SARPs. South Africa pledges to work tirelessly together with all concerned for the realisation of this goal.

The events of the recent past in our country where incidents of lawlessness, which have seen a number of foreign nationals and South Africans being targets,
are regrettable. Our security agencies have moved swiftly in dealing with this criminality and will not hesitate to unleash the full might of the law against those found responsible. We are a family of the nations of the world, and our commitment to uphold the values of our Constitution, which enjoins us to ensure that every person in our country is safe and secure, irrespective of their nationality, has never wavered.

Mr President, we would like to take this opportunity to reconfirm our confidence and support to the leadership of the ICAO President, Dr. Bernard Aliu, and the Secretary General, Dr. Fang Liu.

I wish the 40th Assembly deliberations to be fruitful in addressing pertinent issues that will take international aviation to greater heights.

I thank you.