
ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

Montréal, 31 July 2017

SUMMARY MINUTES



2017

Montréal



COUNCIL — EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

SUMMARY MINUTES

(THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MONDAY, 31 JULY 2017, AT 1000 HOURS)

CLOSED MEETING

President of the Council: Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu

Secretary: Dr. Fang Liu, Secretary General

PRESENT:

Algeria	— Mr. A.D. Mesroua	Kenya	— Ms. M.B. Awori
Argentina	— Mr. G.E. Ainchil	Malaysia	— Mr. Y.-H. Lim
Australia	— Mr. S. Lucas	Mexico	— Mr. D. Méndez Mayora
Brazil	— Mrs. M.G. Valente da Costa	Nigeria	— Mr. M.S. Nuhu
Cabo Verde	— Mr. C. Monteiro	Panama	— Mr. G.S. Oller
Canada	— Mr. M. Pagé	Republic of Korea	— Mr. J. Hur
China	— Mr. Shengjun Yang	Russian Federation	— Mr. A.A. Novgorodov
Colombia	— Mr. A. Muñoz Gómez	Saudi Arabia	— H.E. A.M. Al-Tamimi
Congo	— Mr. R.M. Ondzotto		President of GACA
Cuba	— Mrs. M. Crespo Frasquiere	Singapore	— Mr. T.C. Ng
Ecuador	— Mr. I. Arellano	South Africa	— Mr. M.D.T. Peege
Egypt	— H.E. S. Fathi, Minister of Civil Aviation	Spain	— Mr. V.M. Aguado
France	— Mr. P. Bertoux	Turkey	— Mr. A.R. Çolak
Germany	— Mr. U. Schwierczinski	United Arab Emirates	— H.E. S. Al Mansoori, Minister of Economy
India	— Mr. A. Shekhar	United Kingdom	— Mr. M. Rodmell
Ireland	— Mrs. A. Smith Floch	United Republic of Tanzania	— Mr. R.W. Bokango
Italy	— Mr. M.R. Rusconi	United States	— Mr. S. Kotis (Alt.)
Japan	— Mr. S. Matsui	Uruguay	— Mr. M. Vidal

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. H. Yoshimura	— President ANC
Mrs. M.F. Loguzzo (Alt.)	— Argentina
H.E. K.B.A. Mohammed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications (Obs.)	— Bahrain
Mr. S.M. Hasan (Obs.)	— Bahrain
Mr. P. Langlais (Alt.)	— Canada
Mr. Chunyu Ding (Alt.)	— China
Mr. A. Khedr (Rep.)	— Egypt
Mr. H.Y. Eladawy (Alt.)	— Egypt
Ms. A. Salama (Alt.)	— Egypt
Ms. S. Elmowafi (Alt.)	— Egypt
Mr. M. Millefert (Alt.)	— France
Mr. N. Naoumi (Alt.)	— Germany
Mr. M. Usami (Alt.)	— Japan
Mr. K.A. Ismail (Alt.)	— Malaysia
Mrs. D. Valle Álvarez (Alt.)	— Mexico
H.E. J.B.S.A. Al-Sulaiti, Minister of Transport and Communications (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. A. Al-Hamadi (Obs.)	— Qatar

SECRETARIAT:

Mrs. J. Yan	— C/OSG
Mr. B. Djibo	— D/ATB
Mr. J.V. Augustin	— D/LEB
Mr. S. Creamer	— D/ANB
Mr. C. Radu	— DD/SAF
Mr. M. Fox	— C/PRC
Mr. B. Verhaegen	— SELO
Mr. Y. Nyampong	— LO
Ms. C. Kim	— TO/AMO
Mr. M. Boyd	— TO/AMO
Mr. A. Larcos	— ACC
Mr. M. Vaugeois	— LEB
Miss S. Black	— Précis-writer

ALSO PRESENT (CONTINUED):

Mr. E.A. Al-Malki (Obs.)	— Rep. of Qatar to ICAO
Mr. F.M. Kafood (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. A. Al-Subaey (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. A. Al-Shahwani (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. N. Al Suwaidi (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. A.M.A. Ishaq (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. E. Mandany (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. J. Al Haroon (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. F. Atti (Obs.)	— Qatar
Mr. S. Kim (Alt.)	— Republic of Korea
Mr. K. Lee (Alt.)	— Republic of Korea
Mr. D. Subbotin (Alt.)	— Russian Federation
Mr. S.A.R. Hashem (Rep.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. M.S. Habib (Alt.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. S. Alhamdan (Alt.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. N.B. Alsudairy (Adv.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. W.M.A. Alidrissi (Adv.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. I.B. Al Jabri (Adv.)	— Saudi Arabia
Mr. Ö. Doğrukol (Alt.)	— Turkey
Miss A. Alhameli (Rep.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. H. Al Belushi (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. S. Al Suwaidi (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. A. Al Naqbi (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. M. Al Shehhi (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. L. Weber (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. J.C. Salazar (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Ms. L. Coquard-Patry (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Ms. S. Aminian (Alt.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. V. Singh (Obs.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mr. A. Yanovich (Obs.)	— United Arab Emirates
Mrs. K.L. Riensema (Alt.)	— United Kingdom
Mr. J. Méndez (Alt.)	— Uruguay

Representatives to ICAO

Cameroon
Chile
Cyprus
Greece
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Lebanon
Libya
Peru
Qatar
Sudan

Airports Council International (ACI)
Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO)
European Union (EU)
International Air Transport Association (IATA)

Subject No. 14: Subjects relating to air navigation
Subject No. 14.3: Other air navigation activities
Subject No. 27: Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention)

Request of Qatar – Item under Article 54 n) of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*

1. The President referred to the Council's earlier consideration, at the Tenth Meeting of its 211th Session (211/10) on 23 June 2017, of the request by Qatar for the inclusion in the Council's work programme, pursuant to Article 54 n) of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, of a "top-urgent item" related to the "matter of the actions of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to close their airspace to aircraft registered in the State of Qatar". He recalled that the Council had decided at that meeting to convene, in accordance with Rule 19 of its Rules of Procedure (Doc 7559), an Extraordinary Session to consider the item as soon as practicable, following the first Air Traffic Management (ATM) Contingency Coordination Meeting for Qatar at the ICAO Middle East (MID) Regional Office (Cairo) on 6 July 2017 and the related technical coordination meeting on 9 July 2017 in Doha, Qatar, on the understanding that the Extraordinary Session would occur before the end of July 2017, taking into account the need to ensure that representatives from all of the Parties could attend, as well as the need to prepare and circulate documentation that would form the basis for the Council's deliberations.

2. The President noted that the Council had, at that time, also emphasized the need to clearly differentiate between any actions that it, as a governing body, might consider taking in relation to Article 54 n) of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, which stipulated that it was a mandatory function of the Council to "consider any matter relating to the Convention which any Contracting State refers to it", and any actions that it might consider taking in relation to Article 84 thereof, which provided a process for the settlement of any disagreement between Contracting States concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention and its Annexes which cannot be settled by negotiation.

3. The President further highlighted that, pursuant to the Council's said decision (211/10), an informal briefing *Qatar: Technical issues* had been given during the 211th Session on 30 June 2017 by the Secretary General, with the support of the Secretariat and the ICAO Regional Director, MID Regional Office.

4. The President noted that in accordance with Article 53 of the Convention and Rule 31 of the *Rules of Procedure for the Council* (Doc 7559), and following the Council's approval (cf. President's memorandum PRES OBA/2666 dated 11 July 2017), he had invited Bahrain and Qatar to participate, without a vote, in this Extraordinary Session on grounds of special interest. Furthermore, in the absence of any objections by close of business on 26 July 2017 in response to his e-mails dated 19 July 2017, the President had, in accordance with Rule 32 a) of the said Rules of Procedure, invited the European Union (EU), Airports Council International (ACI), the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to participate therein as Observers.

5. On behalf of the Council, the President then extended a warm welcome to the following distinguished high-level Government officials who were duly accredited to represent their respective affected Member States during this Extraordinary Session: H.E. Kamal Bin Ahmed Mohammed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications of Bahrain; H.E. Sherif Fathi, Minister of Civil Aviation of Egypt; H.E. Jassim Ben Saif Ahmed Al-Sulaiti, Minister of Transport and Communications of Qatar; H.E. Abdulhakim M. Al-Tamimi, President of the General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia; and H.E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates. In addition, he welcomed the Directors General, Advisers and other officials from the said five Member States who were also in attendance.

6. In accordance with ICAO's mandate and its own mandate under the Convention, the Council proceeded to consider the technical issues relating to the aforesaid urgent Article 54 n) matter on the basis of the following three papers: **working paper C-WP/14641 Restricted** [*Request of the State of Qatar for consideration by the ICAO Council under Article 54 n) of the Chicago Convention*], presented by Qatar; **working paper C-WP/14640 Restricted** [*Response to Qatar's submissions under Article 54 n)*], jointly presented by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; and **information paper C-WP/14639 Restricted** [*Contingency arrangements to facilitate the flow of traffic over the high seas airspace in the Gulf region*], presented by the Secretary General.

Introduction of C-WP/14641 Restricted

[Request of the State of Qatar for consideration by the ICAO Council under Article 54 n) of the Chicago Convention]

7. H.E. Jassim Ben Saif Ahmed Al-Sulaiti (Qatar) introduced C-WP/14641 Restricted, which elaborated on the actions taken on 5 June 2017 by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to close their respective airspace to Qatar-registered aircraft and to impose what Qatar considered to be severe restrictions on such aircraft with respect to access to international airspace over the high seas adjacent to their territorial airspace [with effect from 0000 UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) on 6 June 2017], which in Qatar's view caused serious concern for the continuing safety, security, regularity and economy of international air navigation and air transport. The paper also highlighted the repeated efforts made by Qatar to coordinate with the ICAO MID Regional Office in order to develop contingency routes, summarized the general and specific legal obligations and fundamental principles which Qatar considered had been violated by the said four Member States, and proposed actions by the Council.

8. H.E. Al-Sulaiti began by expressing Qatar's gratitude: to ICAO, for its relentless efforts for the benefit of international civil aviation and for assuming its responsibility by convening this Extraordinary Session of the Council to review Qatar's requests regarding the said unjust air blockade imposed upon it by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; and to Council Member States, for having agreed to hold the Extraordinary Session at such a critical time, which reflected the importance ICAO attached to the aviation-safety- and security-related matter at hand.

9. H.E. Al-Sulaiti also voiced Qatar's deep appreciation to all ICAO Bureaus involved, including the MID Regional Office, for their efforts since the beginning of the said air blockade on Qatar on 5 June 2017. He underscored, however, that the first ATM Contingency Coordination Meeting for Qatar held at the MID Regional Office with the four blockading Member States on 6 July 2017 and the subsequent technical coordination meeting held in Doha, Qatar on 9 July 2017 had not achieved the desired results, due to the procrastination of the said Member States under unsubstantiated pretexts regarding certain technical issues, thus preventing Qatar from having full access to international air routes.

10. H.E. Al-Sulaiti noted that Qatar had evinced, over the years, its profound respect for all rules and institutions established by the international civil aviation community to govern relations between countries. He emphasized that Qatar was proud to have adhered to the 1944 Chicago Convention and its Annexes and to be an active participant in the activities of ICAO, a United Nations (UN) Specialized Agency, in support of a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation sector. H.E. Al-Sulaiti further underscored that Qatar was committed to implementing, with a high degree of professionalism, ICAO's international Standards relating to the peaceful use of airspace, the freedom of air navigation over the high seas, and aviation environmental protection.

11. H.E. Al-Sulaiti indicated, however, that as there was a high level of global compliance with ICAO instruments, Qatar had been taken aback by the successive NOTAMs and arbitrary action taken by the four blockading Member States starting on 5 June 2017, in flagrant violation of all relevant ICAO

international Standards, as well as of relevant ICAO instruments to which they were parties. That action had included the publication by Saudi Arabia, on 6 June 2017, of a NOTAM on behalf of Yemen which had: imposed a similar restriction on the use of Yemen's airspace by Qatar-registered aircraft, with immediate effect, in total disregard of Yemen's sovereignty over the airspace above its territory; and urged other Member States to close their airspace to Qatar-registered aircraft. H.E. Al-Sulaiti underscored that while the NOTAM was to have taken immediate effect, less than two hours after its issuance its effective date had been changed to 0001 UTC on 7 June 2017.

12. H.E. Al-Sulaiti noted that the arbitrary measures had continued, when the Civil Aviation Authority of the United Arab Emirates had banned non-Qatar-registered civil aircraft flying to/from Qatar from crossing its Flight Information Region (FIR), including the airspace above its territory and the airspace over the high seas. When Qatar had appealed to ICAO to resolve that issue, the United Arab Emirates had published a NOTAM conforming to the Organization's international Standards relating to transit through airspace over the high seas. However, the air traffic control tower in Doha had been shocked when that NOTAM had been revoked verbally, as indicated in the technical document that had been submitted to the Council, in a blatant violation that put at risk passengers' lives and undermined aviation safety and security.

13. H.E. Al-Sulaiti underscored that the four blockading Member States had persisted in their unjustifiable aggressive behaviour and had continued to misinterpret international law, without any regard for aviation safety and security, leaving a grave humanitarian impact on civil aviation users in Qatar and all around the world. Thus a large number of innocent passengers, including the elderly, women and children who were practicing their religious rites in the holy sites during the month of Ramadan, had been stranded at the King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah while Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation had ignored Qatar's appeals and had not paid attention to ICAO's international Standards relating to NOTAMs in such humanitarian situations.

14. H.E. Al-Sulaiti noted that Qatar, in affirming its profound respect for the provisions of the Chicago Convention and its commitment to upholding them, had consequently decided to appeal to ICAO's august Council and to document its position and the actions it requested the Council to take, in particular, Qatar's urgent request for the enforcement of Article 54 n) of the Chicago Convention to lift the unjust air blockade that had been imposed upon it by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Qatar deemed that necessary in order to be able to exercise its sovereign right of overflight over the high seas in those countries' respective FIRs, in accordance with the principles of international law and related binding conventions. H.E. Al-Sulaiti emphasized that the matter at hand was of utmost importance, not solely to Qatar but to all parties to the Chicago Convention, as it was a dispute that touched upon the Convention's essence and could seriously compromise aviation safety and security.

15. In highlighting that the said four Member States had unfortunately stood against Qatar's requests by word and deed, H.E. Al-Sulaiti noted that they claimed that it was legitimate for them to exercise sovereign and border control rights in the airspace above their territory and the airspace over the high seas, including the exclusive right to prevent all aircraft, whether registered in Qatar or not, from flying to and transiting through Qatar using their respective FIRs. Qatar considered that that went beyond the rights enshrined in the Chicago Convention and constituted an abuse of such rights in a way that undermined the Convention itself and misinterpreted its provisions. In Qatar's view, the fact that the said Member States had actually reversed some of their decisions undeniably proved the extent of uncertainty and lack of transparency on their part and constituted an implicit confession of their grave breaches of international law.

16. Recalling that Qatar and Bahrain had signed an Agreement under which Qatar had delegated the provision of air navigation services within its sovereign airspace to Bahrain from April 2000 onwards (cf. paragraph 1.3 of C-WP/14641 Restricted), H.E. Al-Sulaiti indicated that that had been a gesture of support for the Bahraini national economy, turning it into a major hub in the Middle East, in line with Qatar's

tradition of supporting the economies of neighbouring countries. He underscored that Bahrain had, however, broken its pledge and annulled that Agreement without prior notice, as documented. Moreover, Bahrain had arbitrarily enforced some measures in clear violation of ICAO's international Standards with the intention of undermining aviation safety in Qatar. H.E. Al-Sulaiti emphasized that Bahrain had acted unilaterally in so restricting the use of international airspace and routes that were beyond its sovereign right.

17. H.E. Al-Sulaiti highlighted that the said measures taken by Bahrain had compelled Qatar to manage its own FIR, according to the highest standards of safety. Its civil aviation authorities were acting in a highly-professional way, which was widely praised and recognized.

18. H.E. Al-Sulaiti underscored that over the course of 70 years of safe international civil aviation no country in the world had ever faced such an air blockade and a blatant violation of international law as Qatar. In emphasizing that the behaviour of Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates towards Qatar was lamentable and against the interests of the world at large, he stressed that tolerating such conduct would encourage other Member States to attempt to play the role, and have the authority, of the UN and its organizations, while ignoring all the obligations arising from binding international and regional instruments to which they were parties.

19. H.E. Al-Sulaiti noted that the Delegation of Qatar had not come to this Extraordinary Session to discuss political issues and false accusations, but rather to present issues related to the safety and security of international civil aviation and the right of overflight over the high seas according to international law. He thus urged not only the four blockading Member States, but all Council Member States, which represented the whole international aviation community, to be neutral in the present discussion, based on the principles of international law, the UN common system and relevant binding conventions. H.E. Al-Sulaiti emphasized that Qatar did not wish to live in a world where the law of the jungle and capriciousness prevailed and where international instruments were infringed upon and distorted to serve the narrow interests of individual Member States. In Qatar's view, the four blockading Member States had placed themselves above international law, in total disregard of aviation safety and security, thus endangering the lives of the flying public. It considered that failure to hold them accountable would lead to the recurrence of such violations, which constituted a gross breach of safety, security and the right of overflight over the high seas.

20. Recalling that the 103rd anniversary of the first-ever scheduled commercial passenger flight had recently been celebrated, H.E. Al-Sulaiti underscored that ICAO had achieved much progress and prosperity since its own establishment in 1944. He noted that its 191 Member States had placed their full trust in the Council and its Members, who represented the world and who were the voice of the voiceless. In particular, they trusted Council Members to take the necessary action and to draw on their conscience in order to ensure the continued safety and security of civil aviation, given the Council's essential role as the main arbitrator in the implementation of all binding conventions, in particular the 1944 Chicago Convention, and its Annexes.

21. In conclusion, H.E. Al-Sulaiti reiterated Qatar's deep appreciation for all of the efforts which ICAO had made and would continue to make towards resolving the matter at hand due its paramount importance, not only for Qatar, but also for the Gulf region and indeed the whole world. He affirmed that it was also of utmost importance for the safety of international civil aviation and the legal framework for international air navigation, adopted by the international community after long and hard deliberations that had spanned many years.

22. H.E. Al-Sulaiti looked forward to all present assuming their collective responsibility in tackling this dangerous precedent. He had full trust in the integrity of this process, as well as in the Council's demonstrated credibility, transparency and sound judgment to resolve the matter at hand.

23. H.E. Al-Sulaiti then gave the floor to Mr. A. Al-Hamadi, the Director, Air Safety Department of the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority, to elaborate further on various elements of C-WP/14641 Restricted and the actions which the Council was invited to take.

24. Mr. Al-Hamadi prefaced his remarks by reiterating Qatar's gratitude to Council Members for their willingness to meet in an Extraordinary Session, outside the normal schedule of the Council, and in the middle of their summer holidays. In its view, the urgency of the matter at hand justified their selfless sacrifice.

25. In stressing that Qatar was not bringing before the Council any matters of a political nature, Mr. Al-Hamadi underscored that any such matters should be ruled to be out of order and should not be permitted to overshadow the real issue of its submission in C-WP/14641 Restricted, which was strictly based on Article 54 n) of the Chicago Convention, according to which it was a mandatory function of the Council to "consider any matter relating to the Convention which any Contracting State refers to it". He highlighted that there was no provision requiring that such matter be urgent in nature. Nevertheless, Qatar was convinced that violations of the Chicago Convention and the 1944 International Air Services Transit Agreement (IATA) were matters of high priority. Indicating that it was hard to imagine anything more urgent for the Council to consider, Mr. Al-Hamadi underscored that the consequences of those violations of legal obligations were unprecedented in the entire history of international civil aviation and had caused serious concern for the continuing safety, security, regularity and economy of international civil aviation. He reiterated that such violations could be repeated elsewhere in the world unless condemned by the international community, and that tolerance thereof could undermine the very foundation of ICAO.

26. Mr. Al-Hamadi noted that C-WP/14641 Restricted described the situation after the said four blockading Member States had published, on 5 June 2017, NOTAMs prohibiting all Qatar-registered aircraft from overflying their FIRs and banning them from landing at or departing from their airports. Those Member States had also restricted foreign-registered aircraft flying to/from Qatar via their FIRs by imposing additional approval processes. Qatar considered that those actions posed a direct and imminent threat to the continuing safety, security, regularity and economy of international civil aviation, in particular for Qatar-registered aircraft.

27. Mr. Al-Hamadi underscored that the paper's core emphasis was on the applicable rules of international law that were binding for all ICAO Member States. Reference was made to the rules created by the States themselves, to which the States had committed themselves to respect in good faith. Qatar considered that the actions of the four blockading Member States contravened the spirit of the Chicago Convention as expressed in its Preamble Clause 2, which read "... it is desirable to avoid friction and to promote that cooperation between nations and peoples upon which the peace of the world depends;". In addition, their numerous violations of several provisions of the Chicago Convention, as listed in C-WP/14641 Restricted, caused serious concern for the continuing safety, security, regularity and economy of international civil aviation.

28. Referring to the IATA, Mr. Al-Hamadi highlighted that it was in force for 131 ICAO Member States, including Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, which thereby granted to the other IATA Contracting Parties the following two freedoms of the air in respect of scheduled international air services: the privilege to fly across its territory without landing i.e. overflight; and the privilege to land for non-traffic purposes (cf. Article I, Section 1). He stressed that it would be profoundly incorrect to state that any issues relating to the IATA must be considered as a dispute under Article 84 of the Chicago Convention. Mr. Al-Hamadi noted that, in fact, the IATA clearly indicated in Article II, Section 1 that any complaint made thereunder must be considered by the Council. He affirmed that the present meeting was the time for the Council to act under that provision of the IATA.

29. Mr. Al-Hamadi then drew attention to the executive summary of C-WP/14641 Restricted, in which Qatar invited the Council to:

- a) urge the said four blockading Member States to lift all the restrictions over the high seas to accommodate traffic flow within their respective FIRs for Qatar departures and arrivals. Alternatively:
- b) provide alternative routes/route segments to transit through airspace over the high seas; and
- c) urge the blockading Member States which were Contracting Parties to the 1944 IASTA to comply in *good faith* with their obligations concerning overflight freedom stipulated in that multilateral treaty in order to allow Qatar-registered aircraft to resume normal transit flights within the airspace of Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Introduction of C-WP/14640 Restricted

[Response to Qatar's submissions under Article 54 n)]

30. On behalf of the co-presenters (Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) H.E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori (United Arab Emirates) introduced C-WP/14640 Restricted, which set forth their response to the submissions sent by Qatar to ICAO between 5 and 15 June 2017 to invoke Article 54 n) of the Chicago Convention on an urgent basis and underlined their full commitment to the safety of international civil aviation and of the flying public in their region and worldwide as their highest priority. It also provided an analysis of the situation and an overview of the contingency measures adopted, set forth the co-presenters' viewpoint on the various types of relief requested by Qatar from the Council, and proposed actions by the Council.

31. H.E. Al Mansoori took this opportunity to reaffirm the co-presenters' strong commitment: to the principles and rules of the Chicago Convention, as well as to ICAO's Strategic Objectives and principles as confirmed during the recent 39th Session of the Assembly; and, as Member States of ICAO, to achieving their mutual objective of ensuring the safety of international civil aviation at all times, which also applied in special situations such as the present one in the Gulf region. In highlighting that Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates commended the work of the President of the Council, as well as that of the Secretary General and the Secretariat, he noted that the Secretariat, particularly at the MID Regional Office, had worked tirelessly with all Member States concerned and had encouraged cooperation and the implementation of contingency measures that enabled the safe operation of civil aviation in the Gulf region.

32. H.E. Al Mansoori stressed that the actions taken by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates did not constitute an "air/sea blockade" of Qatar as alleged by the latter in its paper (C-WP/14641 Restricted). Noting that under international law the term "blockade" meant action preventing entry and exit of all vessels (boats), and by analogy, arrival at and departure from airports, he emphasized that that was not the action which the said Member States had taken, as made evident by the facts that Qatar continued to receive vessels and goods and all international air traffic continued to operate normally to and from Qatar using its airspace. H.E. Al Mansoori underscored that the measures which the four Member States had taken were airspace closures, of which there were numerous precedents in ICAO. Those Member States maintained that their airspace closures were legitimate, justified, and a proportionate response to Qatar's actions and were permitted under international law.

33. Turning to C-WP/14640 Restricted, H.E. Al Mansoori indicated that the co-presenters respectfully submitted that the Council should limit its deliberations to the urgent Article 54 n) matter which was related to the safety of international civil aviation, and to defer the other non-urgent matters properly