*[Lunch 9 December 2019]*

Welcome Address by Mr. Iacovos Papadopoulos, Chairman, FSF-Med

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Distingushed Guests,

Dear friends,

It gives me great pleasure that on behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Flight Safety Foundation—Mediterranean I extend a warm welcome to all of you at our today’s event.

Apart from lunch there are another four elements at our event today.

**Firstly,** we celebrate 10 years from the establishment of our Foundation.

FSF—Med was established te years ago as a voluntary, non-governmental and non-political organization with membership from the whole spectrum of aviation professionals. According to our constitution, our tasks include the noble ambition, allow me to say, to contribute towards the improvement of flight safety and air transport in general and initiate debate on relevant emerging issues. Whether and to what extent we achieved these goals I will leave it to you to judge later on, when Christos Petrou, our Ececutive Director and, let me say, the driving force behind all our activities, will present details of them over these ten years.

The **second** element of our event is to commemorate the seventy fifth year since the establishment of ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization. ICAO is the foremost and highest international rule making body and regulator in matters relating to civil aviation; all other rules and regulations set by other organizations or states must conform to those set by ICAO. Apart from the technical aspects of ICAO’s work, I want to stress that the Chicago Convention that established ICAO, sets also the international law governing the rights and obligations of States relating to civil avation matters and ICAO is the protector and defender of these rights. I stress this point because we almost daily witness the violation by Turkey of the rights of Cyprus as set out in the Convention. Having said that, however, I must add that, whenever requested by Cyprus, e.g. with the establishment of the illegal air traffic control centre or the illegal airport in the occupied areas, ICAO without any hesitation or reservation condemned these violations.

The **third** element of our event is to honour the International Civil Aviation Day which,as set by ICAO, falls on 7 December each year, the anniversary date of the signing of the Chicago Convention. For this year the theme for International Civil Aviation Day is “**75 Years of Connecting the World**.”

This theme celebrates ICAO’s 75th Anniversary, and it was selected to help draw attention to the fact that safe, secure and rapid connectivity is the core capability of aviation’s worldwide network, and the key value offering from which derive all other international aviation benefits – whether commercial, cultural or personal.

Last, but not least, the **fourth** element of our today’s event is a presentation by the IATA Regional Director for Europe Giancarlo Buono; Giancarlo proved a strong supporter of our Foundation and in spite of his heavy workload always responds positively to our requests to participate in and contribute to our events (Thank you Giancarlo). Falling fully in line with the theme of International Aviation Day, he will talk to us about Air Transport and Tourism. These two concepts run concurrently in a circle. Tourism is a driver for Air Transport but also, especially for a fairly remote island like Cyprus, there can be no tourism without air transport. But more on this later on from Giancarlo.

Before concluding, I feel it an obligation to thank all our sponsors for their support over the last 10 years, which was invaluable and instrumental for all our acivities.

ln addition, I would like to thank also all those individuals and international organizations, who supported us in various ways since the establishment of our Foundation. Amongst them Ι could mention ΙCΑΟ, EUROCONTROL, EASA, the EC, ECAC, ΙΑΤΑ IFALPA IFATCA ,as well as numerous Government Officials and experts from Greece, ltaly, France, lsrael and other countries. This support, led to the development of close cooperation with their Organisations, as well as excellent personal relations with them. The presence of Gian Carlo Buono from ΙΑΤΑ, who travel to Cyprus just for today in order to be with us, is a manifestation of this support and the credibility of our Foundation internationally.

I would also like to thank the representatives of the Political Parties present in this room and in particular the leader of the Green Party Giorgos Perdikis , who left the discussions on the budget in Parliament ο be with us today.

Our appreciation goes also to certain former Ministers and Directors General of Ministries sitting in table number three.

This is also a good opportunity to congratulate publicly the newly elected President of ICAO MR. Salvatore Schiacchitano, whom we know very well since he visited Cyprus several times to participate in our events. ln fact two years ago we presented to him the FSF-MED ANNUAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

And so, without much further ado, I thank you for honouring us with your presence today, enjoy your lunch and have a fruitful session.

Καλή Όρεξη!