



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 14: Facilitation Programmes

ADVANCEMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY IN AVIATION

(Presented by Canada, on behalf of Australia, Airports Council International and the International Air Transport Association)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) data has established that each day, over 100,000 scheduled flights transport almost 12 million passengers across the global air transportation network, with this passenger traffic expected to more than double in the next 20 years. This has significant implications for those travellers who are among the 15 percent of the world's population that has disabilities. While disability rates are forecast to grow – due in large part to population aging and a rise in chronic health conditions – medical advances and new assistive and other technologies are making it more and more feasible for people with disabilities to travel, including by air.

Barrier-free air services play an important role in allowing persons with disabilities to live with independence and dignity. What remains to be done is to further reduce the barriers to such travel, which continue to exist despite the ongoing efforts of – and many significant improvements made by – various ICAO Member States and their air industries. Subject matter experts are working with international partners through a Facilitation Panel Working Group to develop a compendium of information that highlights the efforts of Member States to address accessibility in aviation, collect relevant data, and identify data gaps, so as to identify areas where additional guidance may prove useful. The Assembly is invited to continue playing a key role in advancing accessibility across the aviation spectrum, and commit to contributing to the Working Group effort through the development of a compendium.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize the importance of increasing awareness and continuing to collaborate to advance accessibility in aviation; and
- b) encourage Member States to provide information to ICAO to support the development of a compendium of regulation, statutes, and policies relating to accessibility in aviation.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective — <i>Security and Facilitation</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A

<i>References:</i>	IATA 20 Year Passenger Forecast WHO World Report on Disability UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities UN Sustainable Development Goals Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation (15th Edition, 2017)</i> , SARPs 8.22-8.44 WP/15 to the Tenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (September 2018)
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 For all of us, air travel is increasingly integral to modern life. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts that air travel will double in the next 20 years¹, with airlines carrying 8.2 billion passengers annually by 2037. A rise in living standards, combined with drops in air fares, are among the principal drivers of this projected growth.

1.2 Passengers with disabilities will be part of this growing air travel trend. Persons with disabilities currently represent approximately 15 percent of the world's population² and these numbers are expected to continue to rise. Advances in medical care and assistive technologies have increasingly given persons with disabilities the freedom to travel, but too often, and for too many, a barrier-free journey remains unattainable.

1.3 Making air travel accessible for all passengers is a legal, economic and human rights concern. Adopting a consistent international approach to achieve this is in all our best interests: it can yield benefits such as improved access to air travel with less confusion and frustration for persons with disabilities, and lead to easier development and implementation of accessibility-related rules by Member States. This would help reduce compliance complexities and costs for transportation service providers.

1.4 It is important that ICAO Member States and the industry continue to play a key role in removing the barriers and challenges that hamper access to reliable, safe, comfortable and easily usable air transportation services for persons with disabilities. Just as air travel is coordinated globally, efforts to make it accessible should be as well.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In WP/15³ to the Tenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel in 2018, Canadian experts invited the Panel to take note of the need to continue to advance accessibility in aviation, with a particular focus on current and emerging barriers and challenges to inform and guide international discussions and actions. This discussion was supported by the representatives of the observer organizations.

2.2 In its consideration of WP/15, the Panel broadly supported the continued advancement of accessibility in aviation. Based on the recommendation from Member States, it was determined that a compendium of state regulations, policies, and statutes be created in order to gather baseline data on best practices and potential gaps in a cost-effective way. A Working Group was formed to facilitate this effort,

¹ <https://www.iata.org/publications/store/Pages/20-year-passenger-forecast.aspx>

² https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf

³ https://www.icao.int/Meetings/FALP/Documents/FALP10-2018/FALP10.WP15.Advancement%20of%20Accessibility%20in%20Aviation_EN.pdf

comprised of experts from Canada, Australia, the United States, United Kingdom, representatives for the European Union, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and Airports Council International (ACI).

2.3 The Working Group has developed a survey to inform the compendium. The survey questions reflect Standards and Recommended Practice's (SARP's) 8.22 through 8.44 of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the Convention on International Civil Aviation,⁴ and give Member States the opportunity to identify other relevant practices they have developed and find useful.

2.4 The compendium will therefore provide a baseline of the existing efforts of Member States to address accessibility in aviation. It will identify different Member State approaches to addressing accessibility across the globe, and may also help to identify gaps in the seamless travel experience of persons with disabilities.

2.5 The compendium will contribute to data on accessible aviation, which can be lacking, affecting States' ability to develop and measure evidence-based approaches. It may also help identify where further data collection would be useful. As the world continues to move towards the implementation of standards and recommended practices that will help create a seamless travel experience for travellers with disabilities, it is important for Member States to understand how their own efforts relate to those of others, and what models and opportunities exist for inspiration, coordination, and collaboration.

2.6 The compendium would differ from, and build on, existing collections of information on accessible aviation. The scope will cover accessibility policies, regulations, and statutes, which have jurisdiction over airports, airlines, and other intertwined transportation service providers, and which affect stakeholders from the community of persons with disabilities. It will also be an avenue for Member States to identify measures they suggest would be useful to assist States in developing programs for enhancing accessibility, building capacity, and/or collecting statistical data on accessible aviation.

2.7 A strong global commitment to accessibility already exists. This includes work to set out principles and obligations in binding international treaties, such as those established in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁵ and the Chicago Convention, all within the current context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that call on the international community to work toward safe, affordable, accessible, sustainable transport for persons with disabilities. Of the 17 SDGs and related 169 targets, ICAO identified 15 SDGs as strongly linked to its Strategic Objectives and is committed to supporting their implementation⁶.

2.8 Airports and airlines are also committed to becoming barrier-free. For example, ACI World has adopted a Board Resolution and published a Handbook that recommends how airports can enhance the accessibility of air travel for persons with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility and hidden disabilities.

2.9 IATA, for its part, has also adopted a Resolution on accessibility and a set of core principles that commits airlines to improve the travel experience for passengers with disabilities and aims to bring the

⁴ https://www.icao.int/WACAF/Documents/Meetings/2018/FAL-IMPLEMENTATION/an09_cons.pdf

⁵ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-9-accessibility.html>

⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2375Mobilizing%20Sustainable%20Transport.pdf>, p.12

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travel sector together with governments and disability communities to harmonize regulations and provide clarity and global consistency for passengers.

2.10 Despite this global framework and important advancements by Member States, industry, and advocates, work remains to make air travel accessible for all. Persons with disabilities still face barriers when travelling by air. These persist in part because of the complexity of the global air transportation network, with its understandable variations from one jurisdiction to the next (for example, in procedural approaches and national regulations).

2.11 The international nature of the issue requires a shared vision to ensure international coordination that leads to international solutions across the full aviation spectrum. The presenters of this paper recognize the need for a consistent international approach to accessibility issues in aviation. For example, through efforts such as the Mobility Aid and Air Travel Forum, international stakeholders from Canada (Forum host), the United States, Europe, ICAO, and IATA are working collaboratively to promote dialogue and innovation related to the transportation of large mobility aids on smaller aircraft. The compendium project provides an additional opportunity for international collaboration.

2.12 The presenters of this paper recognize the Assembly's key role in advancing accessibility across the aviation spectrum by fostering and increasing international dialogue and awareness on this important issue.

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