

**61ST CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7 – 11 September 2026*

**AGENDA ITEM 5: AVIATION SECURITY AND
FACILITATION**

**COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES AND INDUSTRY TO
ADDRESS INADMISSIBLE PASSENGERS IN SUPPORT OF
SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION**

Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA)

SUMMARY

Aviation is experiencing an increasing number of inadmissible passengers (INADs), creating operational, administrative, safety, reputational, and financial challenges for both States and aircraft operators. The Asia-Pacific region, with its high levels of international connectivity, complex transfer flows and diverse regulatory frameworks, is particularly exposed to the consequences of inconsistent admissibility processes and uneven implementation of ICAO Annex 9 — Facilitation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). While airlines have important responsibilities in preventing and managing INAD cases, several challenges arise when States do not fully implement Annex 9 provisions or when responsibilities placed on aircraft operators exceed the scope of those SARPs. This paper invites Asia-Pacific States to strengthen cooperation with industry, improve implementation of Annex 9 provisions relating to inadmissible persons, enhance data-sharing and digital admissibility tools, and support a coordinated regional approach that facilitates legitimate travel while contributing to safe, orderly and regular migration.

COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES AND INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS INADMISSIBLE PASSENGERS IN SUPPORT OF SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Inadmissible passengers are travelers who are refused entry into a State upon arrival or during transit because they do not meet applicable entry requirements. This may include cases involving absent, invalid or expired visas; fraudulent, invalid or insufficient travel documents; watchlist or security concerns; or other immigration-related determinations made by border authorities.

1.2 Since the COVID-19 pandemic, airlines have reported a significant increase in INAD cases. At the same time, the international operating environment has become more complex, with changing entry requirements, increased digitalization of border processes, geopolitical instability, irregular migration pressures and more sophisticated forms of document and identity fraud.

1.3 To better understand the scale and nature of the challenge, IATA launched a survey among airlines and States. Initial responses from approximately 50 airlines recorded more than 111,800 INAD cases in 2024. In addition, 17 State jurisdictions reported more than 32,000 cases.

1.4 The survey showed that 53 per cent of responding airlines reported an increase in INAD cases between 2023 and 2024. Among State authorities reporting an increase, the average growth rate was approximately 41 per cent.

1.5 Reported reasons for inadmissibility include fraudulent or invalid documents, expired or absent visas, failure to meet entry conditions, and post-arrival immigration or security determinations. Airlines also reported cases in which the reasons for inadmissibility were not communicated by authorities, limiting carriers' ability to identify root causes, improve prevention measures, or provide targeted passenger information.

1.6 The financial impact on airlines is significant. Costs per case were reported as reaching up to USD 14,000 in some jurisdictions, while escort-related costs were reported at up to USD 4,000 per case. Airlines also identified fines, penalties, custody costs, accommodation, meals, re-routing, legal and administrative expenses, and difficulties recovering costs from passengers as key cost drivers.

1.7 While airlines are responsible for meeting their obligations under Annex 9, effective INAD prevention and management requires a shared approach. States retain primary responsibility for determining admissibility, enforcing immigration requirements, and ensuring that related processes are implemented in accordance with ICAO SARPs.

1.8 For the Asia-Pacific region, the issue is particularly relevant given the region's extensive international connectivity, major hub operations, large transfer flows, growing passenger volumes, and diversity of border management systems. A coordinated regional approach would support facilitation, enhance border integrity and contribute to safe, orderly and regular migration.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 ICAO Annex 9 — Facilitation establishes a framework for cooperation between States and aircraft operators in the handling of inadmissible persons. Relevant SARPs include provisions concerning notification to aircraft operators, acceptance and return processes, cooperation with carriers, the treatment and care of inadmissible persons, escort arrangements, and the proportionate application of liability measures.

2.2 While aircraft operators have obligations to support removal processes, Annex 9 also recognizes the responsibilities of States. Effective implementation requires that States provide timely cooperation, avoid imposing responsibilities beyond those established in the SARPs, and ensure that procedures are transparent, coordinated, and operationally feasible.

2.3 Greater adherence to Annex 9 across the Asia-Pacific region would enhance predictability, reduce operational disruption, and support more efficient and dignified handling of INAD cases.

Contribution to safe, orderly and regular migration

2.4 The management of inadmissible passengers should also be understood within the broader context of safe, orderly and regular migration. Aviation plays a critical role in enabling legitimate mobility, tourism, trade and family connections. At the same time, States have a legitimate interest in protecting the integrity of their borders and ensuring compliance with entry requirements.

2.5 A cooperative approach between States and industry can help reconcile these objectives. Early verification of admissibility, clear passenger information, reliable travel authorization systems, and effective data-sharing can reduce the risk of irregular travel while preserving the facilitation benefits of international air transport.

Digitalization and pre-travel admissibility verification

2.6 Digitalization offers a significant opportunity to reduce INAD cases before travel begins. Pre-travel verification tools, electronic travel authorizations, interactive advance passenger information systems, and single government portals can help passengers, airlines, and authorities determine admissibility more accurately and earlier in the journey.

2.7 A move toward interoperable pre-travel verification systems would bring important benefits to the Asia-Pacific region, particularly given high passenger volumes, extensive transit traffic, and the need for efficient border processing.

2.8 In such models, the role of airlines should be clearly defined. Airlines can inform passengers of the need to submit required information and verify whether a passenger holds an approval to travel. However, the determination of admissibility should remain the responsibility of the State.

Capacity building and regional cooperation

2.9 The Asia-Pacific region would benefit from further capacity-building and the exchange of practices for INAD prevention and management. This could include guidance on Annex 9 implementation, removal coordination, treatment and care of inadmissible persons, inter-airline cooperation, use of digital tools, and engagement between civil aviation and border authorities.

2.10 Regional dialogue between States and industry can help identify practical solutions, support harmonization and reduce inconsistent practices. Such cooperation is particularly important when passengers travel through multiple jurisdictions or when removal requires coordination among several carriers and authorities.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) encourage full implementation of relevant Annex 9 provisions governing inadmissible persons, covering acceptance and return procedures, notifications to aircraft operators, cooperation, escort arrangements, treatment and care of inadmissible passengers, as well as proportionate, transparent liability frameworks;
- b) foster structured collaboration among civil aviation authorities, immigration and border control bodies, customs, airports, airlines and other stakeholders to enhance the prevention and management of INAD cases;
- c) support States in developing and deploying digital pre-travel verification tools, unified government portals and interoperable admissibility systems, enabling passengers and airlines to verify travel authorization prior to departure;
- d) urge ICAO Asia-Pacific and States to advance capacity building, host regional workshops and facilitate exchange of best practices on INAD prevention and management, including collaborative removal procedures and inter-airline coordination; and
- e) acknowledge that effective INAD prevention and management underpins border integrity, facilitates legitimate travel, and advances the broader goal of safe, orderly and regular migration.

— END —