



WORKING PAPER

**SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
(ATCONF/7)**

Montréal, HQ, 16 to 20 November 2026

Agenda Item 3: Strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks

3.3: Strengthening emergency planning mechanism and consumer protection for a resilient aviation system

**STRENGTHENING AIR PASSENGER CONSUMER PROTECTION
FOR A RESILIENT AVIATION SYSTEM**

(Presented by Thailand)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper present:

Note 1.— Consumer protection is essential to maintaining passenger confidence and supporting the sustainable growth of international air transport. As the aviation sector becomes increasingly digitalized and globally interconnected, new challenges have emerged, including transparency in online distribution channels, cross-border complaint handling, and passenger awareness of their rights.

Note 2.— Large-scale disruptions such as severe weather, operational constraints, geopolitical events, and technology outages highlight the need for effective passenger protection measures and clear communication. Since disruptions may involve multiple stakeholders, including airlines, airports, and air navigation service providers, a coordinated and system-wide approach is required.

Note 3.— Thailand supports strengthening consumer protection through the implementation of the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Core Principles on Consumer Protection and national passenger protection regulations. Enhanced international cooperation, information sharing, capacity-building, and the exchange of best practices can further promote consistent and effective consumer protection worldwide, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable aviation system.

Action: The conference is invited to

- a) encourage States to review and enhance national air passenger consumer protection frameworks, using ICAO's Core Principles on Consumer Protection as a reference;
- b) support initiatives to improve passenger awareness of their rights and available complaint and redress mechanisms;
- c) support the establishment of cooperative arrangements among States for the handling of cross-border passenger complaints and the exchange of relevant information;
- d) request ICAO to facilitate capacity-building activities, and provide forums to exchange regulatory experiences and best practices on air passenger consumer protection;
- e) request ICAO to explore options to enhance international coordination and regulatory convergence in air passenger consumer protection, while recognizing the differing legal and operational environments of States; and

	f) request ICAO to review the continued adequacy of the Core Principles on Consumer Protection in addressing emerging challenges related to digitalization, online distribution channels, cross-border passenger complaints, and large-scale disruptions, and, where appropriate, develop updates or supplementary guidance material.
<i>Strategic Goal:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal: <i>The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All.</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The implementation of the recommendations contained in this paper is expected to be undertaken within existing ICAO work programmes and available resources. Any future initiatives requiring additional studies, guidance material, or capacity-building activities would be subject to the availability of resources and the priorities established by ICAO Member States.
<i>References:</i>	ICAO's Core Principles on Consumer Protection

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Consumer confidence is essential for the sustainable development of international air transport. Effective consumer protection frameworks promote transparency, fairness, and accountability by ensuring passengers receive accurate information, assistance, and support when purchasing tickets or during disruptions.

1.2 Over the past decade, States have increasingly introduced passenger protection measures addressing delays, cancellations, denied boarding, complaint handling, and passenger assistance. The International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Core Principles on Consumer Protection have provided a valuable reference for the development of national policy and regulatory frameworks. Thailand has similarly adopted the ICAO Core Principles as the basis for its civil aviation policy on consumer protection.

1.3 The operating environment for international air transport is evolving. Growth in passenger traffic, increased digitalization, complex distribution channels, and the global nature of aviation services have introduced new institutional and regulatory challenges. Recent large-scale disruptions have highlighted the need for effective consumer protection during both routine operations and extraordinary events.

1.4 Thailand believes that strengthening consumer protection directly enhances the resilience of the air transport system by promoting passenger confidence, supporting regulatory certainty, and ensuring passengers are well informed and assisted during service disruptions.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Emerging Consumer Protection Challenges

2.1.1 The continued growth of air transport has raised passenger expectations and increased demand for effective consumer protection. Meanwhile, the expansion of online travel agencies, digital booking platforms, and other intermediaries has introduced challenges related to transparency, passenger awareness, and the allocation of responsibilities among service providers.

2.1.2 International air travel frequently involves multiple jurisdictions with differing legal and regulatory frameworks. Consequently, passengers may encounter varying levels of protection and difficulties in seeking redress for cross-border complaints.

2.1.3 Furthermore, many passengers remain unaware of their rights, available remedies, and complaint procedures. Enhancing public awareness is therefore essential to improving the effectiveness of consumer protection frameworks.

2.2 Consumer Protection During Disruptions

2.2.1 Large-scale disruption events, including severe weather, airspace restrictions, geopolitical conflicts, airport operational issues, air traffic management constraints, and major technology outages, can significantly affect passengers and aviation stakeholders. These events highlight the importance of consumer protection frameworks that remain practical, proportionate, and effective during extraordinary circumstances.

2.2.2 Although consumer protection frameworks often focus on airlines, disruptions can also originate from other stakeholders, such as airports and air navigation service providers. Operational issues may result from airport congestion, baggage system failures, security screening delays, infrastructure constraints, ground handling problems, or reduced airport capacity. Flight delays and cancellations may also be caused by air traffic management restrictions, airspace closures, staffing shortages, adverse weather procedures, and other limitations. A coordinated approach among all parties is necessary to minimize passenger impacts and support operational recovery.

2.2.3 Passengers increasingly expect real-time information through airline websites, mobile applications, email notifications, Short Message Service (SMS), airport information systems, and social media. Timely, accurate, and consistent communication during disruptions is essential. Passengers should receive clear information about the nature of the disruption, available assistance, alternative travel options, and their rights. Effective communication reduces uncertainty, improves the passenger experience, and supports confidence in the aviation system.

2.3 International Cooperation

2.3.1 Given the international nature of air transport, enhanced cooperation among States remains essential. Areas for cooperation may include:

- a) exchange of best practices and regulatory experiences relating to consumer protection;
- b) sharing lessons learned from large-scale disruption events and promoting regular dialogue among aviation authorities on emerging consumer protection issues and regulatory developments;
- c) strengthening cooperation in the handling of cross-border passenger complaints through designated focal points and information-sharing arrangements;
- d) supporting capacity-building activities, workshops, and training programmes for States developing or strengthening consumer protection frameworks; and
- e) promotion of ICAO's Core Principles on Consumer Protection as a common reference for national frameworks.

2.4 Thailand's Experience

2.4.1 Thailand has adopted the ICAO Core Principles on Consumer Protection as the basis of its national policy and implemented passenger protection measures through Civil Aviation Board Regulation No. 101, which sets minimum standards of care and compensation for passengers affected by delays and cancellations. In line with ICAO guidance, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) emphasizes balancing consumer protection with industry competitiveness. Thailand has promoted regulatory guidance, public awareness campaigns, and stakeholder engagement to ensure consistent implementation of passenger protection and improve public understanding of rights and remedies. Continued dialogue and cooperation among States are essential to address challenges related to digitalization, cross-border operations, and large-scale disruptions. Thailand supports ICAO's efforts to promote regulatory convergence, facilitate best practice exchange, and enhance collaboration among States and industry stakeholders to strengthen consumer protection and maintain a sustainable, resilient air transport system.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Consumer protection is an important element of a resilient and sustainable air transport system. Effective passenger protection measures contribute to consumer confidence and support the continued growth of international aviation.

3.2 Increasing passenger volumes, digitalization, cross-border operations, and large-scale disruption events continue to present challenges for consumer protection frameworks. These challenges require a balanced approach that protects passengers while recognizing operational realities across the aviation ecosystem.

3.3 Disruptions affecting passengers may arise from airlines, airports, air navigation service providers, and other stakeholders across the aviation ecosystem. Effective consumer protection therefore requires a coordinated and whole-of-system approach that recognizes the respective roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the passenger journey.

3.4 To further promote progress in this area, delegates are encouraged to actively participate in dedicated working groups on consumer protection, initiate bilateral or multilateral dialogues with other States, and contribute to ongoing ICAO initiatives aimed at harmonizing regulatory approaches. Delegates may also consider supporting the establishment of regional contact points for cross-border complaints, organizing joint capacity-building events, and sharing national experiences and lessons learned with the wider international community. By taking these practical steps following the conference, delegates can foster ongoing collaboration and help advance the implementation of robust air passenger consumer protection frameworks.

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