SECOND JOINT ICAO/ACI/IATA SYMPOSIUM ON ACCESSIBILITY IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION

"Advancing Global Commitment to Inclusive and Universally Accessible Air Transport for All"

ICAO HEADQUARTERS, MONTRÉAL, CANADA
14-15 OCTOBER 2026

PROGRAMME

Tuesday 13, October 2026	
TIME	
13.00 – 17.00	**ON-SITE REGISTRATION**

Wednesday 14 October 2026	
TIME	
08.00 – 17.00	**ON-SITE REGISTRATION**
09.00 – 10.00	**Opening Ceremony** **Master of Ceremony: Denis Chagnon** **Keynote address by:** **Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar**, Secretary General, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) **Welcome address by**: • The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, Minister of Transport of Canada **(tbc)** • **Mr. Justin Erbacci,** Director General, Airport Council International (ACI) World • **Mr. Howard Liebman**, Vice President, Government Relations, Air Transat / Chairperson of the Board of Directors, National Airline Council of Canada (NACC)
10.00 – 10.15	**Setting the Scene** **Sonia Hifdi**, Deputy Director, Aviation Security, Cybersecurity and Facilitation, & Acting, Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO
10.15 – 10.45	**COFFEE BREAK offered by ICAO**

10.45 – 11.45 **Session 1**	**From Commitment to Implementation – Advancing Accessible, Inclusive and Seamless Air Transport** This session will provide a comprehensive, forward-looking reflection on the evolution of accessibility in international air transport, while simultaneously contributing to shaping the strategic direction for the period 2026–2028. Building on discussions initiated at the first global gathering in 2024, participants will examine how accessibility has transitioned from a policy objective to a recognized strategic, system-wide priority across the aviation sector. Attention will be given to the growing global emphasis on inclusiveness, reinforced during the 42nd ICAO Assembly, and to Assembly Resolution A42-14, which underscores the protection of vulnerable passengers and embeds accessibility within broader Facilitation objectives. The session will highlight the cross-cutting nature of accessibility, emphasizing its strong linkages with safety, security, passenger experience, and human rights considerations. By positioning accessibility as an essential pillar of modern aviation planning and service delivery, discussions will aim to move beyond commitments toward practical, measurable, and scalable implementation across States and industry stakeholders. The discussion will also identify concrete follow-up actions to improve implementation, foster innovation, and maintain sustained, structured engagement with persons with disabilities, industry partners, and Member States beyond the Symposium. By aligning strategic vision with actionable outcomes, this session aims to ensure that accessibility remains a sustained global priority and is effectively integrated into aviation systems worldwide through 2028 and beyond. **Moderator: Sonia Hifdi,** Deputy Director, Aviation Security, Cybersecurity and Facilitation, & Acting, Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO • **Michael Munene**, Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Kenya • **Stephanie Cadieux**, Chief Accessibility Officer, Office of the Chief Accessibility Officer, Employment and Social Development Canada, Government of Canada • **Mario Bauer**, Director, Customer Care, Global Sensitive Servicing, Lufthansa Group • **Fatma Taher**, Head, Strategic Projects & Government Agenda, Dubai Airports
	Question & Answer Session
11.45 – 12.00	SKYTALKS **ACI WORLD**
12.00 – 13.45	**LUNCH BREAK/NETWORKING offered by ICAO**
13.45 – 14.30 **Session 2**	**Global Regulatory Landscape: Accessibility Commitments** This session will review the ongoing evolution of the regulatory and policy framework on accessibility. Participants will explore how States are increasingly aligning accessibility obligations with broader facilitation and consumer-protection responsibilities, including national legislation in line with ICAO Standards and relevant Convention obligations, and oversight expectations. Regional authorities and industry stakeholders will share updates on how inclusiveness for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility have become a central component of their aviation policy agendas. This discussion will help illuminate how regulatory momentum is converging toward more harmonized global expectations for accessible air transport, while recognizing the need for practical regulatory principles and implementation approaches that can be applied across different national, regional, and operational contexts. **Moderator: Linda Ristagno**, Assistant Director, Customer Experience and Facilitation, IATA • **Laura Pierallini**, Professor, McGill and Luiss University Partner Pierallini Studio • **Sonia Gangopadhyay**, Director, Centre of Expertise for Accessible Transportation, Canadian Transportation Agency • **Blane A. Workie**, Assistant General Counsel, Office of Aviation Consumer Protection, United States Department of Transportation • **Yuri Cesar Cherman**, Manager of the Branch of Consumer Affairs, Agência Nacional de Aviação Civil (ANAC), Brazil
	Question & Answer Session

14.30 – 15.30 **Session 3**	**Designing with Empathy: Integrating Passenger Lived Experience into Universal, Future-Ready Aviation Infrastructure** This session integrates lived passenger experiences with the design of future aviation systems. It highlights journeys of passengers with disabilities across the full travel chain—from booking to arrival—showcasing key challenges and solutions across a wide range of visible and non-visible conditions. The discussion will explore how these experiences can inform airport infrastructure, services, and operations, including ways to capture input from those unable to self-advocate through engagement with caregivers, organizations, and frontline staff. It will also address intersectional vulnerabilities and facilitation processes for at-risk travellers. Experts will examine how universal design is transforming airport environments, covering innovations in layouts, wayfinding, digital tools, and boarding systems. Emphasis will be placed on integrating accessibility early in planning, including standards, procurement, and project governance. It underscores that accessibility must be embedded by design, as a core element of modern, inclusive aviation. **Moderator: Kerianne Wilson**, Director, Customer Accessibility, Air Canada • **Hans-Gerhard Giesa,** Senior Expert Human Factors, Cabin & Cargo, Airbus SE • **Sandra Alvarez**, Director, Passenger Experience, Ottawa International Airport Authority, Canada • **Dr. William Harkness**, Accessibility Leader, Boeing Company • **Dr. Sahar Emam Ahmed,** General Manager, Public Relations & Accessibility, Egypt Air • Josh Vander Vies, Director, Diversity, Inclusion and Belong, Vancouver Airport Authority, Canada (**tbc**)
	Question & Answer Session
15.30 – 16.00	**COFFEE BREAK offered by ICAO**
16.00 – 17.00 **Session 4**	**Digital Accessibility: Technology, Identity and Passenger Empowerment** Digital transformation is reshaping the passenger journey, and this session will examine how accessibility must be firmly embedded in emerging digital identities, seamless travel processes, and biometric systems. Participants will discuss Assembly-supported initiatives related to digital travel credentials and passenger-processing modernization, highlighting how these systems can either empower or marginalize passengers with disabilities while including cybersecurity considerations. The session will also analyse accessibility challenges in booking platforms, mobile applications, airline websites, and real-time communication tools. Special attention will be paid to the needs of passengers with cognitive or neurodivergent disabilities who may face unique barriers in navigating digital travel systems. The session will also examine accessible, low-friction processes being designed as part of the mainstream passenger experience. The session will also consider how privacy-preserving tools and passenger-controlled information-sharing could help frontline employees respond more effectively to individual needs, including for passengers who use Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices or who require support that may not be immediately visible. **Moderator: Suzanne Acton-Gervais**, President, Association of Canadian Travel Agencies and Travel Advisors (ACTA) • **Federico Cabrera**, Director, Airport Operations and Customer Experience Manager, Carrasco International Airport, Uruguay • **Dino Zuppa**, Chief Executive Officer, Accessibility Standards, Canada • **Andrea Wright**, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Assistance Dogs Society (PADS) • **Katie Faires**, Product Strategy, Boeing Commercial Airlines
	Question & Answer Session
17.00 – 17.10	**Wrap-up of Day 1**

Thursday 15, October 2026	
09.00 – 10.00 **Session 5**	**Safety, Security & Dignity: Building a Holistic Facilitation Environment** Anchored in Assembly Resolution A42-14 and broader facilitation concerns, this session will explore how safety, security, and accessibility intersect throughout the aviation system. Discussions will address the importance of supporting vulnerable passengers and at risk travellers through respectful and trauma informed assistance practices. The session will also examine how accessibility can be managed through structured programmes, quality assurance, employee reporting, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement. Participants will highlight the need for robust programmes including training, strengthened cross-sector collaboration, and operational preparedness in the face of disruptions. The emphasis will be on continuity planning that ensures accessible services remain reliable even during irregular operations. Drawing on principles from safety culture and operational assurance, presenters will consider how airports, airlines, and service providers can move beyond one-time initiatives toward sustained accessibility management. **Moderator: Fernando Augusto de Castro**, Director of Airport Optimization – Terminals, ACI World • **Kirk Goodlet**, InterVISTAS Consulting, and ACI Terminal Operations Committee Member • **Brenda Asiimire**, Product Manager, Accessible Travel & Special Services, Products & Service Excellence, Iceland Air • **Sarah Eve De Lisle**, Chief, Accessibility and Regulations, Aéroports de Montréal (YUL) • **Derick Zimmerman**, Vice President, Safety and Training, Alliance Ground International (AGI) • **Isabelle Ducharme**, Board President, Kéroul, Montréal & Air Canada Advisory Committee
	Question & Answer Session
10.00 – 10.45	**COFFEE BREAK offered by ICAO**
10.45 – 11.45 **Session 6**	**Collaborative Governance: Strengthening Global & Regional Partnerships** This session will focus on how States, industry partners, disability organizations, and global institutions can work together to build harmonized accessibility standards and policies. Drawing from Assembly outcomes that emphasize the importance of alignment and shared responsibility, speakers will explore how airports, airlines, and regulators can collaborate more effectively to enhance passenger experience and operational efficiency. Discussions will also highlight potential frameworks for monitoring accessibility performance, supporting implementation, and promoting continuous improvement across regions. The session will also consider how global and regional partnerships can support practical implementation, including through shared guidance, performance indicators, quality assurance approaches, and mechanisms for identifying barriers that are not captured through traditional consultation or complaint channels. **Moderator: Dr. Adrian Cioranu,** Director of Programmes, International Partners for Aviation Development, Innovation and Sustainability (iPADIS) • **Alan Campbell**, Senior Manager International Affairs, International Airlines Group (IAG) • **Heather Ansley**, Esq., MSW, Chief Policy Officer, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), United States • **Julie McGuinness**, ESG Manager, Dublin Airport • **Mark De Laurentiis**, Director of Passenger Rights Protection Department, ENAC, Italy
	Question & Answer Session
11.45 – 13.30	**LUNCH BREAK/NETWORKING offered by ICAO**

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<tr><td>13.30 – 14.30

Session 7</td><td>Closing Session: Implementation & Follow Up
The Symposium will conclude with a comprehensive overview of the priority actions identified during the event. The closing discussion will identify practical follow-up actions, including opportunities to strengthen the long-term accessibility strategy including implementation support, improve performance monitoring, and maintain structured engagement with persons with disabilities, industry partners, and States after the Symposium. Representatives from States, industry, and international organizations will share commitments and next steps to advance accessibility at global, regional, and national levels.

Moderator: Serge Bijimine, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Transport Canada (tbc)

• Narjes Abdennebi, Chief, Facilitation Section, ICAO (tbc)
• Linda Ristagno, Assistant Director, Customer Experience and Facilitation, IATA
• Darryl Dowd, Vice President of Safety, Security and Operations, ACI World
• Nuno Bellem, Acting Chair ICAO Facilitation Panel, Rapporteur ICAO Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation, and Team Leader, International Agreements and Determination and Compliance Branch, Canadian Transportation Agency</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Question & Answer Session</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.30 – 15.00</td><td>Wrap up of Day 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>15.00 – 15.30</td><td>Closing Remarks

Sonia Hifdi, Deputy Director, Aviation Security, Cybersecurity and Facilitation, & Acting, Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO</td></tr>
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