



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 14: Facilitation Programmes

**PROGRESS MADE BY THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
IN THE AREA OF AIR TRANSPORT FACILITATION**

(Presented by Dominican Republic)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper presents the progress made by the Dominican Republic in the implementation of the continuing ICAO policies in the area of air transport facilitation and the provisions related to facilitation in matters such as accessibility to and universal design of the different air terminals, urging member States to support this initiative to ensure that *No Country is Left Behind* (NCLB).

Such provisions would bring great benefits and provide facilities to travellers with special requirements by reducing the difficulties that may arise from using this means of transport.

The Dominican Republic, in the spirit of contributing to the topic of accessibility, and given the many benefits to be gained by all the users of the system without distinction, such as improving access to air travel and minimising confusion and frustration for persons with disabilities, reducing compliance costs and difficulties for carriers, and simplifying the development and implementation of accessibility standards by Member States,

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

a) urge ICAO to take into account the Recommendations from Doc 9984 and from Annex 9, on *Facilitation*, in Chapter 8, H. *Facilitation of the Transport of Persons with Disabilities* and to convert them into Standards.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective — <i>Security and Facilitation</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Subject to the activities approved by ICAO in relation to this topic in its budget for the 2020-2022 period.
<i>References:</i>	a) Summary of the Final Report on the Fourth Meeting of the Aviation Security and Facilitation Regional Group (AVSEC/FAL/RG/F), held in Mexico City, Mexico, from 3 to 5 June 2014. NE/8-FAL Best Practices b) 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly (Montréal, 27 September – 6 October 2016) ICAO Resolution A39-20 Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Doc 9984 – <i>Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities</i> .

¹ Spanish version provided by Dominican Republic.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since 1944, the Dominican Republic has been a signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which it ratified on 25 September 1945, demonstrating the firm commitment to assume all the responsibilities that would derive from that very important action. Air Transport Facilitation is a fundamental area for the proper functioning of aviation and will be one of the main areas of national interest for this State.

1.2 It is estimated that in the Dominican Republic, between 10 to 15 percent of the population has some level of disability which affects their active participation in society. This disability occurs due to different causes and contexts, among which the following are worth mentioning: permanent types of damage that affect the neurological, cognitive, sensory, motor systems, or a combination thereof. According to the PAHO/WHO, 35 percent of persons with disabilities have a disability of a motor nature.

1.3 Following up on the provisions related to Facilitation of specific aspects contained in Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation – *Facilitation*, the Civil Aviation Board (JAC) undertook the commitment to faithfully comply with Doc 9984, and as ratified by Assembly A39-20, by carrying out identification, analysis and recommendation efforts on accessibility and universal design, guaranteeing access to environments, processes, products and services to users with disabilities or reduced mobility in air transport.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 The Dominican State established the National Air Transport Facilitation Program (PNFTA) and developed the Air Transport Facilitation Regulations (RFTA), which sets forth, *inter alia*, the purpose, objectives and tasks of the National Facilitation Program in compliance with Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

2.2 According to the annual schedule, inspections are performed in the country's airports; more specifically, five (5) inspections are carried out per year at airports that handle more than 500,000 passengers, and three (3) inspections at airports that handle less than 500,000 passengers; additionally, unscheduled inspections are carried out as required. These inspections have made it possible to obtain a base of data and of best practices in terms of facilitation, accessibility and universal design regarding the implemented improvements, from which the following priorities have been obtained as results:

1. Improvements in signage, hygiene, lighting, air conditioning, parking, land transport and other services;
2. Optimization of passenger entry/exit time to/from the airport, in accordance with the guidelines established in the Recommended Practices 3.37 and 3.40, respectively, from Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation – *Facilitation*;
3. Improvements in passenger screening times at migration, customs and security;
4. Facilities for passengers with disabilities: establishment of parking lots, ramps, wheelchairs, toilets and elevators.

2.3 Since it is an ethical concern for everyone, in order for the aviation industry to exploit the economic potential of this segment of passengers, a cross-sectional analysis is required, across the aviation spectrum, of the obstacles that challenge air transport service usability for persons with disabilities.

2.4 In this regard, in 2017, technicians from JAC and from the Representative State Platform for Physically Disabled Persons (PREDIF) carried out a diagnostic survey of all their areas related to

facilitation at the 'José Francisco Peña Gómez' Las Americas International Airport and at the Punta Cana airport, with the objective of submitting a report on their findings and recommendations to ensure their adoption by the airport owners/administrators. This report was submitted in 2018, and consequently, a plan of action was developed that has resulted in a series of activities, some of which are detailed below:

- In 2017 and 2018, technicians from PREDIF and JAC provided a seminar-workshop on the 'Fundamentals of Accessibility and Universal Design in Air Transport Facilitation' at the University of the Caribbean;
- In 2018, the Chairman of JAC and the Rector of the University of the Caribbean signed, on behalf of their respective institutions, an agreement in collaboration with the headquarters of the '*Alta Casa de Estudios*' [Higher Centre for Studies] with the aim of establishing and developing research projects, fostering academic exchanges, as well as training for the human resources involved in civil aviation activity in the Dominican Republic;
- JAC received the 'RD Includes 2018' seal, awarded by the National Council on Disability (CONADIS) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), for its good inclusive practices in favour of persons with disabilities;
- JAC took the initiative of setting up a unit for accessibility and universal design, as recommended in Chapter 13 of the *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities* (Doc 9984);
- The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Training (INFOTEP) is providing a sign language course within JAC's facilities to the representatives of the entities that make up the National Facilitation Committee. This comes as part of the schedule of activities of the unit for accessibility of JAC's Facilitation Division.

2.5 As a result of combined effort, the commitment and vision of the Dominican State to bolster Dominican airports, it has been possible to initiate the processes of adapting and converting airports into inclusive spaces, which provide autonomy and that adapt to any person without distinction of race, religion, physical condition. To this end, investment initiatives have been carried out for the current year (2019), by the authorities of 'Aeropuertos Dominicanos Siglo XXI' (Aerodom) at the 'José Francisco Peña Gómez' Las Americas International Airport (AILA-JFPG), such as:

- Preferential, duly marked parking spaces of adequate sizes and signage have been designated for persons with disabilities, as stipulated in the 'Diagnóstico' submitted by JAC;
- In the migration area, tables for filling out forms were adapted for use by persons on wheelchairs and/or of short stature;
- Remodelling of toilets, by adding low-height sinks to each one; sanitary cubicles duly equipped with grab bars adapted for persons with reduced mobility;
- Installation of sciatica support chairs in the customs area;
- Adaptation of the migration counters in both terminals;
- Installation of tactile paving surfaces in the critical areas such as stairs and elevators.

2.6 Similarly, at the Gregorio Luperón International Airport, from the information available to us, sciatica support chairs have been installed, dedicated parking spaces have been designated for persons with disabilities, and tactile paving surfaces have been installed in the critical areas such as stairs and elevators.

2.7 While at the Punta Cana International Airport, facilities have been made available at the 23 boarding gates as a way of guaranteeing a greater level of autonomy for persons with disabilities and ensuring that the universal rights of these air transport users are met.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Dominican State has maintained sustainable development over time, striving to comply with domestic and international regulations. Considering that the airports are a basic pillar of this country's economy, a guarantee for cohesion, connectivity, a forefront and standard for economic drive, we must see to it that the universalization of its services becomes a reality.

3.2 The Dominican Republic, in the spirit of contributing to the topic of accessibility, proposes to take into account the aforementioned best practices, and given the many benefits to be gained by all the users of the system, without distinction, such as improving access to air travel and minimizing confusion and frustration for persons with disabilities, reducing compliance costs and difficulties for carriers, and simplifying the development and implementation of accessibility standards by Member States.

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