



| ICAO

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

20 to 24 April 2026

REPORT

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To: The Chairperson, Air Transport Committee

From: The Chairperson, Facilitation Panel

I have the honour to submit herewith the Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel, held from 20 to 24 April 2026.

Chairperson
Facilitation Panel

24 April 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of transmittal	
Table of contents.....	i-1
Introduction	
General.....	ii-1
Terms of reference	ii-1
Agenda.....	ii-1
Attendance	ii-3
Opening of the meeting.....	ii-3
Secretariat	ii-3
Languages and documentation.....	ii-3
Report of the meeting	
Agenda Item 1: Recent Facilitation developments in ICAO.....	1-1
Agenda Item 2: Recent Facilitation-related developments in the United Nations and other international organizations	2-1
Agenda Item 3: Amendments to Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i>	3-1
Agenda Item 4: Reports of the Facilitation Panel’s Working Groups	4-1
Agenda Item 5: New Strategic Goal for 2026-2028 Business Plan - “No Country Left Behind”	5-1
Agenda Item 6: Other Facilitation matters.....	6-1
Appendix A: Opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Air Transport Committee	A-1
Appendix B: List of participants.....	B-1
Appendix C: List of working papers and information papers.....	C-1

REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE FACILITATION PANEL**Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026****INTRODUCTION****General**

1. The Fourteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/14) was held at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal from 20 to 24 April 2026.

Terms of reference

2. The FAL Panel will:
- a) consider input from FAL area meetings, facilitation contacts, and the Secretariat to formulate recommendations for new and amended Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) or guidance material, taking into account recent developments in applicable technology, contemporary challenges, and future needs for improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of border inspection and other control processes in airports;
 - b) contribute information that could be used by the Secretariat in developing management tools (e.g. a manual) and other guidance material to assist States with the implementation of Annex 9;
 - c) develop proposals for consideration at FAL Division sessions; and
 - d) perform other tasks as assigned by the Air Transport Committee (ATC).

Agenda

3. The Agenda for the meeting was determined by the Air Transport Committee and comprised the following items (presented in FALP/14-WP/1):

Agenda Item 1: Recent Facilitation developments in ICAO

The Panel will be advised of Facilitation-related developments in ICAO since its Thirteenth Meeting of Facilitation Panel (26 February - 1 March 2024), the Thirty-fifth Meeting of the Aviation Security Panel (22 April to 26 April 2024), and the Fifth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Traveller Identification Programme (4 to 6 November 2025) and relevant Facilitation-related developments in the United Nations and other international organizations. The Panel will consider, among other things, proposals for new and revised SARPs.

Desired outcome: Recommendations for the Facilitation Panel work programme priorities for consideration by the Air Transport Committee (ATC).

Agenda Item 2: Recent Facilitation-related developments in the United Nations and other international organizations

The Panel will be advised of relevant Facilitation-related developments in the United Nations and other international organizations, impacting on ICAO's FAL Programme.

Desired outcome: Recommendations for the Facilitation Panel work programme priorities for consideration by the Air Transport Committee (ATC).

Agenda Item 3: Amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*

The Panel will consider proposals for new and revised Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for Amendment 31 to Annex 9.

Desired outcome: Proposals for Amendment to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*.

Agenda Item 4: Reports of the Facilitation Panel's Working Groups

The Panel will be updated on the current work by its Working Groups, including recommendations.

- a) Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9)
- b) Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM)
- c) Working Group on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and Their Families (WGAAAVF)
- d) Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA)
- e) Working Group on Facilitation Capacity Building (WGFCB)
- f) Passenger Name Record Task Force (PNR-TF)

Desired outcome: Recommendations, as appropriate.

Agenda Item 5: New Strategic Goal for 2026-2028 Business Plan - "No Country Left Behind"

States participating in the Panel will be invited to provide input on ICAO's efforts to assist States in implementing the provisions of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, and discuss potential approaches/tools, assistance projects for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) implementation, including training and workshops, to increase compliance with Annex 9 SARPs.

Desired outcome: Recommendations to assist Member States build capacity and enhance implementation of Annex 9 SARPs.

Agenda Item 6: Other Facilitation matters

The Panel will be invited to consider other matters concerning the ICAO Facilitation Programme.

Desired outcome: Recommendations on actions to further enhance the facilitation of air transport.

Attendance

4. The total number of xxx participants attended the meeting, as follows:

xx Panel members, alternates and advisers from xx Member States;
xx observers from xx Member States; and
xx observers from xx International Organizations.
5. A complete list of participants is provided in **Appendix B**.

Opening of the meeting

6. The Chairperson of the Air Transport Committee, Mr. Ángel Luis Arias Serrano, opened the meeting. His opening remarks are at **Appendix A**. The Deputy Director, Environment Ms. Jane Hupe on behalf of the Director of the Air Transport Bureau (ATB), Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma, welcomed the participants to the meeting. Deputy Director Aviation Security, Cyber Security and Facilitation, Ms. Sonia Hifdi introduced the members of the Secretariat.

Officers and Secretariat

7. The Panel elected Mr. Douglas Yeo, Panel Member from Singapore, as Chairperson of the Meeting and Mr. Nuno Bellem, Panel Member from Canada, as Vice-Chairperson.
8. Dr. Narjess Abdennebi (Chief, Facilitation Section), was the Secretary of the meeting, supported by Ms. Janet Chemeli (Facilitation Officer), Mr. Anthony Frederick (Technical Officer, Facilitation), Mr. Yukihiko Iimura (Facilitation Officer), Mr. Fahad Alghamdi (Facilitation Officer), Mrs. Christiane Dermarkar (ICAO TRIP Programme Officer), Dr. Ciaran Carolan (ICAO PKD Programme Officer), and Mr. Christopher Hornek (Consultant).

Languages and documentation

9. Interpretation services were provided in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish by the Language and Publications Branch.
 10. A list of documentation for the meeting is provided in **Appendix C**.
-

Agenda Item 1: Recent Facilitation developments in ICAO**1.1 DOCUMENTATION**

1.1.1 The Panel agreed that Information Papers (IPs) will normally not be discussed during the meeting unless the Panel decides that there is a need for additional information, and took note of IP/1 presented by Secretariat, IP/2 presented by Brazil, IP/3 and IP/4 presented by Thailand, IP/5 presented by European Union, and IP/6 presented by Germany and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), as listed on the Agenda.

1.1.2 The Secretariat delivered presentations on updates on developments relating to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, and update on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Secretariat Study Group on Data Protection Law (SSG-DPL).

1.1.3 In WP/2, the Secretariat presents an overview of key strategic air transport facilitation outcomes from the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42), including developments related to Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy, and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD). The paper reflects the high-level political commitment expressed at the ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025 and the adoption of the Doha Declaration, and highlights agreed Assembly actions aimed at strengthening Annex 9 implementation, enhancing global coordination, and advancing long-term facilitation planning. Recognizing the increasingly complex and interconnected nature of facilitation, the paper brings together proposals intended to improve harmonization, capacity building, and strategic focus for the 2026–2028 triennium. The Secretariat invites the Panel to consider and agree on the recommendations contained in paragraph 3 of the paper.

1.1.4 The Panel took note of Information Paper IP/1 relating to updates on the ICAO Facilitation Programmes, presented by the Secretariat.

1.2 DISCUSSION

1.2.1 During its consideration of WP/2, the Panel recalled that, at its Tenth Meeting, it concluded on the recommendation of the Working Group on the Global Aviation Facilitation Plan that a Global Facilitation Plan was not feasible due to limitations in available data, ongoing development of guidance material, and resource constraints. Nevertheless, in response to the Assembly's referral, the Panel agreed on the need to advance work in a structured and realistic manner and agreed to establish a time-limited Task Force, led by the Vice-Chair of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/14), to examine the feasibility of a Global Aviation Facilitation Implementation Strategy. The Panel agreed that this initial phase should focus on feasibility and scope and that, if the work were to progress, any such Strategy would need to clearly articulate its objectives and scope, priority outcomes and actions, and arrangements for monitoring and review. The Panel further agreed that the Strategy must support the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, be sustainable and realistic in terms of resources, enshrine international cooperation and information sharing, foster a strong facilitation culture, encourage innovation and efficiency, and appropriately identify and manage facilitation-related risks. With regard to action (b), the Panel noted that the Assembly had discussed the development of a standardized framework to enable States to conduct continuous monitoring and self-assessment of the effective implementation of Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), potentially including an assessment protocol, a digital reporting platform, and associated guidance. The Panel further noted that there was already a standardised self-assessment framework which can be reviewed by the Task Force. With regard to action (c) the Panel agreed

that this action should be considered as part of the work of the proposed Task Force, taking into account all Annex 9 provisions, and without prioritizing specific provisions at this stage.

1.2.2 The Panel took note of the information presented during the Secretariat's presentations, and in Information Paper IP/1 relating to updates on the ICAO Facilitation Programmes.

Agenda Item 2: Recent Facilitation-related developments in the United Nations and other international organizations**2.1 DOCUMENTATION**

2.1.1 In WP/3, the Secretariat provided an update on joint work undertaken by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) concerning the protection and treatment of transport workers during public health emergencies of international concern. The paper builds on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and recalls the operational, safety and economic impacts of fragmented national measures affecting transport workers, in particular air crew and seafarers, during such crises. It highlights relevant normative developments within the ILO, IMO and WHO frameworks, including the recognition of transport workers as key or essential workers and the adoption of facilitation-related obligations during public health emergencies. Taking into account differences in mandates, terminology and legal regimes across organizations, the paper outlines inter-secretariat considerations and proposes possible avenues for further alignment under Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. The Secretariat invites the Panel to consider and agree on the recommendations presented in paragraph 3 of the paper.

2.1.2 IMO delivered a presentation on Outcomes of the IMO 50th FAL Conference on Joint ICAO/ILO/IMO/WHO on the protection of “key workers” during health emergencies of international concerns.

2.1.3 The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) delivered a presentation on Updates on the UN Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents.

2.1.4 The Panel took note of Information Paper IP/6 relating to update on the Development of the JSON PAXLST Standard.

2.2 DISCUSSION

2.2.1 During discussions on WP/3, the Panel thanked the Secretariats of ICAO, ILO, IMO and WHO for the joint work undertaken on the protection and treatment of transport workers during public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC), building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and recognizing the critical role played by transport workers in maintaining essential connectivity and global supply chains. The Panel acknowledges that this work provides a clear way forward toward concluding the development of provisions related to the treatment of crew. The Panel further noted that the examples drawn from the IMO Facilitation Convention may also inform, if required, future work on broader facilitation issues related to the treatment of transport workers across the supply chain during public health emergencies.

2.2.2 The Panel noted the information presented by IMO, and UNCITRAL and thanked the organizations for their participation, and looks forward to its continued collaboration, as appropriate, in future work of the Panel and its working groups.

2.2.3 The Panel took note of Information Paper IP/6 relating to update on the Development of the JSON PAXLST Standard.

— — — — —

Agenda Item 3: Amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation***3.1 DOCUMENTATION**

3.1.1 In WP/4, the Secretariat presents a consolidated summary of facilitation-related regulatory matters considered under Agenda Item 12 of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42). The paper highlights cross-cutting issues affecting the movement of passengers, crew, aircraft and goods, including emerging challenges related to crew identification, inadmissible persons, transport of animals, disaster and humanitarian operations, public health measures, and passenger experience. It reflects Assembly outcomes that were referred to the Council for further technical study, with the involvement of relevant ICAO bodies. The paper provides a framework for the Facilitation Panel to contribute to the follow-up work by identifying priorities for Annex 9 modernization and implementation support. The Secretariat invites the Panel to consider and agree on the recommendations set out in paragraph 3.

3.1.2 In WP/5, the Secretariat proposes amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to support the implementation of the ICAO Digital Travel Authorization (DTA), a standardized, non-physical authorization to travel based on ICAO Doc 9303 specifications. The paper responds to increasing global use of electronic travel authorizations and aims to enhance interoperability, predictability and contactless processing, in alignment with the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP). It also proposes related clarifications to provisions on interactive Advance Passenger Information (iAPI) systems and Electronic Travel Systems (ETS), as well as adjustments to the structure of Annex 9 provisions on visas and authorizations to travel. The Secretariat invites the Panel to endorse the proposed Recommended Practice and related amendments outlined in paragraph 3.

3.1.3 In WP/15, France reviews ICAO's evolving role in combating wildlife trafficking in the aviation sector, highlighting the scale, security, public health and environmental impacts of this illicit activity. The paper recalls the adoption of Recommended Practice 8.47 in Annex 9 and presents national and international initiatives supporting its implementation. Based on progress made and remaining challenges, the paper proposes elevating the existing Recommended Practice to a Standard and introducing additional Recommended Practices related to awareness training and passenger information. France invites the Panel to consider the proposed amendments to Annex 9, as set out in Appendix A.

3.1.4 In WP/12, Italy presents national experience and best practices aimed at enhancing airport accessibility for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, with particular emphasis on the role of inspections and oversight by civil aviation authorities. The paper notes the growing number of passengers with diverse accessibility needs and highlights the absence of harmonized international approaches to airport accessibility inspections. Drawing on initiatives led by the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC), the paper proposes the sharing and dissemination of best practices within ICAO to support consistent implementation of Annex 9 accessibility provisions. Italy invites the Panel to consider requesting the ICAO Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) to develop best practices for national inspection programmes and to encourage wider dissemination of the experiences described.

3.1.5 In WP/21, New Zealand, on behalf of the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), proposes amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to incorporate Digital Travel Credentials (DTCs) into the ICAO regulatory framework. The paper outlines the need to ensure that DTCs intended for border and immigration purposes meet the same levels of security, integrity and interoperability as Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), in accordance with Doc 9303, *Machine Readable Travel Documents*. It also presents a revised definition of "travel document" for further consideration by the Panel, following discussions at FALP/13. The Panel is invited to agree to the proposed Standards and Recommended Practice contained in Appendix A.

3.1.6 In WP/23, Qatar proposes amendments to Annex 9 to address gaps in accessible communication during disruptions and emergencies, as well as accessible wayfinding and signage at airports. The paper highlights that the absence of explicit Standards in these areas limits the ability of passengers with disabilities to move independently, safely and with dignity. It proposes new Standards for Annex 9 and related updates to guidance material, including Doc 9636, *International Signs to Provide Guidance to Persons at Airports and Marine Terminals* on international airport signage. Qatar invites the Panel to consider the proposed amendments and guidance updates outlined in paragraph 3.

3.1.7 In WP/26, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela proposes amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to explicitly address non-visible disabilities in international air transport. The paper highlights that such conditions affect a significant proportion of persons with disabilities and remain insufficiently reflected in current facilitation provisions. It proposes definitions, operational protocols, training requirements and monitoring mechanisms to enhance universal accessibility. Venezuela invites the Panel to consider the proposed amendments and recommendations set out in paragraph 3.

3.1.8 In WP/22, Canada and co-sponsors review the effectiveness of Crew Member Certificates (CMCs) as currently reflected in Annex 9 and highlight the widespread operational reliance on passports used in combination with airline-issued crew identity cards. The paper notes that while CMCs were originally intended to facilitate crew movement, their limited issuance and acceptance have resulted in inconsistencies that may undermine facilitation objectives. It proposes amendments to Annex 9 SARPs to recognize equivalent crew identification arrangements while maintaining security assurance. The Panel is invited to agree to the proposed amendments contained in Appendix A.

3.1.9 In WP/27, Spain, together with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), presented information on cooperation between States and industry to address the issue of unruly and disruptive passengers. The paper highlighted increasing trends in unruly passenger incidents at airports and on board aircraft and recalled existing obligations under Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to deter and prevent such behaviour. It presented examples of multi-stakeholder initiatives and best practices implemented by States and industry, including awareness campaigns, regulatory measures, and cooperative frameworks. The paper invited the Panel to note the information provided and encourage States to draw on the examples presented to ensure effective implementation of Annex 9 SARPs.

3.1.10 In WP/28, IATA highlights the growing trend of non-standard passenger data requirements imposed on aircraft operators, despite the existence of a comprehensive international framework for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. The paper focuses in particular on the duplicative requirement for passenger manifests where API systems are already in place, contrary to Annex 9 Standards. It proposes amendments to strengthen clarity and compliance, and recommends incorporating relevant provisions into the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP). The Panel is invited to consider and agree to the proposed amendments outlined in paragraph 5.

3.1.11 In WP/29 (Revision No. 1), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) presented an analysis of the growing number of inadmissible passengers and the resulting operational, financial, and administrative challenges faced by airlines and State authorities. The paper summarized findings from an IATA survey illustrating increased inadmissibility rates and identified challenges related to compliance with Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. It highlighted the need for improved cooperation between States and industry, enhanced data-sharing mechanisms, and the development of digital pre-travel admissibility tools. IATA invited the Panel to review the challenges outlined and consider proposed actions to strengthen implementation of existing SARPs and supporting guidance material.

3.1.12 In WP/30, the Russian Federation addresses the absence of a unified global standard for assessing the physical condition of passports, particularly with respect to wear, damage and electronic functionality. The paper highlights the legal and financial risks faced by aircraft operators due to divergent national interpretations of passport “dilapidation.” It proposes the development of harmonized criteria and corresponding amendments to Annex 9, with a view to enhancing predictability and reducing subjectivity in document inspection. The Panel is invited to consider the proposed amendments and to place this issue on the work agenda of the Annex 9 Working Group (WGA9).

3.1.13 In WP/6, the Secretariat presented an overview of the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly relating to accessibility in international civil aviation. The paper summarized the Assembly’s consideration of proposals submitted by States, regional groups, and international organizations, including matters related to service animals, passenger vulnerability, and universal accessibility. It further highlighted the adoption of Assembly Resolution A42-14 on *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation* and the referral of related actions to the Council for further study. The Secretariat invited the Panel to examine the implications of these outcomes within the Facilitation Panel’s mandate and to contribute to follow-up work, as appropriate.

3.1.14 In WP/13, Italy addresses the increasing demand for the carriage of pets by air and the absence of a harmonized international framework governing this evolving facilitation issue. The paper recalls discussions and Assembly outcomes at A42, where the matter was referred to the Council for further study with the involvement of relevant ICAO bodies. Drawing on national experience, Italy outlines the welfare, safety and facilitation implications of current practices and proposes the establishment of a dedicated Study Group and Action Plan to assess the issue comprehensively. The paper invites the Panel to recognize pet transportation as an emerging facilitation matter and to support further ICAO work in this area, as outlined in paragraph 3.

3.2 DISCUSSION

3.2.1 During discussions on WP/4, the Panel agreed on the following way forward:

- a) The Secretariat will coordinate inter Panel collaboration, as appropriate, including the Aviation Security Panel (AVSECP) and the Cybersecurity Panel (CYSECP), and report back to the Panel intersessionally on progress related to the integration of relevant Annex 17 provisions with Annex 9 SARPs, taking into account applicable cybersecurity best practices.
- b) The Panel noted that Annex 9 already contains facilitation provisions supporting the rapid movement of aircraft, crews and personnel in disaster and emergency situations, including the identification of available assistance, and agreed that existing provisions should continue to be applied and promoted in coordination with relevant ICAO technical bodies and Regional Offices
- c) With regard to humanitarian and relief flights, the Panel recalled that Annex 9 provides facilitation provisions in this area and requested the Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM) to review the existing guidance in Doc 9957, *The Facilitation Manual* and report back to the Panel at its next meeting on whether any additional or updated guidance material may be required.
- d) The Panel noted that work on harmonised crew treatment standards has been completed and agreed that this area will continue to be kept under review, as required, in future triennia
- e) The Panel agreed to refer further technical study related to the possible update of Annex 9 SARPs 5.26 to 5.29 to the Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9), taking into account technological advances and practical implementation considerations.

- f) The Panel further agreed to refer to the WGA9 the review of Annex 9, Chapter 3, Section M, including consideration of a wider range of documents and digital credentials used by States for granting visa free crew entry, drawing on relevant global practices and available documentation.
- g) With respect to the transport of radioactive material, the Panel noted that it is within the rights of aircraft operators to deny a shipment where they do not have the capacity to safely handle such material or where aircraft safety could be affected. The Panel requested the Secretariat to coordinate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Dangerous Goods Panel to better understand the background and causes of reported denials and delays of short-lived radiopharmaceuticals, and to report back to the Panel at its next meeting with findings and any proposed way forward.

3.2.2 The Panel agreed to endorse the actions proposed in WP/5, noting in particular the introduction of a new Recommended Practice supporting the implementation of standardized Digital Travel Authorizations (DTAs) issued in accordance with the specifications contained in Doc 9303; the new and amended definitions, as well as the associated amendments to the Recommended Practices for interactive API (iAPI) systems and Electronic Travel Systems (ETS); and the reordering of Annex 9 provisions by moving those related to visas and authorizations to travel from Chapter 3, Section D to Section F, together with the corresponding change to the title of Section F.

3.2.3 During discussions on WP/15, the Panel acknowledged that wildlife trafficking remains one of the largest international illicit trade activities. The Panel noted the overview of the work undertaken by France in this area and, recognizing the progress achieved in implementation support and the need to further strengthen the aviation community's role, expressed broad support for the actions proposed in the working paper. The Panel having referred the proposed amendments to the Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9) to further refine the wording during the current Panel session. The Panel agreed to recommend the proposed SARPs for inclusion in Amendment 31 to Annex 9.

3.2.4 The Panel agreed to refer the actions proposed in WP/12 to the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) for consideration as part of its future work programme. The Panel further recommended that the Secretariat consider whether the best practices identified in the working paper could be extracted and disseminated to States through an appropriate State Letter. In addition, the Panel invited the Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM) to assess whether these best practices could be incorporated into existing or future guidance material, as well as integrated, as appropriate, into the ICAO Annex 9 — Facilitation training course, in order to support awareness-raising and effective implementation by States.

3.2.5 During discussions on WP/21, the Panel considered revised definition and proposed Standards and Recommended Practices for ICAO Digital Travel Credentials (DTCs) and, taking into account the extensive consultations undertaken by the ICBWG with States and relevant stakeholders, as well as the coordination and consultation carried out with the Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9), agreed to endorse the proposed amendments to Annex 9 SARPs as set out in Appendix A to the working paper. The Panel, however, agreed to refer the proposed definition of “travel document” back to the ICBWG for further consideration.

3.2.6 In considering WP/23, the Panel noted Qatar's proposal to amend Annex 9 to address gaps related to accessible communication during disruptions and emergencies, as well as accessible wayfinding and signage at airports. The Panel acknowledged the concern that the absence of explicit Standards in these areas may limit the ability of passengers with disabilities to move independently, safely and with dignity. The Panel agreed, however, that the proposed new Standards would be better addressed through guidance

material rather than through the introduction of new Standards. With regard to paragraph 3.3 of the working paper, the Panel agreed to refer the matter to the Working Group on Guidance Material for consideration as part of its work programme, including the potential updating of Doc 9957 to address the areas raised in the proposed new Standards.

3.2.7 During discussions on WP/26, the Panel noted the proposal by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to amend Annex 9 — *Facilitation* in order to explicitly address non-visible disabilities in international air transport, recognizing that such conditions affect a significant proportion of persons with disabilities and are not sufficiently reflected in current facilitation provisions. The Panel agreed that the establishment of an annual monitoring mechanism, if any, should fall under the National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP), monitored by the State's National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC), and should remain at the discretion of individual States. The Panel further agreed that the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation would examine elements of the proposal for possible inclusion in guidance on accessibility, and that the Secretariat would consider relevant elements for inclusion in training material.

3.2.8 In considering WP/22, presented by Canada and co-sponsors, the Panel reviewed the effectiveness of Crew Member Certificates (CMCs) as currently reflected in Annex 9. The Panel noted that, while CMCs were originally intended to facilitate the movement of crew members, their limited issuance and acceptance have resulted in inconsistent application, with operations in practice relying largely on passports used in combination with airline-issued crew identity cards. The Panel recognized that these inconsistencies may undermine facilitation objectives. The Panel agreed with the proposals contained in the working paper, to refine language in the new provision to “in accordance with Doc 9303 ~~Part 4 accompanied by~~” for inclusion in the Amendment 31 to Annex 9.

3.2.9 In considering WP/27, the Panel noted the information provided on cooperation between States and industry to address the issue of unruly and disruptive passengers. The Panel highlighted the reported increase in unruly passenger incidents at airports and on-board aircraft and recalled existing obligations under Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to deter and prevent such behaviour. The Panel noted the information presented and encouraged States to draw on the examples shared in the working paper and made reference to ICAO Doc 10117, *Manual on the Legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers* to support the effective implementation of Annex 9 SARPs.

3.2.10 During discussions on WP/28, the Panel noted the information highlighting the growing trend of non-standard passenger data requirements imposed on aircraft operators, despite the existence of a comprehensive international framework for Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. In particular, the Panel noted concerns regarding the duplicative requirement for passenger manifests where API systems are already in place, contrary to Annex 9 Standards. The Panel agreed with the proposed amendments contained in the working paper to strengthen clarity and compliance and recommended that the Secretariat consider the possibility of incorporating relevant provisions as indicated in the paper into the ICAO Universal Security Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA).

3.2.11 In considering WP/29 (Revision No. 1), the Panel reviewed an analysis of the growing number of inadmissible passengers and the resulting operational, financial and administrative challenges faced by airlines and State authorities. The Panel noted the summary of findings from an IATA survey highlighting increased inadmissibility rates, challenges in the implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, and the need for enhanced cooperation between States and industry, improved data-sharing mechanisms, and the development of digital pre-travel admissibility tools. The Panel agreed with the proposed actions under a), b) and c) to strengthen the implementation of existing SARPs and supporting guidance material, and agreed to refer proposed action d) to the Working Group on Guidance Material for further consideration.

3.2.12 During discussions on WP/30, the Panel noted the proposal addressing the absence of a unified global standard for assessing the physical condition of passports, particularly with respect to wear, damage and electronic functionality, as well as the legal and financial risks faced by aircraft operators arising from divergent national interpretations of passport “dilapidation,” and proposed the development of harmonized assessment criteria and corresponding amendments to Annex 9 with a view to enhancing predictability and reducing subjectivity in document inspection. The Panel agreed to refer the proposed actions to the TAG/TRIP experts for further review on what constitutes damage and/or wear and tear, and way forward and reporting back to the Panel at its next meeting.

3.2.13 In considering WP/6, the Panel noted that adequate industry material and operational guidance already exist, notably from IATA, covering the carriage of pets for relocation, shipment and as support animals for special assistance. The Panel agreed on the need to clarify the distinction between pets and support animals for special assistance first and the development of national regulations or operational guidelines by States should remain the primary approach, rather than incorporating pet transportation requirements into Annex 9. With respect to accessibility matters, the Panel agreed to task the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) to analyse the drivers of increasing demand and to identify potential measures to address gaps in service provision, including consideration of whether any new SARPs or enhanced guidance related to accessibility may be warranted, and to report back to the Panel at its next meeting.

3.2.14 The Panel considered WP/13 and noted the increasing demand for the carriage of pets by air, driven by evolving social dynamics and changing passenger expectations. The Panel further noted that comprehensive material and operational guidance on the carriage of pets whether for relocation, shipment, or as support animals for special assistance is already available from industry sources, notably IATA, and that some States have developed national regulations or operational guidelines in this area. In this context, the Panel agreed that such national and industry-led approaches should continue to be the norm, and that the carriage of pets should not be embedded as a facilitation matter within Annex 9 beyond its existing animal health and quarantine provisions.

APPENDIX to Agenda Item 3

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT TO ANNEX 9

Amend Annex 9 as follows:

.....

CHAPTER 1. DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Definitions

Authorization to travel. Either a non-physical (not affixed to a passport) and/or a physical authorization (affixed to a passport) issued by the receiving State authorizing the traveller to travel.

.....

Digital Travel Authorization (DTA). Proof of issuance of an authorization to travel not affixed to a passport containing a digitally signed barcode using an ICAO Datastructure for Barcode (IDB), as specified in Doc 9303.

.....

Digital Travel Credential (DTC). A travel credential in a digital format that conforms with the specifications contained in Doc 9303 and is meant to temporarily or permanently substitute a conventional passport with a digital representation of the traveller's identity.

.....

Electronic Travel Systems (ETS). The ~~electronic automated~~ process for the lodgement, acceptance and verification of a passenger's authorization to travel ~~not affixed to a passport to a State, in lieu of the standard counterfoil paper visa.~~

.....

CHAPTER 2. ENTRY AND DEPARTURE OF AIRCRAFT

.....

B. Documents – requirements and use

.....

2.11 Contracting States shall not normally require the presentation of a Passenger Manifest. On those occasions when a Passenger Manifest is required the information requirements shall be limited to the elements indicated in Appendix 2. The information shall be accepted in either electronic or paper form.

Note. - Attention is drawn to the Standard 9.15 which prevents requiring passenger manifests in paper form or any non-standard electronic format when an API system is implemented. Establishing an API system is mandatory for Contracting States in accordance with Standard 9.7.

.....

CHAPTER 3. ENTRY AND DEPARTURE OF PASSENGERS AND THEIR BAGGAGE

D. Travel documents

.....

3.16 Recommended Practice.— *When issuing identity documents ~~or visas~~ accepted for travel purposes, Contracting States should issue these in machine readable form, as specified in Doc 9303.*

3.16.1 Recommended Practice.— *~~When issuing visas that are not machine readable, Contracting States should ensure that the personal and issuance data in such documents conform to the specifications for the visual zone of the machine readable visa, as set forth in Doc 9303, Part 7.~~*

[Editorial Note: RP 3.16.1 relocated to sub-section F.]

.....

F. Entry/re-entry visas and authorizations to travel

.....

3.XX Recommended Practice.— *When issuing visas accepted for travel purposes, Contracting States should issue these in machine readable form, as specified in Doc 9303.*

3.XX Recommended Practice.— *When issuing visas that are not machine readable, Contracting States should ensure that the personal and issuance data in such documents conform to the specifications for the visual zone of the machine readable visa, as set forth in Doc 9303, Part 7.*

[Editorial Note: RP 3.xx previously RP 3.16.1, relocated to sub-section D.]

3.XX Recommended Practice.— *Contracting States issuing authorizations to travel not affixed to a passport and which cannot be verified through an interactive Advance Passenger Information (iAPI) system should issue such authorizations as Digital Travel Authorizations (DTA), in accordance with the specifications contained in Doc 9303.*

.....

M. Identification and entry of crew and other aircraft operators' personnel

3.xx Contracting States accepting CMCs for visa-free entrance shall equally accept a passport issued in accordance with Doc 9303 accompanied by crew identity cards for visa-free entrance of crew members.

.....

3.71.2 Recommended Practice.— *Contracting States should waive the visa requirement for arriving crew members presenting CMCs or a passport accompanied by crew identity cards, when arriving on another aircraft operator or another mode of transport and seeking temporary entry for the period allowed by the receiving State in order to join their assigned flight in a duty status.*

.....

CHAPTER 8. FACILITATION PROVISIONS COVERING SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

I. Wildlife trafficking

8.47 ~~Recommended Practice~~ — Contracting States ~~should~~ shall take measures to ensure that procedures are in place to combat wildlife trafficking, including clear reporting systems and relevant competent authorities' points of contact for airport and airline operators.

8.xx **Recommended Practice** — *Contracting States should ensure that relevant airport and aircraft operator's personnel in direct contact with the travelling public or cargo are provided with awareness training on combatting of wildlife trafficking.*

8.xx **Recommended Practice** — *Contracting States should inform aircraft operators of wildlife specimens and products prohibited or restricted under applicable laws, and aircraft operators should make such information available to passengers.*

....

CHAPTER 9. PASSENGER DATA SYSTEMS

B. Advance Passenger Information (API)

....

9.16 **Recommended Practice.**— *Contracting States implementing an iAPI system should:*

a) *seek to minimize the impact on existing aircraft operator systems and technical infrastructure by consulting aircraft operators before development and implementation of an iAPI system; ~~and~~*

b) *work together with aircraft operators to develop iAPI systems that integrate into the aircraft operator's departure control interfaces.; and*

c) *consider incorporating immigration and security-related vetting outcomes into the interactive response message provided to aircraft operators.*

Note.— Immigration related response messages to aircraft operators could include verification of both non-physical authorizations to travel not affixed to a passport, as well as physical authorizations to travel affixed to a passport, through an iAPI system.

....

C. Electronic Travel Systems (ETS)

9.17 Recommended Practice.— *Contracting States ~~seeking to~~ establishing an Electronic Travel System (ETS) should perform ~~integrate~~ the pre-travel verification system ~~through~~ with an ~~iAPI~~ ~~interactive~~ ~~Advance~~ ~~Passenger Information~~ system.*

Note.— *This will allow States to integrate with the airline departure control systems using data messaging standards in accordance with international guidelines in order to provide a real-time response to the airline to verify the ~~validity and authenticity~~ of a passenger’s authorization during check-in.*

9.18 Recommended Practice.— *Contracting States seeking to implement an ETS should:*

a) ensure a robust electronic lodgement platform where an online application for authority to travel can be made. A State should make clear that its platform is the preferred means for applying online in order to reduce the scope of unofficial third-party vendors that may charge an additional fee for the purpose of lodging an individual’s application;

b) include tools built into the application to assist individuals to avoid errors when completing the application form, including clear instructions as to the applicability of which nationalities require a travel authorization not affixed to a passport ~~an~~ ETS, and not allow application processing for non-eligible passengers (such as nationality and/or document type);

c) institute automated and continuous vetting of relevant alert lists;

d) provide ~~electronic notification~~ to the passenger ~~an electronic notification of~~ ~~to replace paper evidence of an individual’s approval for travel;~~ and

e) ensure that the information required from the passenger is easily understood in accordance with the national laws and regulations of that State.

.....

Agenda Item 4: Reports of the Facilitation Panel's Working Groups**4.1 DOCUMENTATION**

4.1.1 In WP/16, the Secretariat presented the draft Global and Holistic Vision of the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Ecosystem developed by the Advanced Air Mobility Study Group (AAM SG). The paper highlighted the maturity of the Vision document and its relevance for coordination with ICAO expert groups, including the Facilitation Panel. It emphasized potential facilitation implications associated with future AAM operations, such as passenger and cargo processing, border control, and the use of new infrastructure. The Secretariat invited the Panel to review the draft Vision document and provide comments from a facilitation policy perspective.

4.1.2 In WP/14, the Rapporteur of the Panel's Working Group on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families (WG-AAAVF) presented an update on the work of the Group, with particular emphasis on implementation gaps in existing ICAO SARPs and guidance material. The paper outlined the results of data analysis and identified key factors contributing to low levels of implementation among ICAO Member States. It further presented a set of recommended options aimed at enhancing awareness, building expertise, and facilitating implementation. The Rapporteur invited the Panel to note the findings and endorse the recommendations contained in Appendix A to the paper.

4.1.3 In WP/20, the Rapporteur of the Panel's Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) presented a report on the progress made in developing a draft ICAO Strategy on Accessibility in Aviation for Persons with Disabilities and Reduced Mobility. The paper also introduced a draft Compendium of national regulations, statutes, and policies relating to accessibility, based on responses to a State survey. The Rapporteur outlined planned next steps, including continued updates to the Compendium and further coordination with relevant stakeholders. The WGAA invited the Panel to review the proposed Strategy and Compendium and provide guidance on the way forward.

4.1.4 In WP/24, the Rapporteur of the Panel's Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM) presented a summary of the work carried out since FALP/13. The paper highlighted that the review of the *Guidelines on Passenger Name Record Data (Doc 9944)* had been completed and that work had progressed on updating Chapters 1 to 3 of the *Facilitation Manual (Doc 9957)* to ensure alignment with Amendment 30 to Annex 9. The Rapporteur further outlined ongoing coordination with other Facilitation Panel working groups and emphasized the need to continue prioritizing guidance material updates. The WGGM invited the Panel to acknowledge the work completed, note the progress achieved, and recognize the importance of prioritizing its future work programme.

4.1.5 In WP/25, the Rapporteur of the Panel's Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9) presented a summary of the work undertaken during the 2024–2026 cycle in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The paper highlighted progress in the ongoing review of Annex 9 SARPs, coordination with other working groups, and the development of proposed new Standards on crew treatment during public health emergencies of international concern. It also outlined the review and proposed clarification of the Working Group's Terms of Reference and planning for the next work cycle. The WGA9 invited the Panel to take note of the progress achieved, consider the proposed draft amendments to Annex 9, endorse the revised Terms of Reference, and provide guidance on priority areas for future work.

4.1.6 The Rapporteur of the ICAO's Passenger Name Record Task Force (PNR-TF) presented an oral report on progress made by the Task Force, since its reinstatement.

4.1.7 The Rapporteur of the Panel's Working Group on Facilitation Capacity Building (WGFCB) presented an oral report on progress by the group since its establishment.

4.2 DISCUSSION

4.2.1 The Panel considered WP/16 submitted by the Secretariat and agreed to invite Panel experts to closely follow the ongoing work on the coordination of a global and holistic vision for the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) ecosystem. The Panel requested experts to provide input to the Secretariat, with a particular focus on facilitation-related policy considerations, in line with the timelines and deadlines indicated in the working paper, to support the further development of the draft AAM Vision Document.

4.2.2 In considering WP/14, presented by the WG-AAAVF, the Panel noted the update on the work of the Group, with particular emphasis on implementation gaps in existing ICAO SARPs and guidance material. The working paper outlined the results of data analysis, identified key factors contributing to low levels of implementation among ICAO Member States, and presented a set of recommended options aimed at enhancing awareness, building expertise and facilitating implementation. The Panel acknowledged the efforts of the Working Group, noted the findings, and endorsed the recommendations contained in Appendix A to the working paper for continued consideration by the Group. In particular, the Panel agreed to the proposed amendment in recommendation 4 in Appendix A, proposing an amendment to Annex 9 Recommended Practice 8.44 to replace the wording “aircraft or airport operator” with “aircraft and airport operator,” in order to clarify that both aircraft and airport operators should plan for family assistance.

4.2.3 The Panel considered WP/20 and acknowledged the extensive and substantive work undertaken by the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) in the development of the draft ICAO Strategy on Accessibility in Aviation for Persons with Disabilities and Reduced Mobility, as well as the accompanying Compendium of Regulations, Statutes and Policies relating to accessibility in aviation. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Secretariat proceed with the appropriate internal processes for the approval and publication of both the Strategy and the Compendium, as appropriate. The Panel further approved the WGAA work programme.

4.2.4 The Panel considered WP/24 submitted by the WGGM and acknowledged the significant work undertaken by the Group in completing the review of the Guidelines on Passenger Name Record Data (Doc 9944), as well as the progress made in the periodic review of existing guidance material in consultation with other Annex 9 working groups and proposers of new or revised SARPs. The Panel emphasized the importance of prioritizing the WGGM work programme and urged the Group to continue its efforts to keep ICAO facilitation guidance material current, relevant and responsive to evolving regulatory, operational and implementation needs, and to report back to the Panel accordingly.

4.2.5 In considering WP/25, presented by the WGA9, the Panel noted the summary of work undertaken during the 2024–2026 cycle in accordance with the Group’s Terms of Reference. The working paper highlighted progress in the ongoing review of Annex 9 SARPs, coordination with other working groups, and the development of proposed new Standards related to the treatment of crew during public health emergencies of international concern. It also outlined the review and proposed clarification of the Working Group’s Terms of Reference, as well as planning for the next work cycle. The Panel took note of the progress achieved, agreed with the proposed draft amendments to Annex 9, and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference. In doing so, the Panel noted that Secretariat support would continue to be provided, while recalling that Working Group meetings are convened by the respective Rapporteurs, who are responsible for organizing such meetings, preparing the related reports, and presenting them to the Panel.

4.2.6 The Panel took note of the information presented in the oral reports by the Rapporteurs of the PNR-TF and WGFCB.

APPENDIX to Agenda Item 4

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT TO ANNEX 9

Amend Annex 9 as follows:

CHAPTER 8. FACILITATION PROVISIONS COVERING SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

G. Assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families

.....

8.44 **Recommended Practice.**— *Contracting States should ensure that each aircraft and ~~or~~ airport operator, as appropriate, develop appropriate plans to provide timely and effective assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.*

Note.— *Airport operators' plans regarding assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families may form part of the Aerodrome Emergency Plan (AEP) required under Annex 14 – Aerodromes.*

.....

CHAPTER 10. HEALTH-RELATED PROVISIONS

A. Crew Treatment

[Editorial Note: New sub-section D.]

.....

10.xx Contracting States shall facilitate, to the extent possible, expedited and simplified arrival and departure procedures for crew members when enhanced border control measures are applied during public health emergencies of international concern.

10.xx Contracting States which prescribe temporary accommodation for crew members when enhanced border control measures are applied during public health emergencies of international concern shall ensure that those facilities, including access to regular meals, water, and emergency egress, are conducive to recuperation, which are imperative to carrying out air crew duties.

.....

Agenda Item 5: New Strategic Goal for 2026-2028 Business Plan - “No Country Left Behind”**5.1 DOCUMENTATION**

5.1.1 In WP/7, the Secretariat presented the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) relating to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, as well as facilitation oversight and capacity building. The paper summarized Assembly discussions and decisions arising from working papers submitted by States, regional groups and international organizations, highlighting progress achieved, persistent challenges and future priorities in these areas. It reflected the Assembly’s endorsement of ICAO’s programme on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, the adoption of Resolution A42-15 superseding Resolution A41-14, and the referral to the Council of proposals aimed at strengthening State preparedness, oversight frameworks and capacity-building initiatives under Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. The Secretariat invited the Panel to consider follow-up actions within its mandate in support of the Assembly outcomes.

5.1.2 In WP/8, the Secretariat presented an update on capacity-building activities under the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) programme, in support of the implementation of electronic and digital travel documents. The paper highlighted the growing importance of capacity building as participation in the PKD continues to expand, particularly for States with limited experience in electronic travel document issuance and verification. It described current initiatives undertaken by the PKD Board, including workshops, regional seminars and a coaching programme, and outlined planned enhancements aimed at improving effectiveness and scalability. The paper also recalled Assembly recommendations from A42 relating to PKD capacity building and invited the Panel to consider requesting the Working Group on Facilitation Capacity Building to engage with the PKD Board and take these experiences into account in the development of broader facilitation capacity-building activities.

5.1.3 In WP/9, New Zealand, as Chair of the ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), presented progress made towards the development of an ICAO Doc 9303 Compliance Programme for Machine Readable Travel Documents. The paper outlined the rationale for establishing a voluntary compliance framework to support global interoperability of travel documents and summarized work undertaken by the relevant ICBWG subgroup. It described a proposed governance structure and an accreditation framework for testing centres based on ISO/IEC 17025, intended to ensure technical competence, reliable results and globally recognized oversight. New Zealand invited the Panel to endorse the proposed framework, provide guidance on further development of the Compliance Programme, and support continued coordination with TAG/TRIP and other relevant bodies.

5.2 DISCUSSION

5.2.1 In considering WP/7, the Panel agreed as follows - with respect to items (a) and (b), that the Working Group on AAVF should continue its work on identifying the reasons for low levels of AAVF compliance, including through the conduct of State surveys, and on analysing the survey results. The findings should be shared with ICAO Regional Offices in order to support the development and implementation of targeted regional strategies. Regarding item (c) on the development of guidance on national facilitation oversight frameworks, including a possible oversight manual, the Panel noted that Doc 9957 (Facilitation Manual) already contains guidance on national facilitation oversight through the establishment of the National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP) and the National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC). States were encouraged to prioritize the establishment of these mechanisms as a prerequisite for effective coordination among stakeholders and for strengthening facilitation oversight arrangements. With respect to item (d) on the establishment of ICAO platforms for sharing best practices, including the certification of facilitation inspectors and instructors, the Panel recalled that relevant technical guidance already exists in Doc 9957, Doc 10042 (Model National Air Transport

Facilitation Programme) and Doc 10047 (Aviation Security Oversight Manual), which address oversight-related aspects. The Panel noted that States remain at liberty to establish their own national mechanisms, drawing on regional best practices, as appropriate. Concerning item (e), the Panel agreed to request the ICAO Secretariat, in coordination with the Global Aviation Training (GAT) Office, to consider the matter further, noting that the cadre of facilitation instructors is managed under the GAT framework. Finally, with respect to item (f), the Panel noted that several assistance programmes are already in place. It was further recognized that this does not preclude States from pursuing additional assistance bilaterally or multilaterally, including through regional cooperative arrangements. In this context, the Panel recalled that the Passenger Name Record Task Force (PNR-TF) has been tasked with identifying implementation gaps and will be reviewing existing implementation mechanisms to determine the most effective means of improving compliance with passenger data provisions.

5.2.2 In considering WP/8, the Panel noted the growing importance of capacity building as participation in the PKD continues to expand, particularly among States with limited experience in the issuance and verification of electronic travel documents. The Panel also noted the initiatives currently undertaken by the PKD Board, including workshops, regional seminars and a coaching programme, as well as the planned enhancements aimed at improving their effectiveness and scalability. The Panel agreed that, in order to ensure coherence and avoid duplication across facilitation-related capacity-building efforts, any capacity-building initiatives related to the ICAO PKD should be referred to the Implementation and Capacity-Building Working Group (ICBWG) and the Working Group on Facilitation and Capacity Building (WGFCB) for further consideration. The Panel further agreed that such work should be undertaken in close coordination with the ICAO PKD Board, with a view to leveraging lessons learned from existing PKD capacity-building activities and contributing, as appropriate, to broader ICAO TRIP-related capacity-building initiatives.

5.2.3 During discussions on WP/9, the Panel was informed of progress made towards the development of an ICAO Doc 9303 Compliance Programme for Machine Readable Travel Documents outlining the rationale for establishing a voluntary compliance framework aimed at supporting global interoperability of travel documents and summarized the work undertaken by the relevant ICBWG subgroup, intended to ensure technical competence, reliability of test results, internationally recognized oversight, and eliminate non-compliant travel documents. The Panel also noted the current context in which approximately 160 States issue electronic machine readable travel documents (eMRTDs), and that Digital Travel Credentials (DTCs) are beginning to gain traction among States. In this regard, the Panel emphasized the importance of ensuring that any defects in eMRTDs are identified and addressed at an early stage, so as to avoid the risk of such deficiencies being propagated into virtual credentials derived from those documents. The Panel agreed to endorse the proposed framework, noting that participation in the Compliance Programme would be voluntary and that States would retain the discretion to determine whether or not to participate. The Panel welcomed the further development of the Compliance Programme, in particular with respect to the definition of next steps, and supported continued coordination with TAG/TRIP and other relevant bodies. In doing so, the Panel recalled that this matter has been under discussion for some time, with the overarching objective of eliminating non-compliant travel documents.

Agenda Item 6: Other Facilitation matters**6.1 DOCUMENTATION**

6.1.1 In WP/18, the United States presented considerations related to ensuring transparent and predictable procedures through the completion of a Facilitation Handbook. The paper recalled the Secretariat's circulation of a proposed Handbook to Member States in March 2025 and noted that it was not discussed at the subsequent intersessional meeting. It emphasized the importance of clear and authoritative procedural guidance to support consistent decision-making by the Facilitation Panel and its subsidiary bodies. The United States invited the Panel to prioritize the completion and publication of the Facilitation Handbook and to establish a clear and transparent timeline for consolidating Member State feedback.

6.1.2 In WP/32, the Secretary of the Dangerous Goods Panel (DGP) presented safety concerns related to the carriage of lithium battery-powered mobility aids by passengers with reduced mobility. The paper summarized discussions held at the Thirtieth meeting of the Dangerous Goods Panel, including risks associated with the increasing energy capacity of lithium-ion batteries and the challenges of managing thermal runaway events. It outlined proposed amendments to the Technical Instructions as a near-term mitigation measure and emphasized the need for coordinated inter-panel work. The paper invited the Facilitation Panel to collaborate with the DGP and other expert groups to support passenger accessibility while prioritizing aviation safety.

6.1.3 In WP/11, the United Arab Emirates presented a proposal addressing challenges in identity verification for identical twins during border control and airport processing. The paper described how near-identical biometric features may complicate manual and automated identity checks, potentially leading to errors or delays. It proposed the introduction of an internationally recognized identifier on passports of identical twins, supported by system-level linkage between twin records to aid verification authorities. The United Arab Emirates invited the Panel to consider the proposal and its potential implications for future work related to travel document standards and border facilitation.

6.1.4 In WP/31, Kazakhstan presented information on challenges associated with unruly and disruptive passengers, with particular emphasis on offences committed at airports. The paper described national legislative measures introduced to address disruptive behaviour on board aircraft, including the establishment of a register of passengers whose air transportation is restricted. It highlighted gaps in liability frameworks for offences committed on the ground and the risks faced by airport and ground handling personnel. Kazakhstan invited the Panel to consider the information provided and the potential need to strengthen approaches to managing unruly behaviour within the broader civil aviation environment.

6.1.5 In WP/10, the Secretariat presented the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) relating to trafficking in persons and irregular migration in international civil aviation. The paper consolidated the Assembly's deliberations based on working papers submitted by Member States and international organizations and highlighted the evolving misuse of air transport by trafficking and migrant smuggling networks. It recalled the Assembly's adoption of Resolution A42-16 on the development and implementation of facilitation provisions to combat human trafficking and the referral to the Council of proposals related to irregular migration by air, including possible updates to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* and related guidance material. The Secretariat invited the Panel to consider follow-up actions within its mandate in support of the Assembly outcomes.

6.1.6 In WP/19, Jamaica presented an overview of the increasing exploitation of non-scheduled operators and general aviation in the Caribbean and Latin America for the purposes of irregular migration. The paper described emerging trends involving the misuse of air transport by transnational criminal networks, including migrant smuggling routes aligned with non-scheduled aviation activities. It recalled Assembly Resolution A42-16 and emphasized gaps in existing regulatory and oversight frameworks, particularly the absence of Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record requirements for general aviation. Jamaica invited the Panel to consider collaboration with other ICAO expert panels to review Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, ICAO Doc 9626, *Manual on the Regulation of International Air Transport* and other relevant guidance material to strengthen the regulatory framework for non-scheduled and general aviation.

6.1.7 In WP/17, the European Union, co-sponsored by Italy, Japan and the Netherlands, presented an overview of the challenges associated with the use of air transport for irregular migration. The paper recalled the broad support expressed at A42 for examining irregular migration by air and outlined the evolving methods used by migrant smuggling networks, including document fraud, abuse of visa regimes, and the use of commercial and non-scheduled flights. It highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation among States, aviation stakeholders and international organizations. The paper invited the Panel to consider tasking or establishing a Working Group to further examine the issue and prepare a comprehensive strategy, including a possible review of existing Annex 9 provisions and guidance material.

6.1.8 The Panel noted IP 2, presented by Brazil, IP/3 and IP/4, presented by Thailand, and IP/5 presented by the European Union, respectively.

6.2 DISCUSSION

6.2.1 In considering WP/18, presented by the United States, which set out considerations related to ensuring transparent and predictable procedures through the completion of a Facilitation Handbook, the Panel noted the invitation to prioritize the completion and publication of a document to establish a clear and transparent timeline for consolidating Member State feedback. The Panel supported the need for clarity and predictability and agreed that this document would not be a governance document and does not supersede Doc 9482, *Directives for the Panels of the Air Transport Committee and Aviation Security Committee*. The Panel further emphasized that this document is intended to serve solely as practical guidance, consistent with the Directives for Panels, for the Panel's own use, and does not establish formal rules of procedure. In this context, the Panel recommended that the Secretariat proceed with finalizing a document consistent with Doc 9482.

6.2.2 During discussions on WP/32, in which the Secretariat presented safety concerns related to the carriage of lithium battery-powered mobility aids by passengers with reduced mobility, the Panel noted the summary of discussions held at the Thirtieth meeting of the Dangerous Goods Panel. These discussions highlighted the risks associated with the increasing energy capacity of lithium-ion batteries, the challenges of managing potential thermal runaway events, and the proposed amendments to the Technical Instructions as a near-term mitigation measure and the need for coordinated inter-panel collaboration. The Panel noted the safety-risks identified by the Dangerous Good Panel regarding the carriage of lithium battery-powered mobility aids and agreed to collaborate with the Dangerous Goods Panel and other relevant expert groups to support passenger accessibility.

6.2.3 During discussions on WP/11, the Panel noted the description of how near-identical biometric characteristics may complicate both manual and automated identity checks, potentially resulting in errors or delays. The paper proposed the introduction of an internationally recognized identifier on the

passports of identical twins, supported by system-level linkage between twin records, to assist verification authorities. The Panel acknowledged the proposal to explore the use of an internationally recognized identifier for identical twins to support identity verification at border crossings, however, there was no support, but the Panel recognizing the technical and policy implications of such an initiative, agreed to refer the paper to TAG/TRIP for further technical consideration and assessment.

6.2.4 In considering WP/31, the Panel noted the emphasis placed on offences committed at airports as well as on board aircraft and they described national legislative measures introduced to address disruptive behaviour, including the establishment of a register of passengers whose air transportation is restricted. It also highlighted gaps in existing liability frameworks for offences committed on the ground and the risks faced by airport and ground handling personnel. The Panel noted the information provided and encouraged States to share best practices in addressing unruly and disruptive passenger behaviour.

6.2.5 In considering WP/10, presented by the Secretariat, which outlined the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) relating to trafficking in persons and irregular migration in international civil aviation, the Panel noted the Assembly's decisions to undertake an analysis of the scope of ICAO's role in addressing irregular migration by air, in coordination with other ICAO technical bodies and relevant United Nations agencies; review existing facilitation provisions and guidance material, including Doc 10171, *Manual on a Comprehensive Strategy for Combatting Human Trafficking in the Aviation Sector*, to identify areas requiring clarification or enhancement; and support the establishment of a multidisciplinary task force involving the Air Transport, Facilitation and Aviation Security Panels to review Annex 9, Doc 9626 and related guidance, including consideration of the possible application of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) requirements to non-scheduled and general aviation operations.

6.2.6 The Panel also considered WP/19, presented by Jamaica, which provided an overview of the increasing exploitation of non-scheduled operators and general aviation in the Caribbean and Latin America for the purposes of irregular migration and highlighted emerging trends involving the misuse of air transport by transnational criminal networks, including migrant smuggling routes aligned with non-scheduled aviation activities, and identified gaps in existing regulatory and oversight frameworks, notably the absence of API and PNR requirements for general aviation.

6.2.7 In addition, the Panel considered WP/17, presented by the European Union and co-sponsored by Italy, Japan and the Netherlands, which highlighted challenges associated with the use of air transport for irregular migration, and the evolving methods used by migrant smuggling networks, including document fraud, abuse of visa regimes, and the use of both commercial and non-scheduled flights, and emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation among States, aviation stakeholders and international organizations.

6.2.8 Following consideration of these papers, the Panel noted that the issues under discussion were complex and of significant importance and emphasized the need to proceed with due caution and responsibility and noted that, prior to addressing the specific matters raised in the working papers, it was essential to clearly define what falls within the mandate of ICAO and the Facilitation Panel, particularly given the broad and multifaceted nature of irregular migration which could include human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and human smuggling and encompasses legal and illegal elements that may extend beyond ICAO's remit. Accordingly, the Panel agreed to:

- a) establish a Task Force on Irregular Migration. As a first priority, the Task Force will determine which aspects of irregular migration fall within the mandate of the Facilitation Panel and ICAO, and which do not; matters determined to fall outside that mandate will not be addressed.
- b) the terms of reference for the Task Force, including that it will operate under a broad scope, consult relevant United Nations agencies and ICAO technical bodies, and refine its work following this initial determination.
- c) consider the requests contained in the relevant working papers only insofar as they fall within ICAO's remit.
- d) that the Task Force will report initially to the Panel and subsequently to the ICAO Council, and that it will be chaired by the Alternate Member from the United States of America.
- e) that matters relating to the use of API and PNR should be referred to the PNR Task Force, and that further consideration of their application, including to non-scheduled and general aviation, should be deferred pending the outcome of that work.

6.2.9 The Panel took note of IP 2, presented by Brazil, IP/3 and IP/4, presented by Thailand, and IP/5 presented by the European Union, respectively.

APPENDIX A

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)****Fourteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel (FALP/14)
20 – 24 April 2026 Montréal, Canada**

*Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning
Señoras y señores,
Muy buenos días*

On behalf of the ICAO Council, I am honored to welcome you to Montréal for the Fourteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel, held from 20 to 24 April 2026. Although I am abroad and unable to be with you in person in Montréal, I am grateful that the hybrid format allows me to join you remotely and participate in this important panel.

I am pleased to open this session of the Panel under the Air Transport Committee of the ICAO Council. Your participation demonstrates the ongoing commitment of Member States, international organizations, and industry partners to making facilitation a foundation of a safe, secure, efficient, and inclusive global air transport system.

Since our last meeting, the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly reaffirmed the vital role of facilitation in ensuring reliable, accessible, and seamless mobility for all. The Assembly's endorsement of the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport, highlights the strong political commitment to global cooperation and harmonization in this area.

The Assembly also adopted Resolution A42-17, consolidating ICAO facilitation policies and emphasizing the need for effective implementation of Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices. These actions provide a clear mandate for the Panel's work in the 2026–2028 triennium.

The agenda reflects both continuity and change. Facilitation is evolving quickly due to rising traffic, technological advances, and new global challenges within an uncertain world. As noted in the Assembly, we must address interconnected issues such as border management, public health preparedness, humanitarian operations, and the efficient movement of passengers, crews, and goods.

We must also ensure our work remains people-centred. The Assembly emphasized the importance of accessibility, dignity, and non-discrimination in international civil aviation, recognizing that inclusive air transport is both a human rights imperative and a driver of sustainable development.

And here, I would like to emphasize the importance of passengers' experience. As you know, according to the projections of the ICAO's Strategic Plan 2026-2050, global passenger numbers are expected to nearly triple by 2050. This projection underscores the importance of continuously enhancing both the current and future passenger experience. Achieving this goal will require sustained effort and close cooperation among

all aviation stakeholders. In this regard, ICAO SARPs, Policies, and Guidance Material on Facilitation, play a fundamental role in supporting a positive evolution of the passenger experience. Should we don't succeed in this collective endeavour, we will fail in meeting passengers' expectations and of the global society which we ultimately serve.

I would also like to highlight the human dimension in tragic air accident cases, and the importance of implementing ICAO SARPs, policies, and guidance on the provision of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families. This week we will have the opportunity to review the progress of working group and the two subgroups dedicated to this matter.

To move from words and documents to implementation, it is very important to strengthen capacity building, oversight, and support for States. The "No Country Left Behind" strategic objective it's essential to support and guide our efforts, ensuring all Member States can implement Annex 9 provisions with training, technical assistance, and enhanced cooperation.

Emerging challenges such as trafficking in persons and irregular migration in the context of aviation require coordinated global responses. We must use the facilitation framework to protect human rights and maintain the integrity of international air transport.

This meeting is timely. The Assembly has asked us to advance key initiatives to strengthen the implementation of Annex 9, including a feasibility study for a potential global facilitation approach and broader efforts to enhance implementation frameworks. Recent developments underscore the need for a structured and pragmatic approach to supporting implementation. Continued focus on monitoring practices and overall strategic direction will further strengthen implementation, provided that resources are used efficiently and duplication is avoided.

Your expertise and collaboration are essential to shaping these initiatives and ensuring facilitation evolves in a harmonized, efficient, and forward-looking way.

As we begin the work of the Panel this week, I encourage everyone to engage constructively, share experiences, and work together to achieve practical, impactful results. ICAO's strength lies in its collective approach, and this Panel is a key platform for translating global facilitation-related frameworks into effective action.

In closing, I sincerely thank very much all of you, all delegates, observers, and the Secretariat for their dedication, knowledge, experience and contributions to this very important work, and to wish you comprehensive and fruitful deliberations.

It is now my great pleasure to declare the Fourteenth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel officially open.

Thank you very much.

— — — — —

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS: FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE FACILITATION PANEL

APPENDIX C

LIST OF WORKING PAPERS AND INFORMATION PAPERS

FALP/14 WP No.	Agenda Item	Title of Paper	Presented by
Working Papers			
1	-	Agenda	Secretariat
2	1	Outcomes of A42 Relating to Air Transport Facilitation Strategic Matters	Secretariat
3	2	Update on Joint ICAO/ILO/IMO/WHO on the protection of "key workers" during health emergencies of international concerns	Secretariat
4	3	Outcomes of A42 Relating to Regulatory Matters	Secretariat
5	3	Implementation of the ICAO Digital Travel Authorization (DTA) and related measures	Secretariat
6	4	Outcomes of A42 Relating to Accessibility in International Civil Aviation	Secretariat
7	5	Outcomes of A42 Relating to Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families and Facilitation Oversight and Capacity Building	Secretariat
8	5	Advancing global capacity building activity for the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD)	Secretariat
9	5	Development of an ICAO Doc 9303 Compliance Programme	New Zealand as Chair of ICAO ICBWG
10	6	Outcomes of A42 Relating to Trafficking in Persons and Irregular Migration	Secretariat
11	6	Encoding Twin Passports with an Internationally Recognized Identifier	United Arab Emirates
12	3	Toward a more inclusive airport: "If it does not exist, it does not mean it cannot be done"	Italy
13	3	Pet in aviation: enhancing animal welfare	Italy
14	4	Implementation of ICAO SARPs and guidance for the provision of Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their families	Rapporteur of WG-AAAVF
15	3	The evolution of ICAO provisions to combat wildlife trafficking in the aviation sector	France
16	4	Coordination of the global and holistic vision of the advanced air mobility (AAM) ecosystem	Secretariat
17	6	Addressing the use of air transport for irregular migration	European Union and co-sponsored by Italy, Japan and the Netherlands
18	6	Ensuring transparent and predictable procedures through completion of the Facilitation Handbook	United States
19	6	Irregular migration – the exploitation of non-scheduled operators and general aviation in the Caribbean and Latin America	Jamaica

FALP/14 Report

C-2

List of Working Papers and Information Papers

20	4	Report of the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA)	Rapporteur of WGAA
21	3	Revised definitions and proposed standards and recommended practices for ICAO Digital Travel Credentials	New Zealand as Chair of ICAO ICBWG
22	3	Crew Identification and Facilitation	Canada, UK, IATA, IFALPA, ITF, GEA, TIACA
23	3	Enhancing Accessibility in Passenger Information and Navigation for persons with disabilities: accessible communications during disruptions & emergencies and accessible wayfinding & signage	Qatar
24	4	Report of the Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM)	Rapporteur of WGGM
25	4	Report of Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9)	Rapporteur of WGA9
26	3	Incorporation of non-visible disabilities in ICAO Annex 9 to increase universal accessibility in air transport	Venezuela
27	6	Cooperation between States and Industry to address the issue of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers in support of standards & recommended practices in Annex 9	Spain, IATA and IFALPA
28	3	Tackling Passenger Data non-standard requirements – passenger manifest and advance passenger information (API) data	IATA
29 Revision No. 1	6	Cooperation between States and Industry to address the issue of Inadmissible Passengers in support of standards & recommended practices in Annex 9	IATA
30	3	Harmonization of Travel Documents. A Unified Standard of Passport “Dilapidation”	Russian Federation
31	6	Unruly and disruptive passengers – challenges, best practices and policy recommendations	Kazakhstan
32	6	Lithium Battery Powered Mobility Aids	Secretariat
Information Papers			
FALP/14 IP No.	Agenda Item	Title of Paper	Presented by
1	1	Update on the ICAO Facilitation Programmes	Secretariat
2	6	Strategies of the Brazilian Civil Aviation Authority aimed at combatting and preventing human trafficking in civil aviation	Brazil
3	6	Measures to combat human trafficking in children	Thailand
4	6	Rights of persons with disabilities to access air transport in Thailand	Thailand
5	6	A European coordinated approach to address Unruly and Disruptive Passengers	European Union
6	2	Update on the Development of the JSON PASLST Standard	Germany & IATA

— END —