



WORKING PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026

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

OUTCOMES OF A42 RELATING TO REGULATORY MATTERS

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a consolidated summary of facilitation-related policy matters considered under Agenda Item 12 at the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42), based on working papers presented by Member States and international organizations¹. It highlights emerging operational, regulatory, and policy challenges affecting facilitation and reflects the Assembly's outcomes, for further technical study and development by the Council, with the support of relevant ICAO bodies.

The paper addresses cross-cutting issues related to the movement of aircrew, passengers, aircraft, and goods, including limitations in the issuance and recognition of Crew Member Certificates (CMCs), the need for closer coordination between facilitation, aviation security, and cybersecurity activities, and the importance of balancing border security with operational efficiency, consistent with the Doha Declaration. Contributions from States and industry organizations, underscore the need for harmonized and technology-enabled solutions.

The paper also highlights State-led initiatives and experiences proposed as potential models or inputs for future guidance, including the regulation of air transport of pets and service animals, facilitation of disaster response and humanitarian operations, establishment of comprehensive National Facilitation Programmes, and coordinated public health measures at airports. Regional cooperation efforts, notably through the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), are highlighted as important drivers of standardization and best practices. In addition, the paper summarizes proposals related to enhancing passenger experience and operational performance at airports, improving the treatment of aircrew during public health emergencies, reviewing Annex 9 provisions on inadmissible persons and deportees, addressing disruptive and unruly passenger behaviour, and ensuring the timely transport of critical goods, including radioactive materials, as emphasized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Action by the FAL Panel:

Actions by the Panel are presented at paragraph 3, below.

¹ A42 Facilitation papers are accessible on the Assembly website at [Working Papers by Agenda Item](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Facilitation policy continues to evolve in response to growing traffic volumes, heightened security and health considerations, technological change, and increasing expectations for efficient, accessible, and passenger-focused air transport. Since the last ICAO Assembly, Member States and international organizations have identified a wide range of facilitation-related challenges affecting the movement of passengers, crew, aircraft, and goods, highlighting the need for coordinated, practical, and forward-looking policy responses within the framework of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*.

1.2 Against this backdrop, a series of working papers submitted to the Assembly addressed diverse but interrelated facilitation issues, including the issuance and recognition of Crew Member Certificates (CMCs), the transport of animals, disaster and humanitarian response operations, national facilitation programme implementation, passenger experience and airport performance, public health preparedness, treatment of aircrew, management of inadmissible persons and deportees, disruptive passenger behaviour, and the transport of critical and time-sensitive goods. These papers, supported by States, regional groups, and industry organizations, reflect both shared challenges and innovative national and regional experiences.

1.3 This paper brings together these facilitation-related policy matters considered under Agenda Item 12, capturing the Assembly's outcomes. It provides a basis for further technical analysis and policy development by the Council, with the support of relevant ICAO technical bodies, with a view to strengthening global harmonization, improving implementation of Annex 9 provisions, and enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of the international air transport system.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The actions of each of the following A42 working papers are listed in Appendix A.

2.2 In WP/323, Canada, co-sponsored by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), highlighted challenges related to the limited issuance and recognition of CMCs. The paper called for stronger collaboration between ICAO's Aviation Security, Cybersecurity, and Facilitation Panels to ensure an appropriate balance between border security and travel efficiency, consistent with the Doha Declaration. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and the development of a proposed way forward.

2.3 In WP/460, Colombia, supported by 15 Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), shared its national experience in regulating the air transport of pets, emotional support animals, and service dogs, proposing it as a basis for broader recommendations to promote international standardization. The paper noted rising pet ownership and increasing demand for air transport of animals, emphasizing the need for Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) ensuring safe, efficient, and passenger-focused transport. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

2.4 In WP/461 (Rev.1), Colombia, supported by 14 LACAC Member States and co-sponsored by the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), outlined facilitation challenges related to disaster response and proposed regulatory provisions and cooperation mechanisms to enable the rapid movement of aircraft, crews, and relief personnel. The paper also emphasized the need for information systems allowing States to identify sources of assistance, supported by ICAO Regional Offices through a dedicated platform. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

2.5 In WP/466, the Dominican Republic, supported by 18 LACAC Member States, reported on the adoption of a comprehensive National Facilitation Programme (NATFP), supported by national regulations, a technical inspection manual, and a National Facilitation Committee to ensure inter-agency coordination. The paper highlighted challenges faced by States in implementing Annex 9 and proposed recognition of this model as a benchmark. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward, taking into account the Dominican Republic's experience as an example of replicable best practices.

2.6 In WP/104 (Rev.1), Saudi Arabia, co-sponsored by Singapore, emphasized the need to enhance and upgrade passenger experience by optimizing existing airport capacity in the context of rising passenger traffic and constraints on new infrastructure development. The paper proposed the establishment of Operational Performance Review Systems using quantitative metrics, complemented by Facilities-and-Services Evaluations, and suggested that ICAO compile existing State best practices as an initial step. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

2.7 In WP/105, Saudi Arabia, supported by Singapore, outlined its coordinated approach between health and civil aviation authorities to safeguard travellers and aviation personnel. The approach includes surveillance centres at international airports and continuous improvements in preparedness and response capabilities. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

2.8 In WP/386, Saudi Arabia emphasized the role of aviation in humanitarian response, identifying obstacles such as fragmented access, delayed clearances, and inconsistent charges that impede the timely operation of relief flights. The paper proposed the establishment of a task force to review existing provisions to facilitate the rapid transport of humanitarian assistance. The Assembly referred action (c) to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward, and endorsed the A42-13: *Strategy on disaster risk reduction and response mechanism in aviation*, superseding Assembly Resolution A41-13 presented in Appendix B.

2.9 In WP/156, the United States highlighted the inconsistent treatment of aircrew during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in unsafe conditions and operational inefficiencies. The paper recalled the Assembly's call for harmonized standards and noted the significant progress achieved by the Facilitation Panel's Working Group on Annex 9 (WGA9) in developing new provisions. The Assembly supported the proposal and referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study with the objective of finalizing harmonized standards for crew treatment.

2.10 In WP/161, the United States reviewed Annex 9 SARPs concerning inadmissible persons and deportees, which require States to issue repatriation documents within 30 days. The paper highlighted widespread non-compliance and argued that the timeframe is outdated given current technological capabilities. Some States expressed concerns that a proposed reduction of the timeframe to seven days could be unrealistic, particularly for developing countries, and noted the need to assess appropriate technologies before proceeding. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

2.11 In WP/372, Uruguay, supported by 19 LACAC Member States, reviewed progress in South America on addressing disruptive and unruly passengers, including outcomes of a 2024 meeting in Brazil where the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) shared relevant initiatives. The paper also referenced a draft resolution developed by the Group of Experts on Policy, Economics and Legal Matters in Air Transport (GEPEJTA). Some States noted that actions should also address behaviour onboard aircraft. The Assembly endorsed actions (a) and (b) contained in the paper.

2.12 In WP/285, IATA, IFALPA, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and the International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) emphasized the need to expedite the cross-border movement of aircrew. The paper noted that while Annex 9 provides for visa-free entry for crew holding CMCs, recognition remains limited, with many States relying on alternative documents. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward, taking into account technological developments in digital credentials.

2.13 In WP/439 (Rev.1), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stressed the importance of reliable air transport for radioactive material, particularly short-lived radiopharmaceuticals essential for cancer diagnosis and treatment. Despite an established international regulatory framework, denials and delays continue to occur. The Assembly referred the actions contained in the paper to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and a proposed way forward.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Panel is invited to:

- a) participate actively in the work of the joint task force to be established involving the Facilitation Panel, Aviation Security Panel, and Cybersecurity Panel with the objective to develop methods for integrating Annex 17 provisions on crew identity with Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices, taking into account applicable cybersecurity best practices;
- b) in coordination with relevant ICAO technical bodies and Regional Offices, develop facilitation measures tools that enable the rapid movement of aircraft, crews, and personnel in disaster situations, including mechanisms to identify available assistance;
- c) evaluate existing global practices and propose standard procedures and policies to expedite humanitarian and relief flights, in consultation with relevant United Nations bodies and aviation stakeholders;
- d) continue to prioritize attention on harmonized crew treatment standards into the next triennium;
- e) undertake further technical study and develop proposals to update Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices 5.26 to 5.29, taking into account technological advances and practical implementation considerations;
- f) conduct a comprehensive review of Annex 9, Chapter 3, Section M, with a view to modernizing its provisions and recognizing a wider range of documents and digital credentials used by States for granting visa-free crew entry; and
- g) advise of way forward regarding denials and delays of short-lived radiopharmaceuticals which continue to occur and support technical work and awareness-raising related to Annex 9 facilitation provisions for the safe, secure, and timely air transport of radioactive material, in coordination with relevant technical bodies and national competent authorities.

APPENDIX A

List of the actions related to each working paper summarized in paragraph 2

Actions for WP 323

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recall the role facilitation plays to enhance and balance the need for efficiency in international air travel with that of global aviation and border security, as well as the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport endorsed at the ICAO Facilitation Conference (FALC2025) that affirms the critical importance of facilitation in ensuring the efficient and seamless movement of passengers, cargo, and aircraft and crew across international borders;
- b) encourage Member States to explore and support a harmonized performance-based global approach that recognizes all available valid and secure primary and secondary documents and/or procedures that establish and validate crew identity, including digitalized documents and similar initiatives to enhance the entry process for crew members so that they may experience a seamless and efficient movement across international borders; and
- c) consider requesting the Council to task the Aviation Security Panel, Cybersecurity Panel and the Facilitation Panel to establish a Task Force made up of Annex 17 —*Aviation Security*, Annex 9 —*Facilitation* and cybersecurity panel members to collaborate in developing tangible methods that recognize and integrate existing Annex 17 Standards pertaining to crew identity with Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as per Appendix A to this paper, and cybersecurity best practices.

Actions for WP 460

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) review Colombia's experience regulating the air transport of pets, emotional support animals, and assistance and service dogs;
- b) issue recommendations on the subject to other States; and
- c) support the adoption of Standards and Recommended Practices for the carriage by air of pets, emotional support animals and assistance and service dogs, incorporating as a minimum the aspects based on Colombia's regulatory experience in this area.

Actions for WP/461 (Rev.1)

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request the ICAO Council to review and update the regulatory framework and its legal impacts, incorporating relevant international cooperation mechanisms that will facilitate and expedite the movement and entry of aircraft, crews and disaster response personnel through greater flexibility in the granting of entry permits and in customs and operations procedures, expanding the scope of the provisions of Annex 9; and
- b) encourage ICAO's Regional Offices to build an information system containing data on organizations, aircraft, personnel and equipment that each State would be in a position to provide or offer to others if needed to deal with natural or human-caused disasters.

Actions for WP/466

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize the need to strengthen the implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* by means of regulatory instruments and effective national governance structures;
- b) take note of the experience described as an example of replicable best practice; and
- c) invite ICAO to consider developing guidelines or technical references to assist States in preparing national facilitation programmes in line with Annex 9.

Actions for WP/104 (Rev.1)

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) agree that the importance of addressing and upgrading the passenger experience with an Operational Performance Review System based on metrics be included in the Assembly resolution dedicated to Facilitation;
- b) request the Council to include in the work programme for (2025–2028) upgrading the passenger experience provisions in Annex 9 with the concept of Operational Performance Review System based on metrics;
- c) request the Council, as a first step, to compile and publish the best practices of States currently implementing such performance review procedures; and
- d) based on the best practices compiled, request the Council to elaborate and publish guidance material to be widely used by Member States.

Actions for WP/105

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize the importance of establishing a global framework to guide cooperation between the health and aviation sectors in cases of potential public health threats; and
- b) request the International Civil Aviation Organization to develop training programmes for aviation personnel on identifying, reporting and appropriately responding to health risks, as well as ensuring proper protection measures for aviation workers.

Actions for WP/386

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize the increasing need to enhance the efficiency of humanitarian action, specifically related to humanitarian flights, at the national, regional and global levels;
- b) urge Member States to give humanitarian missions maximum access to airspace and airports and to exempt humanitarian aviation flights from all operational charges, including landing fees, parking fees, and any taxes or levies imposed when operating to/from airports within their territory;
- c) request the International Civil Aviation Organization Council to establish a Special Task Force to evaluate global practices and propose standard procedures and policies, in consultation with relevant United Nations bodies and aviation stakeholders; and
- d) agree to amend A41-13, as reflected in A42-WP/15 Appendix E.
 - i. Preambular Clause:
“*Whereas* humanitarian response in major crisis relies heavily on swift transportation aid and relief by air”;
 - ii. Operative Clause 7:
“*Urges* Member States to give humanitarian missions the maximum access to airspace and airports”;

- iii. Operative Clause 8:
“Requests the Council to review and enhance the ICAO provisions to facilitate the operations of humanitarian flights”.

Actions for WP/156

The Assembly is invited to direct the Secretary General to continue to prioritize attention on harmonized crew treatment standards into the next triennium and encourage States to fully support the Facilitation Panel’s work in this area.

Actions for WP/161

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) remind States of their obligations to adhere to SARPs in the Annexes to the Convention and
- b) agree to prioritize Annex 9 SARPs 5.26 through 5.29 for amendment/updating to reflect modern technological advances, allowing States to provide travel documents for their nationals within seven days of a request of another Contracting State.

Action for WP/372

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) encourage all stakeholders and other regions to raise awareness and share experiences in the establishment of procedures and protocols for the regulation of disruptive and/or unruly passenger behaviour at airports, in compliance with the international Standards and Recommended Practices contained in Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the Chicago Convention and Doc 10117, *Manual on the Legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers*;
- b) raise awareness among States of the need to share best practices in order to standardize and improve staff training on how to prevent and manage conflicts with unruly or disruptive passengers at air terminals; and
- c) promote the collection of statistical data on disruptive and/or unruly passenger behaviour incidents worldwide and share such data to determine the effectiveness of any measures in place.

Action for WP/285

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the data and analysis presented in this working paper;
- b) acknowledge the limited use and impact of CMC as a singular facilitation document for crew identification; and
- c) request ICAO to initiate a comprehensive review of Chapter 3, Section M of Annex 9, taking into consideration the multi-disciplinary nature of this section, with a view to modernizing its provisions to recognize the wider range of documents used by States for granting visa-free crew entry when on duty and the developments with regards to digital credentials

Action for WP/439 (Rev.1)

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) reiterate the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Member States’ continued commitment to economic development;

- b) strengthen support to the ICAO policy on Annex 9 — *Facilitation* provided that safety requirements are met;
- c) make ICAO Member States aware that hospitals and clinics worldwide depend on fast and reliable transport, including by air, of radioactive material (often short-lived radiopharmaceuticals), for cancer diagnosis and treatment; and
- d) encourage ICAO Member States to share this working paper with their civil aviation authorities, for awareness raising and enhanced coordination with their national competent authorities for the transport of radioactive material.

APPENDIX B

Resolution A42-13: Strategy on disaster risk reduction and response mechanism in aviation

Whereas Article 44 of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* states that among the aims and objectives of ICAO are to foster the planning and development of international air transport so as to meet the needs of the people of the world for safe, regular, efficient and economical air transport;

Whereas the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 adopted by the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction;

Whereas humanitarian response in major crisis relies heavily on swift transportation aid and relief by air;

Mindful that natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, and the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper their sustainable development;

Mindful that States are primarily responsible for the prevention and reduction of disaster risk and any response undertaken by the Organization should be guided by, and in concert with, the State(s) affected;

Recognizing that Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft*, Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services*, Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* and Annex 19 — *Safety Management* provide Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for States relating to emergency planning and response, as well as border control formalities relating to relief flights following natural or man-made disasters;

Recognizing that disaster risk reduction is an important function of the United Nations System and should receive continued attention, and stressing the need for the international community to demonstrate the firm political determination required to utilize scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries;

Recognizing that all States have a vital need for disaster-resilient aviation infrastructure to promote socio-economic development and, in times of need, to support the timely and efficient distribution of aid;

Recognizing that all States can benefit from integrating disaster risk reduction strategies into their Air Transport Sector Strategic Plans; and

Recognizing that there is a need to coordinate at the most appropriate level the political and operational response to natural or man-made disasters reaching a regional or global scale;

The Assembly:

1. *Urges* States to recognize the significant role of aviation in the context of disaster risk reduction at the national level, including in their Air Transport Sector Strategic Plans;
2. *Urges* States to take into consideration the disaster risk reduction priorities as contained in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as well as the best practices of Member States, in the development of their State emergency response plans, as well as in the emergency response plan requirements for aviation service providers;
3. *Directs* the Council to establish a crisis response policy and disaster risk reduction strategy in aviation that would institutionalize and guide the Organizations strategic approach and tactical responses to aviation-specific crises that could affect the safety or continuity of international civil aviation;
4. *Directs* the Council to assist States in implementing disaster risk reduction strategies in aviation with priority given to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
5. *Instructs* the Secretary General to establish an ICAO network of crisis coordination structures and associated coordination mechanisms, and an arrangement between ICAO, regions, States and industry supporting coordinated political and operational crisis response and assistance at the most appropriate level;
6. *Instructs* the Secretary General to continue working collaboratively within the United Nations System to ensure timely, coordinated and high-quality assistance to all States where disaster losses pose a threat to people’s health and development; and
7. *Instructs* the Secretary General to ensure that ICAO participate, when applicable and in alignment with its Strategic Objectives, in appropriate mechanisms put in place to support the cross-sectorial implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.
8. *Urges* Member States to give humanitarian missions the maximum access to airspace and airports;
9. *Requests* the Council to review and enhance the ICAO provisions to facilitate the operations of humanitarian flights; and
10. *Declares* this Resolution supersedes Resolution A41-13.

— END —