



**WORKING PAPER**

**FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)**

**FOURTEENTH MEETING**

**Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026**

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

**OUTCOMES OF A42 RELATING TO ACCESSIBILITY IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents an overview of the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) relating to accessibility in international civil aviation, based on working papers presented by Member States, regional groups, and international organizations<sup>1</sup>. It reflects the Assembly's decisions to strengthen global commitment to dignity, non-discrimination, and universal accessibility in air transport, consistent with Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, relevant Assembly Resolutions, and international human rights instruments.

The paper highlights the Assembly's decisions to refer to the Council, for further study and development, proposals aimed at promoting greater standardization in the transport of pets, emotional support animals, and service dogs, drawing on regulatory experience shared by Colombia with the support of Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC). It also highlights the Assembly's adoption of Resolution A42-14: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation*, superseding Resolution A41-15, reaffirming aviation's commitment to accessibility, dignity, and non-discrimination, while referring related actions to the Council.

In addition, the paper highlights the Assembly's endorsement of multiple State and regional initiatives focused on advancing universal accessibility, including a regional accessibility strategy aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, improved regulatory definitions and data collection on disability, and harmonized approaches to support the growing population of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Contributions from industry and partner organizations, underscore the importance of coordinated policy, guidance material, training, and capacity building.

**Action by the FAL Panel:**

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

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

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Accessibility is an essential element of a safe, inclusive, and sustainable international civil aviation system. As global air traffic continues to grow and passenger demographics evolve, the need to ensure dignified, non-discriminatory, and barrier-free air travel for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, elderly passengers, and other vulnerable travellers has become increasingly important. Accessibility is not only a social and human rights obligation, but also a key enabler of quality, resilience, and efficiency across the air transport chain.

1.2 At the A42 ICAO Assembly, States, regional organizations, and industry stakeholders presented working papers addressing accessibility from regulatory, operational, legal, and policy perspectives. These papers highlighted national and regional experiences, emerging challenges, and best practices related to universal accessibility, disability definition, passenger vulnerability, and the transport of service animals. They also emphasized the importance of alignment with Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Assembly Resolutions reflecting dignity and non-discrimination, and relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

1.3 This paper brings together the outcomes of the Assembly's deliberations on accessibility-related matters, reflecting decisions which led to the adoption of revised Assembly Resolutions, endorse proposed actions, and advance further work through the Council and relevant technical bodies. It provides a comprehensive foundation for continued global cooperation, harmonization, and capacity building to support accessible, dignified, and passenger-centred international air transport for all.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In WP/447, Colombia supported by 14 Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), presented Colombia's regulatory framework for the transport of pets, emotional support animals, and service dogs. The Assembly took note of the proposal to use this framework as a reference for developing recommendations to States to promote greater standardization. Emphasis was placed on the need to adopt Standards and Recommended Practices to ensure safety, comfort, and accessibility for passengers while maintaining operational efficiency. This paper asked A42 to: a) agree on the adoption of a new chapter in Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, incorporating a regulatory framework for the protection of animals in international air transport, with a more elaborate definition of animals as sentient beings, their classification as service, emotional and therapeutic support animals, and guiding principles on animal welfare; b) agree on the adoption of harmonized procedures and requirements on animal carrier design and certification, as well as documentation and ground and on-board handling; and c) agree on risk management strategies to deal with unintentional animal release from their carriers, aggressiveness or death during the flight. 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.

2.2 In WP/184, Denmark on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) States, and co-sponsored by Australia, Canada, Japan, and Airports Council International (ACI) proposed strengthening global aviation's commitment to accessibility, recalling Assembly Resolution A41-15 on dignity and non-discrimination. Regarding the action a) requesting to amend Resolution A41-15: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation*, the Assembly adopted Resolution A42-14: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation* (reflected in the Appendix), thereby superseding Assembly Resolution A41-15. Action b) tasked ICAO to develop a comprehensive and strategic action plan to address the growing demand for accessibility provision, and A42 referred this action to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for consideration in the context of ongoing work.

2.3 In WP/471, the Dominican Republic, supported by 18 LACAC Member States and co-sponsored by ACI, proposed a regional strategy for universal accessibility in civil aviation. The strategy was aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Assembly Resolution A41-15, and Doc 9984, *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*. The Assembly recognized accessibility as both a human rights obligation and a sustainable development priority and endorsed the actions contained in the working paper, namely, a) take note of the progress made by the Dominican Republic in terms of universal accessibility in civil aviation and its contribution to compliance with Annex 9; b) approve the proposal for a regional accessibility strategy aligned with current international standards and best practices; c) encourage Member States to establish technical units or focal points on accessibility within their aviation authorities; d) promote the permanent inclusion of accessibility issues in National Facilitation Committees and training programmes, and e) promote technical cooperation, the exchange of best practices and voluntary monitoring of progress in universal accessibility in civil aviation.

2.4 In WP/416, Uruguay supported by 19 LACAC Member States, presented work on defining disability, outlined a regulatory approach, and provided statistical data to improve understanding of the global situation of persons with disabilities. This paper asked for the following actions from A42, namely, a) encourage all stakeholders to adapt their regulatory frameworks by incorporating into its rules or acceding to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol; b) foster enhanced participation by persons with disabilities in the aviation sector; and c) support and encourage decision-making by States, airport operators and airlines to provide facilities and amenities conducive to the effective integration of persons with disabilities in this mode of transport. The Assembly endorsed the actions contained in the working paper, recognizing the value of consistent definitions and data in supporting evidence-based policy development.

2.5 In WP/354, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) co-sponsored by ACI, highlighted the growing population of elderly persons and persons with disabilities and the resulting need for disability-inclusive air transport. Recalling Assembly Resolution A41-15, the paper emphasized the importance of harmonized regulations, standards, and procedures to improve accessibility across the air transport system. The Assembly endorsed the actions contained in the working paper, namely, a) recommend ICAO to ask States to strive for uniformity in their legislative design, actively involving industry stakeholders and persons with disabilities through their representative organization in the policymaking cycle; and b) encourage States to support the ICAO Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation and include representatives of the disability community.

2.6 In WP/264, the International Partners for Aviation Development, Innovation and Sustainability (iPADIS), recalled Assembly Resolution A41-15 and emphasized accessibility as both a social responsibility and a business priority. The paper presented the three-pillar “Accessible Air Travel for All” strategy—Accessibility Evaluation and Promotion for Air Travel and Tourism (ACCEPT), Model Policy and Guidance on Accessibility (MPGA), and Technical and Training Support (TTS)—and highlighted the need for stronger coordination, engagement, training, and capacity building. The Assembly endorsed the actions presented in the paper, namely, a) note the content of this working paper and the iPADIS three-pillar strategy on accessible air travel; b) emphasize the importance of robust coordination among States, industry and civil society stakeholders, engagement with organizations representing the interests of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility as well as development of standardized training programmes; c) empower all stakeholders to uphold the highest accessibility standards and support the development and deployment of the necessary tools and training and foster local capacity building through its technical assistance programmes; and d) adopt the amendment to Paragraph 9 of Appendix E to the A42/xx draft Resolution: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation of A42-WP/15*, as proposed in the Appendix of the WP/264, and adopted the amendment to Appendix E of the draft Resolution presented in A42-WP/15. These changes are reflected in shaded format, as follows: “Urges Member States and ICAO to prioritize the inclusion and accessibility of air transport services to

persons with visible and non-visible disabilities and reduced mobility by ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes, ensuring multi-stakeholder cooperation and civil society engagement, fostering data collection and sharing, and advancing standardized personnel training, among other efforts in order to achieve a disability-inclusive air transport system.”

2.7 In WP/433, the Latin American Association of Air and Space Law (ALADA), provided a multidimensional analysis of passenger vulnerability in Latin America, with a particular focus on persons with disabilities and reduced mobility. The paper emphasized that disability, whether temporary or permanent, requires appropriate accommodations and presented an overview of the international regulatory framework applicable to disability in civil aviation. The Assembly endorsed the actions contained in the working paper, namely, a) propose that States that are not yet party to these international conventions on disability ratify them; b) promote State policies that allow persons with disabilities or reduced mobility to use air transport permanently; and c) promote decisions by the private sector, whether airports or airlines, that aim to improve the quality of life in air transport.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Panel is invited to:

- a) examine the development of Standards and Recommended Practices under Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to establish a regulatory framework for the transport of pets, emotional support animals, and service dogs, with a view to promoting safety, comfort, accessibility, and operational efficiency;
  - b) assess the feasibility of harmonized procedures and requirements related to animal carrier design and certification, as well as documentation, ground and on-board handling of animals;
  - c) consider risk management approaches to address issues such as unintentional release of animals from carriers, animal aggressiveness, or animal injury or death during flight operations; and
  - d) contribute to the development of a comprehensive and strategic ICAO action plan to address the growing demand for accessibility provision in international civil aviation, including analysis of drivers of increased demand and identification of measures to address gaps in current and future service provision, in cooperation with industry and consumer stakeholders.
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## APPENDIX

### **Resolution A42-14: Accessibility in International Civil Aviation**

*Whereas* persons with disabilities and reduced mobility form a large and growing proportion of the world's population;

*Whereas* the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, including freedom of movement and freedom of choice;

*Recalling* the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, which provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of work of the United Nations;

*Recalling* that the UN Resolution A/RES/76/154 adopted by the General Assembly in 2021 recognized the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities in all aspects of life and the need to identify and eliminate prejudice, discrimination, obstacles and barriers that limit the access of persons with disabilities to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications;

*Noting with concern* that, despite these instruments and undertakings, persons with disabilities and reduced mobility continue to face barriers in their participation as equal members of society, including barriers to their free movement;

*Acknowledging* that the aviation community needs to accommodate the growing demand in the aviation sector for services for persons with visible and invisible disabilities, as well as persons with reduced mobility and ageing populations, and that evolving societal trends are reshaping the nature and prevalence of accessibility needs;

*Recognizing* the importance of government and industry working together to support the travel needs of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility while prioritizing safety in all circumstances;

*Affirming* that diversity and social inclusion are concepts that are essential to the sustainable growth of international civil aviation;

*Recognizing* the essential nature of air transport services and the need to provide equal access to such services for all passengers;

*Also acknowledging* that digitization and innovation are creating new opportunities as well as new challenges for persons with disabilities, with reduced mobility and aging populations;

*Reemphasizing* the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices contained in Annex 9 — *Facilitation* as well as the procedures and principles contained in Doc 9984 – *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*;

*The Assembly:*

1. *Resolves* that dignity and non-discrimination are universal rights that apply to all persons, including persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility travelling by air;

2. *Requests* the Council to:
  - a) ensure that ICAO exercise continuous leadership on sustainability, including the social sustainability imperatives of inclusion and accessibility;
  - b) develop an effective strategy and work programme on accessibility for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility, including actions to monitor the impact on the aviation sector of societal and demographic changes and assess their impact on the provision of accessibility services, with the aim of future-proofing these services, in order to reach for a disability inclusive air transport system in cooperation with all the stakeholders;
  - c) ensure that Annex 9 — *Facilitation* SARPs recognize the essential nature of accessible services for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility and support the continued development of such services in line with evolving accessibility needs;
3. *Urges* Member States to prioritize the inclusion and accessibility of air transport services to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility;
4. *Encourages* all Member States to strive for uniformity in their air transport accessibility regulations, standards and procedures, to the greatest extent practicable, and to work closely with disability groups and other relevant stakeholders;
5. *Encourages* Member States to ensure that the transport sector coordinates its approach with the industry and civil society in order to deliver accessible end-to-end services to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, and to work closely with disability groups and other relevant stakeholders; and
6. *Encourages* Member States to support ICAO activities with resources, both financial and in-kind, to ensure a successful implementation of agreed measures to support air transport of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility.
7. *Declares* that this Resolution supersedes Resolution A41-15.

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