



WORKING PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026

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

**OUTCOMES OF A42 RELATING TO ASSISTANCE TO AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT VICTIMS
AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FACILITATION OVERSIGHT AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the outcomes of the Forty-second Session of the ICAO Assembly (A42) relating to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families (AAAVF) and to facilitation capacity building and oversight, based on working papers submitted by the Council, Member States, and international and regional organizations¹. It reflects the Assembly’s decisions to strengthen ICAO’s policy framework, oversight, and implementation support in these areas, recognizing their importance to effective facilitation, safety, and public confidence in international civil aviation.

The paper highlights the Assembly’s endorsement of ICAO’s AAAVF programme, including progress made since Resolutions A39-27, A40-16, and A41-14, and the adoption of Resolution A42-15: *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families*, superseding Resolution A41-14. It also reflects the referral to the Council of proposals aimed at improving State preparedness and compliance in assisting accident victims and families, including actions to address gaps identified through safety oversight and to enhance regional and stakeholder engagement.

Additionally, the paper highlights Assembly decisions related to strengthening facilitation oversight and capacity building under Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. This includes referral to the Council of proposals on national oversight frameworks, passenger data systems, and global assistance mechanisms, as well as endorsement of initiatives focused on training, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices. Contributions from regional organizations, underscore the importance of coordinated regional approaches to improving compliance and implementation.

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 Assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, together with effective facilitation oversight and capacity building, are integral to a resilient, people-centred, and well-functioning international civil aviation system. While compassionate and timely support following an aircraft accident remains a critical responsibility of States and stakeholders, sustained implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* also depends on strong national oversight mechanisms, adequate institutional capacity, and coordinated international support.

1.2 During A42, States, regional organizations, and international stakeholders presented working papers addressing progress achieved, persistent challenges, and future priorities in these interconnected areas. These papers reviewed advancements in assisting aircraft accident victims and their families, including the implementation of relevant Assembly Resolutions and outcomes of recent AAVF activities, as well as gaps in preparedness and compliance. In parallel, they highlighted the need to strengthen facilitation oversight through national frameworks, improve compliance with border clearance Standards and Recommended Practices, enhance the use of passenger data systems, and expand training, technical assistance, and regional cooperation initiatives.

1.3 This paper consolidates the outcomes of the Assembly's deliberations on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, facilitation capacity building, and oversight. It reflects decisions to endorse programmes and initiatives, the adoption of updated Assembly Resolutions, and refer specific actions to the Council and relevant technical bodies for further work, with the objective of reinforcing implementation, consistency, and effectiveness across the global facilitation system.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In WP/16, the Council, highlighted progress achieved since Assembly Resolutions A39-27, A40-16, and A41-14 in supporting assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families (AAVF). The paper reported on the implementation of the 30 recommendations adopted in 2021, outcomes of the AAVF 2024 event, ongoing actions, identified gaps, and proposed priorities for the 2026–2028 triennium. The Assembly endorsed the AAVF programme, urged stakeholders to strengthen implementation efforts, and adopted Resolution A42-15: *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families* as shown in the Appendix, thereby superseding Assembly Resolution A41-14.

2.2 In WP/59, Qatar emphasized the importance of preparedness in assisting aircraft accident victims and their families and highlighted the consequences of inadequate readiness. The paper identified persistent challenges faced by States and proposed actions to address low levels of compliance with Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Protocol Questions related to AAVF, including the use of surveys, enhanced participation, and the development of regional strategies. The WP actions are requesting the Assembly to a) urge ICAO to identify the reasons for the low compliance rates with the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Protocol Questions regarding AAVF, including the development and implementation of a survey to States to address this matter; b) request States to actively support and work with ICAO, including in the development and completion of the survey; and c) urge ICAO to analyse the survey results to better direct its efforts toward enhancing State compliance, and to share the survey findings with the ICAO Regional Offices, enabling them to develop targeted compliance strategies at the regional level. 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/290, the Air Crash Victims Families' Federation International (ACVFFI), co-sponsored by Kazakhstan, proposed strengthening the organization of future AAVF symposia. The paper recalled existing commitments under Assembly Resolutions A39-27, A40-16, and A41-14, as well as the contributions of the AAVF 2021 and 2024 events. The Assembly was invited to a) recognize the contributions of AAVF 2021 and 2024 to strengthening the victim-centered approach in international civil aviation; b) take note of the need to establish a standardized and formal mechanism for future editions; c) request the Council to incorporate a structured procedure to ensure that each AAVF symposium concludes with outcomes validated by participants and presented to the Council; d) recommend that the planning of future symposia be carried out in consultation with key stakeholders; and e) urge the Council to consider the outcomes of future AAVF symposia as institutional reference inputs that inform and enhance ICAO's triennial work programme. The Assembly noted ICAO's existing policy framework governing symposia, requested the Council to continue promoting broad stakeholder engagement, and encouraged the convening of future AAVF symposia in accordance with ICAO procedures, relevant Council decisions, and Host State Agreements.

2.4 In WP/320, Saudi Arabia, recalled that Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, as part of the Chicago Convention, obliges States to minimize delays through compliance with border clearance Standards and Recommended Practices. The paper noted that, despite early adoption, Annex 9 implementation has lagged behind safety and security and proposed the following actions, a) encourage Member States to establish a national oversight framework for air transport facilitation, modelled on existing frameworks used for safety and security oversight, to ensure effective and consistent implementation of Annex 9; and b) request the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to provide technical support and guidance to Member States developing an Oversight Manual for Air Transport Facilitation, which would assist in assessing compliance with Annex 9 SARPs and strengthen institutional mechanisms for implementation and sustainable monitoring. 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, taking into account resource requirements and work prioritization.

2.5 In WP/244, the United Arab Emirates, presented the “Year of Facilitation (FAL2024)” initiative aimed at strengthening global compliance through training, capacity building, and technical assistance. The paper recalled the establishment by the Facilitation Panel of the Working Group on Facilitation Capacity Building (WGFCB) to develop a global strategy. The Assembly endorsed the actions contained in the paper, namely, a) promote active participation in capacity building activities to strengthen the competencies of personnel involved in facilitation processes; and b) encourage Member States and industry stakeholders to assist the ICAO Secretariat in identifying and providing expert resources to deliver training courses, workshops, seminars and other capacity building activities, recognizing the value of coordinated capacity-building initiatives.

2.6 In WP/158, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) on behalf of 54 African States, presented Angola's legal framework for the certification of Facilitation inspectors and instructors. The paper demonstrated how a structured national approach can strengthen Annex 9 implementation and encouraged other States to adopt similar models. As per the actions a) take note of the lessons learnt from the Angolan model as a reference for Member States aiming to strengthen their FAL inspectorate frameworks and b) urge Member States to implement comprehensive national air transport facilitation programs aligned with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) provisions and international best practices, the Assembly urged States to implement national facilitation programmes, noted Angola's model as a reference. With regard to action c) which directs ICAO Secretariat to create a platform for sharing of experiences and best practices to enhance implementation of Annex 9, the Assembly referred this action to the Council, with contributions from relevant technical bodies, for further study and the development of a proposed way forward.

2.7 In WP/127, AFCAC on behalf of 54 African States, highlighted the role of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems in supporting both border security and facilitation. The paper proposed the following actions:

- a) encourage States to enhance participation in peer-to-peer exchanges and technical capacity-building activities;
- b) request ICAO to establish a Global Passenger Data Systems Assistance Framework, consolidating technical, operational, legal and financial support mechanisms;
- c) invite ICAO to regularly update information on available funding mechanisms and partnerships to support States' implementation efforts;
- d) urge ICAO to promote regional cooperation and public-private partnerships to accelerate progress and foster innovative, cost-effective solutions; and
- e) encourage States to enhance inter-agency cooperation at the national level to maximize the benefits of passenger data systems for aviation security and facilitation

2.8 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, encouraged enhanced State cooperation, capacity building, and partnerships, and urged the Council to direct the Secretary General to promote regional cooperation, update information on available funding mechanisms, and foster cost-effective implementation solutions.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Facilitation Panel is invited to:

- a) identify the reasons for low State compliance with Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Protocol Questions related to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families (AAAVF), including by developing and implementing surveys to States;
- b) analyse survey results on AAAVF preparedness and compliance and share the findings with ICAO Regional Offices to enable the development of targeted regional compliance strategies;
- c) develop guidance material on the establishment of national oversight frameworks for air transport facilitation, modelled on existing safety and security oversight frameworks, to strengthen implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*;
- d) develop technical guidance, including an Oversight Manual for Air Transport Facilitation, to assist States in assessing compliance with Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices, taking into account resource requirements and work prioritization;
- e) establish an ICAO platform for the sharing of experiences and best practices related to the certification of facilitation inspectors and instructors, with a view to enhancing global implementation of Annex 9; and

- f) develop proposals for a Global Passenger Data Systems Assistance Framework, including mechanisms for peer-to-peer state mentoring and regional cooperation, consolidating technical, operational, legal, and financial elements to facilitate State implementation of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems.

APPENDIX

Resolution A42-15: Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families

Having considered that, even though international air transport is the safest means of transportation, the total elimination of serious accidents cannot be guaranteed;

Whereas the actions of the State of Occurrence should address the most critical needs of persons affected by a civil aviation accident, including to ensure that each aircraft or airport operator develop and implement a comprehensive family assistance plan, and recalling the inclusion, in 2005, of provisions in Annex 9 to enable expeditious entry into the State in which an accident occurs for family members of victims of aircraft accidents;

Whereas the policy of ICAO should be to ensure that the mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of victims involved in civil aviation accidents and their families are considered and accommodated by ICAO and its Member States, including the establishment of national victim support networks;

Whereas it is essential that ICAO and its Member States recognize the importance of timely notification of family members of victims involved in civil aviation accidents; the prompt recovery and accurate identification of victims; the return of the victims' personal effects; and the dissemination of accurate information to family members;

Recognizing the role of Governments of nationals, who are victims of civil aviation accidents, in notifying and assisting families of the victims;

Recalling the provision of Article 28 of the Montreal Convention of 1999 (*Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules for International Carriage by Air*) as well as Resolution No. 2 adopted by the Montreal Conference, which called for the provision of advance payments, without delay, to aircraft accident victims, and their families and acknowledging that lack of universal ratification of the Montreal Convention hinders improved and standardized compensation regimes, and emphasizing the need for universal ratification and implementation of the Montreal Convention of 1999;

Recalling the adoption of Amendment 29 to ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation* which has elevated Recommended Practice 8.46 to Standard 8.47, thus obliging States to establish legislation, regulations and/or policies in support of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families;

Recognizing the importance of the Council's decision to officially designate 20 February as the International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families in remembering the victims and expressing solidarity with their families, as well as continuing to enhance aviation safety and prevent such tragedies from happening in the future;

Acknowledging the approval by the Council of the *ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* (Doc 9998) in March 2013 and the issuance of the *Manual on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* (Doc 9973) in December 2013;

Acknowledging that a review of the electronic filing of differences (EFOD) system compliance checklist (CC) has indicated a low implementation rate of Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), and urging Member States to increase frequency of reporting to improve compliance;

Whereas it is essential that support be provided to family members of victims of civil aviation accidents, wherever the accident may occur, and any lessons learned from support providers, including effective

procedures and policies, be promptly disseminated to other Member States and ICAO to improve States' family support operations;

Considering that harmonization of the regulations for dealing with the needs of victims of civil aviation accidents and their families is also a humanitarian duty and a permissive function of the ICAO Council contemplated in Article 55 (c) of the Chicago Convention, and recognizing the need for enhanced information-sharing mechanisms and training resources for States and operators to conduct thorough risk assessments and implement mitigation strategies;

Considering that States should provide a homogeneous solution for treatment of victims of civil aviation accidents and their families;

Recognizing that the air carrier involved in a civil aviation accident is often best situated to assist families in the immediate aftermath of the accident;

Acknowledging the outcomes of the ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families (AAAVF 2021), including the 30 recommendations encapsulated in the Symposium report;

Recalling the useful initiatives of the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International (ACVFFI) in assisting family members of victims;

Noting that family members of victims of a civil aviation accident, irrespective of where the accident occurs or the national origin of the victims, express certain fundamental human needs and emotions; and

Recognizing that public attention will continue to focus on States' investigative actions, as well as the human interest aspects of a civil aviation accident;

The Assembly:

1. *Calls on* Member States to reaffirm their commitment to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members and to ensure that each aircraft or airport operator develop and implement a comprehensive family assistance plan;
2. *Urges* Member States to establish legislation, regulations and/or policies to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members, as mandated by ICAO Annex 9 Standard 8.47, and pursuant to Article 28 of the Montreal Convention 1999 and Resolution No. 2 adopted by the Montreal Conference;
3. *Encourages* States that have legislation, regulations and/or policies to support civil aviation accident victims and their families to review these documents, as necessary, in consideration of the ICAO Policy in Doc 9998 and of the guidance material in Doc 9973;
4. *Urges* Member States to regularly report to ICAO, through the compliance checklist (CC) in the electronic filing of differences (EFOD) system regarding their level of implementation of Annex 9 provisions associated with family assistance plans, and to increase transparency and frequency of reporting to improve compliance;
5. *Urges* Member States to recognize 20 February as the International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families and conduct national commemorations relevant to their citizens impacted by civil aviation tragedies;
6. *Urges* Member States which have not already done so, to ratify and implement the Montreal Convention of 1999;

7. *Welcomes* the recommendations of the Symposium and directs the Council to incorporate into the next triennium Business Plan those Symposium recommendations that require further consultation with expert groups, and in particular to support capacity-building needs of Member States, including enhanced training and resources for conflict zone risk mitigation;
8. *Directs* the Council to actively and timely follow-up on the relevant ICAO expert groups regarding those recommendations emanating from the Symposium as required;
9. *Directs* the Council, when considering the extent of the level of implementation of family assistance plans, to give further consideration to the development of Standards and Recommended Practices to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members, including provisions for timely notification, and dissemination of accurate information to family members; and
10. *Declares* that this resolution supersedes Resolution A41-14.

— END —