



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

OUTCOME OF THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE
FACILITATION CONFERENCE HELD IN DOHA, QATAR

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the outcome of the High-level Ministerial Segment convened on 17 April 2025 during the ICAO Facilitation Conference hosted by the Civil Aviation Authority of Qatar, in Doha, from 14 to 17 April 2025. Fifty-three Ministers participated in this event, with thirty-five Ministers and four Deputy Ministers delivering oral statements. The High-level Ministerial Segment culminated in the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport. The event reaffirmed the commitment of States to enhancing air transport facilitation, and provided policy direction, advancing the new Strategic Goal - Aviation Delivers Reliable, Accessible and Seamless Mobility for All.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) reaffirm the commitments made in the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport;
- b) note that continued efforts will be made to promote and raise awareness of the Doha Declaration through publications, outreach activities and promoted through global and regional event opportunities; and
- c) support the inclusion of clauses of the Doha Declaration into proposed revisions to Assembly Resolutions A41-17 on the *Consolidated Statement on Continuing ICAO Policies Related to Facilitation* and A41-14 on *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families* to the 42nd Session of the ICAO Assembly (refer to A42-WP/15 and WP/16).

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal - Aviation Delivers Reliable, Accessible and Seamless Mobility for All.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The ICAO activities referred to in this paper are expected to be undertaken within the resources available in the 2026-2028 Regular Budget and/or from extra-budgetary contributions as guided by the ICAO Business Plan 2026-2028.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of 7 October 2022) Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation [Amendment 30, 17th Edition]</i> Doc 9303, Machine Readable Travel Documents A42-WP/15, Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation A42-WP/16, Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025 (FALC2025) held in Doha, Qatar commenced on 14 April 2025 and concluded with a High-level Ministerial Segment on 17 April 2025. The four -day Conference, hosted by the Government of Qatar, gathered more than 2 000 delegates from 143 States and 17 International and regional Organizations, industry and other stakeholders under the theme “Facilitation the Future of Air Transport: Collaboration, Efficiency, and Inclusivity.” The event details, including the list of participating States, are available at: <https://www.icao.int/Meetings/FALC2025/Pages/default.aspx>.

1.2 This paper focuses on the outcome of the High-level Ministerial Segment during which Ministers, senior officials, and aviation leaders from across the globe gathered with the purpose of strengthening air transport facilitation as foundations of sustainable air transport culminating in the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport.

2. HIGH LEVEL MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

2.1 The High-level Ministerial Segment was presided by Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano, President of the ICAO Council, supported by Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary General of ICAO, Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma, Director Air Transport Bureau, ICAO, with participation of H.E. Mohamed bin Faleh Al Hajri, Acting President of the Civil Aviation Authority of Qatar. Fifty-three Ministers including the Prime Minister of Grenada and Deputy Prime Ministers of Fiji and Tonga and over 70 Directors General of Civil Aviation and/or heads of delegations attended the High-level Ministerial Segment. Altogether this segment featured oral statements by 35 Ministers and 4 Deputy Ministers, 13 Heads of Delegations and 4 International Organizations who overwhelmingly advocated strong air transport facilitation frameworks. The event concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport (“Doha Declaration”), which recognizes that air transport facilitation is critical for the sustainable development of air transport and that it needs to be prioritized and appropriately resourced.

3. DOHA DECLARATION

3.1 By way of State letter EC 6/54-24/98 dated 2 December 2024, it is recalled that extensive consultation was made on the Doha Declaration during its development and published the final draft on the event website.

3.2 During the Ministerial Segment on 17 April 2025, participants expressed broad support to the final draft Doha Declaration through their oral statements. In this regard, the President of the Council announced that the Declaration was adopted by acclamation.

3.3 The Doha Declaration, provided in the Appendix to this paper, seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- recognition that air transport facilitation is fundamental to the sustainable development of air transport, and requires prioritized and appropriate resourcing;
- commitment to actively engage in the development of relevant international legal and administrative frameworks that support the evolving needs of international civil aviation and facilitation, particularly in the areas of civil registration, digital identity, biometric recognition, advance passenger information, passenger name record data, and seamless passenger and crew processing; and
- calls for more global cooperation to strengthen ICAO’s leadership role in the ongoing implementation of the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy and support the active use of the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD).

3.4 The Doha Declaration embodies the collective resolve to ensure aviation delivers reliable, accessible and seamless mobility for all for global progress. As such, the following are the seven pillars of the Doha Declaration:

- a) **Global Facilitation Governance:** Emphasize the importance of air transport facilitation to ensure a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation sector, and promote the implementation of Facilitation Standards and Recommended Practices to achieve global alignment and harmonization of passenger, crew, aircraft, and cargo processing;
- b) **Facilitating the Passenger Journey and Protecting Rights:** Improve passenger travel experience and cargo facilitation by enhancing efficiency of the movement of aircraft, passengers, crew and cargo;
- c) **Allocation of sufficient resources:** Consider sustainable funding mechanisms that ensure the long-term viability of facilitation programmes and the continuous improvement of air transport operations which requires adequate resources for air transport facilitation, and hence, States must nurture diverse, skilled professionals who can harness emerging technologies and drive innovation;
- d) **Data, Innovation and Skills:** Take a strategic, proactive and collaborative approach to the implementation of innovative technologies that can improve all aspects of air transport facilitation, including border control, by ensuring that endorsed technologies are properly implemented, generalized and used across all aspects of Facilitation, to enhance processes related to passengers, crew, aircraft, cargo and mail, and by considering the adoption and integration of innovative technologies that address existing Facilitation challenges;
- e) **International and regional coordination:** Recognize that regional facilitation groups are invaluable as they enhance operational efficiency and ensure compliance with international standards, serving as models for collective progress;
- f) **No Country Left Behind (NCLB):** Reaffirm ICAO's efforts through its NCLB Strategic Goal to support effective capacity-building (including training and assistance) to ensure that air transport facilitation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) are effectively implemented globally, and that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe, secure, efficient and reliable air transport; and
- g) **Health:** Work collaboratively with the public health sector and relevant stakeholders to develop a national aviation plan in preparation for the outbreak of a communicable disease posing a public health risk, ensuring that air transport can continue safely and efficiently in all circumstances; this plan should be developed in line with the World Health Organization International Health Regulations.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 FALC 2025 was a highly successful event, culminating with the adoption of the Doha Declaration which highlights enhanced work in the field of Facilitation defining priorities for the work of the ICAO Facilitation Programmes for the 2026-2028 triennium.

4.2 The Doha Declaration highlights the vital importance of ICAO's work within a comprehensive United Nations framework to foster partnerships and cooperation across ICAO's Member States and the civil aviation sector.

4.3 As a first follow-up action, the Doha Declaration was disseminated to Member States and international organizations to convey a strong political message to the global aviation community. Subsequently, the provisions of the Declaration are incorporated into the proposed revisions of Assembly Resolution A41-17, *Consolidated Statement on Continuing ICAO Policies Related to Facilitation*. This includes the addition of a new Appendix E – Global Commitment to ensure that aviation delivers reliable, accessible and seamless mobility for all, along with proposed editorial amendments and a newly submitted clause received after the adoption of the Declaration. Furthermore, relevant updates are also made to Assembly Resolution A41-14, *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families*. Finally, continued efforts will be undertaken to promote and raise awareness of the Doha Declaration through outreach activities at various regional and international events.

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APPENDIX

DOHA DECLARATION ON FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT Doha, Qatar, 17 April 2025

We, the Ministers, and Heads of Delegation, meeting at the Ministerial Segment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Facilitation Conference (FALC2025) held in Doha, Qatar, on 17 April 2025, in the presence of senior representatives of the aviation industry:

Recalling ICAO Assembly Resolutions A41-17: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies, related to facilitation*, A41-16: *Development and implementation of facilitation provisions — combatting human trafficking*, A41-15: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation*, A41-14: *Assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families*, A41-12: *Maintaining health and sustaining safe international air transport during public health emergencies affecting air travel*; and A41-11: *Declaration on air transport facilitation affirming global commitment to enable the safe and efficient recovery of aviation from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to make aviation more resilient in the future*, that enshrine the global commitment of Member States and ICAO to enhance air transport facilitation;

Affirming the critical role of air transport facilitation in ensuring the efficient and seamless movement of passengers, crew, cargo, and aircraft across borders, and noting the continuing importance of Annex 9 — *Facilitation to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944* (Annex 9) in this regard;

Recognizing the impact of recent global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on the aviation industry and the necessity to incorporate lessons learned and assure a more harmonized global approach to enhance the resilience and future-proofing of international air transport;

Acknowledging the ongoing work of ICAO in leading global efforts to standardize and improve air transport facilitation measures through the development of Annex 9, the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy, and the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) programmes, as well as through the establishment of technical specifications, policies, guidance material, capacity building and assistance, and collaboration with relevant international organizations;

Acknowledging that air transport has an essential role in connecting people, facilitating trade, improving sustainable social, and economic, development and consequently the quality of life, while ensuring that international civil aviation continues to contribute to the achievement of the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Emphasizing the need for Member States to support actively ICAO's efforts to improve air transport facilitation through voluntary contributions, including the secondment of staff, and to promote closer collaboration with national and international agencies, including immigration, border control, customs, and public health entities; and

Acknowledging that humanitarian response in major crisis relies heavily on swift transportation of aid and relief by air.

THEREFORE, URGE STATES, ICAO, INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INDUSTRY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO:

Global Facilitation Governance

- a) Emphasize the importance of air transport facilitation to ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation sector, and promote the implementation of Facilitation Standards and Recommended Practices to achieve global alignment and harmonization of passenger, crew, aircraft, and cargo processing;
- b) Engage actively in international frameworks and decision-making fora, including the ICAO Facilitation Panel, in order to streamline and continually improve facilitation and traveller identification;
- c) Strengthen mechanisms for establishing robust partnerships with immigration and border control agencies, customs, public health authorities and all stakeholders involved in the management of border crossing in order to foster a unified and comprehensive approach to air transport facilitation;
- d) Develop a strategic, prioritized, forward-looking vision that addresses emerging trends, technological advancements, and global imperatives such as seamless movement of people and goods, inclusivity and sustainability;
- e) Commit to actively engage in the development of relevant international legal and administrative frameworks that support the evolving needs of international civil aviation and facilitation, particularly in the areas of civil registration, digital identity, biometric recognition, advance passenger information, passenger name record data, and seamless passenger and crew processing;
- f) Consider sustainable funding mechanisms that ensure the long-term viability of facilitation programmes and the continuous improvement of air transport;
- g) Actively engage in activities and take measures that support the achievement of the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- h) Work closely to support the value and importance of ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind' strategic goal that aims to help States and provide expertise and resources through the provision of targeted and effective air transport facilitation assistance and capacity-building to States in need;
- i) Give humanitarian missions the maximum access to airspace and airports and work with ICAO to review and enhance the ICAO provisions to facilitate the operations of humanitarian flights;

Facilitating the Passenger Journey and Protecting Rights

- j) 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, fostering data collection and sharing, and advancing personnel training, among other efforts in order to achieve a disability-inclusive air transport system;
- k) Commit to issuing machine readable travel documents for refugees and stateless persons (Convention Travel Documents (CTDs)) in compliance with relevant Annex 9 provisions;
- l) Establish legislation, regulations and/or policies to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members and advance the ongoing implementation and evolution of ICAO's work programme and priorities related to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, and support ICAO's leadership role in this regard;
- m) Advocate for States to ratify the *Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules for International carriage by Air* (Montréal Convention 1999), which provides a comprehensive and unified framework for

the equitable, fair and convenient compensation of claims by passengers and shippers on international flights;

n) Advocate for States to ratify and implement the Montréal Protocol 2014 and consider the recommendations in the ICAO *Manual on the legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers* (Doc 10117);

o) Take measures to ensure that procedures in place to combat trafficking in persons are based on a comprehensive policy and include reporting systems and relevant competent authorities' points of contact, and to recommend appropriate training of airport and aircraft operators' personnel in direct contact with the travelling public;

p) Improve passenger travel experience and cargo facilitation by enhancing efficiency of the movement of aircraft, passengers, crew and cargo;

q) Take measures and or actions to address air transport Facilitation issues related to inadmissible persons, refugees and stateless persons by partnering with national and international human rights institutions;

Data, Innovation and Skills

r) Take a strategic, proactive and collaborative approach to the implementation of innovative technologies that can improve all aspects of air transport facilitation, including border control, by ensuring that endorsed technologies are properly implemented, generalized and used across all aspects of Facilitation, to enhance processes related to passengers, crew, aircraft, cargo and mail, and by considering the adoption and integration of innovative technologies that address existing Facilitation challenges;

s) Strengthen ICAO's leadership role in the ongoing implementation and evolution of the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) Strategy, including the development of advanced technical specifications for travel documents and digital credentials ensuring data interoperability, and mechanisms for their efficient validation;

t) Acknowledge the various specialized skillsets needed for air transport facilitation and focus on recruitment and training efforts;

u) Work to attract the next generation of facilitation professionals while promoting policies and initiatives that enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, including efforts to bridge the gender gap within the aviation industry;

v) Support ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) and its active use internationally, advocating for its use in both governmental and private sectors to provide the foundation for the verification of travel documents and related digital credentials globally;

w) Encourage robust partnerships with immigration and border control agencies, customs, public health authorities to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the flow of passengers and goods; and

Health

x) Work collaboratively with the public health sector and relevant stakeholders to develop a national aviation plan in preparation for the outbreak of a communicable disease posing a public health risk, ensuring that air transport can continue safely and efficiently in all circumstances; this plan should be developed in line with the World Health Organizations' International Health Regulations.