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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

**REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND STRATEGIC COOPERATION ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION (API) AND PASSENGER
NAME RECORD (PNR) SYSTEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA: THE EXPERIENCE
OF SAUDI ARABIA**

(Presented by Saudi Arabia)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper highlights the efforts of Saudi Arabia in strengthening regional capacity building and strategic cooperation with international organizations to support the implementation of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems in Middle Eastern and African countries. These efforts contribute to enhancing States' compliance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the implementation of the ICAO Ministerial Declaration (2025).

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This information paper relates to Strategic Goal: Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	There are no additional financial implications.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 7300, <i>Convention on International Civil Aviation</i> , signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 and amended by the ICAO Assembly, Article 22 Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i>

¹ Arabic and English versions provided by Saudi Arabia.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The use of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems is considered a key tool in enhancing border security, streamlining procedures and combating terrorism and transnational organized crime. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Ministerial Declaration (2025) emphasized the importance of international cooperation to support States in developing and implementing these systems in accordance with international standards and best practices.

2. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

2.1 The ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation* Standards 9.1–9.33 encourage Member States to implement Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems, including the following elements:

- a) Utilization of standardized data exchange formats, such as UN/EDIFACT PAXLST for API data and PNRGOV for PNR data;
- b) Development of legal frameworks to protect data and define its purposes of use;
- c) Promotion of cooperation among relevant national entities; and
- d) Collaboration with international organizations such as ICAO, the United Nations (through the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme and UN Office on Drugs and Crime), the International Organization for Migration, the World Customs Organization, the International Air Transport Association and INTERPOL to support national and regional capacity-building.

2.2 The ICAO Ministerial Declaration (2025) reaffirmed these principles and called for continued international support to assist States in this domain.

3. SAUDI ARABIA'S INITIATIVE: THE NATIONAL PASSENGER SECURITY CENTER

3.1 In line with its commitment to international standards and strengthening regional cooperation, Saudi Arabia established the National Passenger Security Center to serve as the national platform (single window) for the collection, analysis and exchange of API and PNR data. Key achievements in this field include:

- a) Cooperation with international organizations in areas such as:
 - Transferring expertise and knowledge to 4 countries in establishing Passenger Information Units (PIUs) and utilizing API/PNR data, with 42 trainees;
 - Hosting study visits for four 4 countries; and
 - Hosting a workshop on balancing security with privacy and personal data protection for 5 countries, with 18 trainees;

- b) Bilateral cooperation in sharing experiences and best practices in the use of API/PNR data for border security, combating terrorism and transnational organized crime, and data privacy protection with 12 countries;
- c) Supporting integration and coordination among national entities involved in border security;
- d) Aligning legal and technical frameworks with ICAO guidance material (Doc 9944, *Guidelines on Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data*) and PNRGOV Standards;
- e) Organizing 400 regular workshops with airlines operating in Saudi Arabia to familiarize them with the API/PNR system's operational and technical requirements. These workshops aim to help airlines comply with national requirements and facilitate effective data transmission—reinforcing cooperation with the air transport sector and supporting security efforts and smooth travel procedures; and
- f) Encouraging regional and international knowledge exchange and supporting cooperation among states at different technical levels.

4. **FUTURE APPROACH**

4.1 Saudi Arabia, through the National Passenger Security Center, affirms its readiness to:

- a) Share its experience in establishing a national centre for the management and analysis of passenger data as a leading model;
- b) Support ICAO efforts in developing regional capacity-building programs; and
- c) Continue cooperating with the United Nations, its agencies, and other relevant entities to promote the full implementation of API/PNR systems while respecting data privacy.

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