



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

A42-WP/130¹

EX/64

27/7/25

(Information paper)

English and Arabic only

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

THE EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION GUIDE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(Presented by Saudi Arabia)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the experience of Saudi Arabia in developing a specialized guide for emergency evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities within the airport environment. This initiative aims to strengthen compliance with safety and security requirements while ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to equal protection during emergencies.

In accordance with Article 22 of the Chicago Convention, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Member States are obligated to take all possible measures to facilitate international air navigation and to simplify customs, immigration and security procedures for passengers and cargo. In this context, auditing air transport facilitation is considered a fundamental tool to ensure State compliance with these obligations. Although Annex 9 — *Facilitation* was first issued in 1949, its implementation has seen comparatively slower progress than other Annexes related to safety and security.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This paper relates to Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	There are no additional financial implications.
<i>References:</i>	Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Implementing Regulations Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i>

¹ English and Arabic versions provided by Saudi Arabia.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government of Saudi Arabia places increasing and significant emphasis on empowering persons with disabilities to fully exercise their rights, including their right to safe and accessible air travel, which is considered a key pillar for promoting their active participation in society. In line with this commitment, this information paper highlights the national framework adopted to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities throughout the air travel experience. The paper presents a structured analysis of four interconnected dimensions that reflect the regulatory, physical, technical and social aspects of these challenges, which have been actively addressed by the competent authorities in Saudi Arabia to facilitate the mobility of persons with disabilities.

1.1.1 Regulatory (Policy) Pathway:

Focuses on aligning the national legislative framework with relevant international conventions, Standards and best practices—particularly Annex 9 — *Facilitation* to the Convention on International Civil Aviation—and enhancing the effectiveness of local regulations to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in the air transport sector.

1.1.2 Physical (Infrastructure) Pathway:

Highlights the challenges related to the built environment of airports and facilities, emphasizing the need for accessible infrastructure that ensures safe and easy mobility throughout all stages of the journey. This includes accessible corridors, elevators, dedicated seating, rest areas and supportive logistical services.

1.1.3 Technical (Digital Accessibility) Pathway:

Emphasizes the opportunities available to harness digital tools and assistive technologies to enhance the travel experience for persons with disabilities. Access to information and data at all stages of travel is essential—not a luxury. The journey begins with browsing websites for travel information and booking and continues with accessing information on display screens throughout the airport.

1.1.4 Social Pathway:

Addresses the challenges stemming from stereotypes and lack of awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities. Social perceptions can be a barrier to access, as service providers may lack the necessary knowledge or training to accommodate individuals with different types of disabilities. This can result in the denial of rights or inadequate service delivery due to insufficient training mechanisms.

2. A DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE IN FACILITATING SAFE MOBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2.1 Within this comprehensive framework, Saudi Arabia has made notable progress in identifying these barriers and developing strategies to overcome them. One such initiative is the development of an Emergency Evacuation Guide for Persons with Disabilities, led by the Authority for the Care of Persons with Disabilities, in coordination with the General Directorate of Civil Defense. This guide was developed as an operational tool, aligning with the regulatory, technical and governance tracks, and serves as a practical output in support of the national framework.

2.2 The guide aims to establish clear procedures to ensure the safety of persons with disabilities during emergencies. It also contributes to enhancing the readiness of facilities and personnel, unifying evacuation procedures, and providing a fast, safe and disability-inclusive response.

2.3 This framework reflects Saudi Arabia's strong commitment to empowering persons with disabilities and improving their quality of life. It supports the objectives of the National Programme for Air Transport Facilitation in the field of aviation safety. It promotes integration between legislative and operational efforts with practical outcomes on the ground.

2.4 Through this paper, Saudi Arabia aims to present a model that can assist other States in identifying gaps, challenges and barriers, and in establishing mechanisms to overcome them by sharing experiences and providing practical examples.

2-1 Introduction to the Emergency Evacuation Guide for Persons with Disabilities
Preparation Mechanism, Identification of Challenges, Stakeholders, and Proposed Solutions
Stages of Approval, Implementation, Dissemination, and Training
Impact and Relevance of the Emergency Evacuation Guide Across the Four Pathways

- **Regulatory (Policy) Pathway**
 - Negative Bias Toward Disability
 - Direct and Indirect Discrimination
 - National Legislation and Integration of International Requirements (Practical Example from Saudi Arabia)
 - Related Regulations and Guidelines
- **Physical Pathway (Infrastructure)**
 - Accessibility and Implementation Challenges
 - Accessibility Standards (Ease, Safety, Independence, Universal Design Specifications)
 - Required Equipment and Tools
- **Technical Pathway (Non-Physical Accessibility)**
 - Non-Physical Accessibility
 - Sign Language and Its Applications (Practical Example from Saudi Arabia)
 - Global Standards and Their Integration
- **Social Pathway**
 - Raising Awareness of the Guide and Promoting Its Objectives
 - Training for Personnel Working with Persons with Disabilities (Practical Example from Saudi Arabia)

— END —