



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

FOSTERING FACILITATION THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

(Presented by the United Arab Emirates)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Year of Facilitation (FAL2024) highlighted the importance of capacity building that includes training and assistance initiatives, focused on enhancing air transport facilitation compliance, which is in line with the objective of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to enhance capacity building in facilitation globally. The ICAO Facilitation Panel at its 13th Meeting held in Montréal last year, established the Working Group of Facilitation Capacity Building (WGFCB) in order to assist the Secretariat in undertaking its work. The main task of this working group was to elaborate and propose a global strategy on Facilitation capacity building and propose new areas of capacity building, including assistance to Member States.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- promote active participation in capacity building activities to strengthen the competencies of personnel involved in facilitation processes; and
- 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.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	FALP/10-WP/21, <i>Development of a Facilitation Training Programme</i> ICAO FALP/10 Report ICAO FALP/13 Report The Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport adopted on 17 April 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The year 2024 was designated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council as the Year of Facilitation (FAL2024), marking the 75th anniversary of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*. As we all know that Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) on Facilitation were first adopted by the ICAO Council on 25 March 1949 and designated as ‘Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation’ (Chicago Convention, 1944) with the title “Standards and Recommended Practices – Facilitation”. They became effective on 1 September 1949 and became applicable on 1 March 1950.

1.2 In order to ensure the success of FAL2024 ICAO prioritized four activities, namely: “Awareness Creation” (to promote the importance of air transport facilitation); “Milestone Recognition” (to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Annex 9); “Strengthening of Global Collaboration” (to forge stronger ties amongst States and industry stakeholders) and “Capacity Building” that includes training and assistance initiatives focused on enhancing air transport facilitation compliance.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 During the Tenth Meeting of the ICAO Facilitation Panel (FALP/10), held in Montréal from 10 to 13 September 2018, the Member nominated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) presented working paper FALP/10-WP/21, *on Development of a Facilitation Training Programme*. This paper was co-sponsored by Singapore. It discussed the need and importance of appropriate training in the field of Facilitation in Civil Aviation for various agencies and organisations that have a role in implementation of the ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation* SARPs and National Facilitation Programme. FALP was invited to study the need related to the development of the comprehensive training programme and materials in the field of Facilitation and possible establishment of the Working Group on Facilitation Training.

2.2 There was broad support by the FALP/10 Meeting on the proposals to improve training, through the development of guidance materials (particularly The Facilitation Manual) and training programmes in the field of Facilitation. While some Members expressed the view that greater use of seminars (in the absence of formal training) could be organised to assist them in meeting their facilitation objectives, as well as to gain a better understanding of SARPs, some other Members expressed the view that seminars are useful, but greater value can be provided through formal training, that allows for two-way interactions and exchange of views. Some Members felt that the establishment of a training working group was a good idea, but for the future. Hence, the FAL Panel agreed on the approach to address the matter of training in the future.

2.3 In 2020 the ICAO was developing new Facilitation courses for civil aviation and other relevant border control authorities to deal collectively in the implementation of Annex 9 provisions. In order to support this training initiative, the Member nominated by UAE, on invitation from the ICAO Secretariat, successfully participated in the Validation Delivery of the ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation*: Virtual Classroom Course in May 2020.

2.4 The ICAO FALP at its 13th Meeting held in Montréal from 26 February to 1 March 2024, in order to assist the Secretariat in undertaking its work, established the Working Group of Facilitation Capacity Building (WGFCB). The main task of this working group was to elaborate and propose a global strategy on Facilitation capacity building ensuring alignment with ICAO "No Country Left Behind" initiative and propose new areas of capacity building targeting assistance to Member States for effective implementation of Annex 9 provisions. The Member nominated by UAE has been designated to take the leading role in this important group.

2.5 The importance of capacity building and assistance in Facilitation, together with other significant facilitation aspects, was acknowledged by the High-level Ministerial Segment on 17 April 2025, as part of the ICAO Facilitation Conference 2025, held in Doha, Qatar. The Conference adopted the Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport, which provides policy direction on these critical issues. The Ministerial Segment reaffirmed the global commitment to enhancing the facilitation of international air transport through stronger governance, innovation, inclusivity, the protection of passenger rights, and collaboration across sectors to ensure a resilient, efficient and sustainable aviation system.

2.6 The ICAO leading role in improving 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 the establishment of technical specifications, policies, guidance material, capacity building and assistance was acknowledged in the Declaration. Member States, ICAO, international and regional organizations, industry and other stakeholders were urged to work closely to support the value and importance of the 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.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Capacity building in Civil Aviation Facilitation is crucial for ensuring the safe, efficient, and sustainable growth of air travel and in achieving the ICAO Strategic Goal related to seamless, accessible and reliable mobility for all. Developing human resources and providing targeted assistance to Member States for effective implementation of Annex 9 provisions will further support handling increasing air traffic and addressing evolving challenges. Facilitation challenges need to be addressed by enhancing processes related to passengers, crew, aircraft, cargo and mail, and by considering the adoption and integration of innovative technologies. This includes enhancing passenger experience, cargo operations, border security, and overall operational efficiency for a sustainable aviation future.

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