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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO ANNEX 9 — FACILITATION IN CUBA

(Presented by Cuba)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Annex 9 — *Facilitation* is based on 10 articles of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention), which require Member States to comply with laws regulating the inspection of aircraft, cargo and passengers by the authorities dealing with customs, immigration, agriculture and public health, in order to minimize operational delays. As a tool to carry out this mandate, the International Civil Aviation Organization Facilitation Programme and the National Air Transport Facilitation Programme of Cuba are based on the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) set forth in Annex 9, and on national standards related to this activity, forged to achieve maximum efficiency in border clearance operations. Taking into account the resolutions of the 41st Session of the Assembly (September/October 2022), specifically those related to Facilitation, the conclusions and recommendations of the Operational Security Component of the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021) from October 2021, and the outcomes of the Facilitation Conference (FALC 2025). This note reports on the updates and challenges related to the implementation of the SARPs of Annex 9 since the 41st Session of the Assembly and the expected effects for the next triennium for our country.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This information paper relates to Strategic Goals — <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	It has no financial repercussions.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> , 17th edition Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 7 October 2022)</i> Doc 10042, <i>Model National Air Transport Facilitation Programme</i> Doc 9957, <i>The Facilitation Manual</i> , 2nd edition Doc 10160, <i>Report of the High-level Conference on COVID-19</i> (Montréal, 12 to 22 October 2021) Report of the Twelfth Meeting of the Facilitation Panel, 13 to 22 July 2021 Doha Declaration on Facilitation of International Air Transport

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by Cuba.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The strategic objective of Aviation Security and Facilitation reflects the need for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to lead aviation security and air transport facilitation, along with issues related to border security. The Facilitation Programme primarily, and in a coordinated manner, addresses the diverse, yet interrelated, interests of Member States, aircraft and airport operators, and the traveling public, while simultaneously working to achieve a more efficient and orderly air transport.

1.2 In the context of civil aviation, facilitation refers to a wide variety of issues and activities, as well as the development of standards related to the formalities required at international borders for the admission of aircraft, people, and goods.

1.3 At the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly, it was agreed that the priorities related to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* for the triennium 2023–2025 would be divided into four directions:

- a) Development and implementation of facilitation provisions;
- b) National and international measures to ensure the security and integrity of traveler identification and border controls;
- c) Measures and cooperation at national and international levels concerning facilitation issues, and
- d) Data exchange systems regarding passengers.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 **Updates regarding the addresses of Resolution A41-17: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation***

2.1.1 Cuba, a founding member of ICAO, respects and complies with the principles of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the obligations that arise from it, making the greatest efforts and providing the most open collaboration, in support and defense of the interests and integrity of the Organization.

2.1.2 As part of the effective implementation of the recommended standards and methods of Annex 9, Cuba directed strategies to strengthen multisectoral collaboration through the operation of the National Facilitation Committee, a committee established in our country since 26 January 1974, with the aim of maintaining coordination and collaboration among all competent state authorities, which constantly interact for the benefit of eliminating the difficulties that hinder the free and rapid transit of aircraft, their crews, passengers, luggage, cargo and mail through our international airports.

2.1.3 The year 2024 was declared as the Year of Facilitation and, as part of the planned activities convened by ICAO, the Minister of Transportation of Cuba, in his capacity as President of the Committee during the International Transport and Logistics Fair (FITL2024) held in Havana in April, invited the permanent members of this body to hold a panel in which professionals from the sector received an update on progress in the activity. The topics presented covered all border control points, including an overview of the development projects for our international airports.

2.1.4 Among the advancements discussed is the initiative for the implementation of the D'Travelers form, through which some of the documents to be presented by traveling individuals at border controls are digitized, improving and optimizing the flow of passengers as they transit through our country. This advanced information speeds up the procedures at the various entry points. The progress of the implementation of this digital platform is reviewed in the meetings of the Committee to assess its impact and the challenges that arise in its execution. This digital platform was developed by officials and

specialists from the Aeronautical Authority, the Cuban Aviation Corporation S.A, and companies in the electronics industry.

2.1.5 This digital platform has incorporated the digitization of the tourist visa, generating an electronic visa and eliminating the handling of a physical document in addition to traditional travel documents.

2.1.6 In parallel, there has been a constant update of legislation, regulations, and procedures following the update of the Migration Law and the enforcement of the Personal Data Protection Law, which allows for the adaptation of activities to the current legislative framework. Similarly, the amendment of the Decree-Law to the Civil Aviation Law is in the process of review and approval, which allows raising issues such as human trafficking, assistance to victims of civil aviation accidents and their families, as well as the very existence of the National Facilitation Committee and the Airport Facilitation Committees.

2.1.7 As part of the updating procedures for the fast transit of passengers through our airports, regulations related to the importation of non-commercial items and those linked to the country's energy strategy are constantly reviewed.

2.1.8 The National Facilitation Committee is attentive to every change or modification of airport infrastructure, taking into account the increase in operations and the welfare of passengers and workers in general. To achieve this, both permanent and non-permanent members maintain one or more representatives at the convened meetings. Also, as part of this monitoring, the administrators of the international airports report on how they operate and the performance of all competent authorities that may affect passenger stay times and negatively influence the quality of services.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The work of the National Facilitation Committee through the National Facilitation Programme is multisectoral and of high priority for our State. It maintains a close relationship among all members to achieve good results.

3.2 Some of the challenges for the next three-year period are:

- a) Maintain awareness of the need for compliance with Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) by all organizations and entities involved in the Facilitation process;
- b) Further strengthen the culture of facilitation in close relation to the culture of aviation safety, tempered by the current national and international context;
- c) Enhance the national surveillance system for facilitation;
- d) Improve the facilitation policy, legal framework and guidance texts, through the work and coordination of multisectoral groups in this area of facilitation;
- e) Continue updating training programmes related to the Facilitation process and improving existing ones and conduct seminars on the implementation of Facilitation SARPs in the national and international context; and
- f) Implement solutions to problems considering the use of innovative technologies.