



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Agenda Item 26: Economic Development of Air Transport

**ADVANCING LIBERALIZATION IN INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT: QATAR'S
COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT TO ICAO'S STRATEGIC VISION**

(Presented by Qatar)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper outlines the State of Qatar's support for the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) Strategic Plan 2026–2050 and its work in advancing the liberalization of international air transport. It highlights Qatar's role as a proactive advocate for open skies, equitable access, and economic sustainability in civil aviation.

In line with ICAO's Strategic Goals and the “No Country Left Behind” initiative, the working paper emphasizes that the ICAO Strategic Plan, together with the ongoing discussions within the Air Transport Regulation Panel (ATRP) on advancing liberalization, underscores the need for continued efforts and the development of effective support mechanisms are essential to achieving meaningful liberalization that benefits all States, enhances resilience, and delivers long-term connectivity gains.

Action:

Qatar shares ICAO's belief that the objectives of the ICAO's Strategic Plan 2026–2050, underpinned by enabling tools such as the Template Air Services Agreement (TASA), legal modernization, and practical guidance, are essential to achieving meaningful liberalization that benefits all States, enhances resilience, and delivers long-term connectivity gains.

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) reaffirm ICAO's leadership role in advancing the liberalization of international air transport;
- b) urge all ICAO Member States to participate actively in ICAO-led initiatives, surveys, and working groups on air transport liberalization; and
- c) request the ICAO Council and the ICAO Secretariat to continue working on the further liberalization of international air transport through the ATRP and other relevant bodies, particularly to:
 - i. review, update and promote the TASA, including updated definitions, explanatory notes, and practical guidance;
 - ii. expand capacity-building programs related to air transport economic regulation in line with the “No Country Left Behind” initiative;
 - iii. develop further studies on the economic and social benefits of liberalization, including its impact on environmental sustainability and regional development;
 - iv. ensure that ICAO's legal frameworks and instruments remain adaptive to new modes of transport and global challenges,

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal: The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	ICAO Strategic Plan 2026–2050 Report of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Air Transport Regulation Panel (ATRP/18) State letter Ref. 2025/10 Survey on barriers to market access and foreign investment in airlines

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The State of Qatar, a committed International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Member State since 1971, has consistently supported the Organization’s mission to lead international civil aviation as a driver of social and economic development. With a global route network and a modern regulatory framework, Qatar’s efforts and experience demonstrates the benefits of liberalization underpinned by robust safety, security, and sustainability standards.

1.2 These efforts are aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030), which charts the country’s transformation into a diversified and advanced economy capable of sustaining a high standard of living for all its people for generations to come. The QNV 2030 is built upon four pillars: Human Development, Economic Development, Environmental Development, and Social Development; all of which intersect with and support the aviation sector.

1.3 Qatar’s national air transport strategy not only reinforces ICAO’s global vision but also serves as a critical lever for delivering the aspirations of the QNV 2030. The aviation sector in Qatar is central to building a prosperous, connected, and resilient nation, firmly grounded in international engagement and sustainable development.

1.4 That is why, Qatar recognizes the role of liberalization in enhancing connectivity, competition, investment, and consumer welfare. Qatar actively participates in ICAO’s technical bodies, including the Air Transport Regulation Panel (ATRP), and has shared its experience and perspectives to help develop global best practices for international air transport economic regulation.

1.5 Qatar has played an important role in advancing liberal and economically sound air transport policies through active bilateral, regional, and multilateral engagements, and in line with the ICAO Strategic Plan 2026–2050, Qatar believes that further liberalization is necessary to ensure that international air transport continues to contribute to sustainable development globally.

2. SUPPORTING ICAO’S STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2050

2.1 Qatar supports the ICAO’s Strategic Plan 2026–2050, which outlines a forward-looking framework for the sustainable growth of international civil aviation. Central to this vision is the recognition that liberalization of air transport is fundamental to achieving economic and connectivity goals.

2.2 ICAO’s objective to foster a sound and economically viable civil aviation aligns with Qatar’s commitment to ensuring that air transport remains accessible, efficient, and inclusive for all. The

Strategic Plan emphasizes the development of a system based on equal opportunity, meeting the needs of people worldwide for safe, regular, and affordable air transport.

2.3 The “No Country Left Behind” initiative remains central to ICAO’s liberalization agenda, ensuring that all Member States, regardless of their level of development, are equipped to benefit from expanded market access. ICAO’s Strategic Goal for the Economic Development of Air Transport acknowledges liberalization as a driver of economic prosperity and social well-being.

2.4 In a rapidly evolving aviation landscape, ICAO also stresses the importance of updating international air law frameworks to remain responsive to emerging challenges. Legal adaptability is essential to preserve a coherent and equitable liberalization process that reflects global realities.

3. ADVANCING LIBERALIZATION THROUGH ICAO WORKSTREAMS

3.1 The outcomes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Air Transport Regulation Panel (April-2025), particularly the report of the survey on barriers to market access and foreign investment, reaffirmed the relevance of ICAO’s role in facilitating dialogue, identifying capacity gaps, and harmonizing economic regulation terminology.

3.2 The Panel’s recommendation to continue liberalization efforts through the review of the Template Air Services Agreement (TASA) is fully supported. Qatar also endorses the Panel’s view that a one-size-fits-all approach should be avoided, and instead advocates for gradual, flexible liberalization pathways tailored to the specific circumstances of each State. These efforts should be complemented by targeted capacity-building initiatives and technical assistance to ensure inclusive and sustainable progress.

3.3 The ICAO Strategic Plan 2026–2050, together with the ongoing discussions within the ATRP on advancing liberalization, underscores the need for continued efforts and the development of effective support mechanisms to assist States in implementing liberalized air transport policies.

— END —