



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY IN AVIATION

(Presented by International Partners for Aviation Development, Innovation and Sustainability (iPADIS))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper responds to Assembly Resolution A41-15, *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation* and emphasizes that enhancing accessibility to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility is a social and business priority for the international aviation community. It further highlights the three-pillar ‘*Accessible Air Travel for All*’ strategy developed and implemented by iPADIS consisting of (i) *Accessibility Evaluation and Promotion for Air Travel and Tourism (ACCEPT)* programme, (ii) *Model Policy and Guidance on Accessibility (MPGA)* publication and (iii) *Technical and Training Support (TTS)* programme for customized assistance to States and stakeholders.

The paper supports the proposed priorities in A42-WP/15, *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation* and the commitment to ensure that aviation delivers, reliable, accessible and seamless mobility for all as detailed in Appendix E to A42/xx draft Resolution: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*. In this regard, the paper emphasizes the importance of robust coordination among States, industry and civil society stakeholders, engagement with organizations representing the interests of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, as well as the development of standardized training programmes.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the content of this working paper and the iPADIS three-pillar strategy on accessible air travel;
- b) emphasize the importance of robust coordination among States, industry and civil society stakeholders, engagement with organizations representing the interests of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility as well as development of standardized training programmes;
- c) empower all stakeholders to uphold the highest accessibility standards and support the development and deployment of the necessary tools and training and foster local capacity building through its technical assistance programmes; and
- d) adopt the amendment to Paragraph 9 of Appendix E to the A42/xx draft Resolution: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation* of A42-WP/15, as proposed in the Appendix of this paper.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
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<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
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¹ Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by iPADIS.

<i>References:</i>	A42-WP/15, <i>Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation</i> Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of 7 October 2022) Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> , 17th Edition Doc 9984, <i>Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities</i> <i>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States to ensure access to transportation to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with other passengers. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Resolution A41-15: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation* emphasizes the importance of inclusion and accessibility of air transport services. The World Health Organization estimates that 1.3 billion people representing about 16 per cent of the global population currently experience some form of disability. This, coupled with an increasingly ageing population makes enhancing accessibility a pressing social and business priority for the international aviation community.

1.2 ICAO has provided leadership through recent strengthening of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* regulatory requirements relating to accessibility as well as the establishment by the ICAO Facilitation Panel of the Working Group on Accessibility in International Civil Aviation (WGAA) to assist in developing a comprehensive strategy and work programme on accessibility for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility. The International Partners for Aviation Development, Innovation and Sustainability (iPADIS) supports these efforts and is committed to bring to ICAO concerns and proposals by the civil society towards developing an effective and inclusive accessibility strategy.

1.3 iPADIS supports the proposed priorities for the work Programme on Annex 9 and expected outcomes for the 2026–2028 triennium in A42-WP/15, *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation* and the Global Commitment to ensure that aviation delivers, reliable, accessible and seamless mobility for all as detailed in Appendix E to A42/xx draft Resolution: *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation*.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS ENABLER OF ACCESSIBILITY IN AVIATION

2.1 Despite existing guidance on accessibility (Annex 9, Doc 9984, *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*), challenges remain. Variability in regulations, infrastructure gaps, and lack of uniform operating and training standards continue to raise barriers for passengers with disabilities at every stage of the air-travel journey, from booking to disembarkation and up to reaching their destination.

2.2 For its part, iPADIS has developed and implemented a three-pillar ‘*Accessible Air Travel for All*’ strategy based on robust stakeholder engagement, community consultation and curriculum development that includes (i) *Accessibility Evaluation and Promotion for Air Travel and Tourism (ACCEPT)* programme to help regulatory authorities and travel and tourism organizations identify gaps and systemic challenges while supporting the creation of efficient, respectful and inclusive processes for handling persons with disabilities, (ii) a *Model Policy and Guidance on Accessibility (MPGA)* publication, a powerful resource incorporating a unique collection and analysis of international treaties, industry

standards, best practices and community input, and (iii) a *Technical and Training Support (TTS)* programme for customized assistance to States and stakeholders in developing and implementing accessibility initiatives.

2.3 Multi-stakeholder cooperation and proactive civil society engagement is urgently needed to deliver coordinated systems that meet the diverse needs of persons with both visible and non-visible disabilities. While technological developments offer new possibilities for more customised solutions that can be tailored to the needs and wishes of all travellers, mandatory training remains essential to equip personnel with the knowledge, competences and sensitivity throughout the passenger journey.

2.4 Currently, training remains largely voluntary and unevenly applied, because of differences in the legal framework and sustained community engagement, thereby limiting consistency in passenger experience across the regions of the world. Without a standardized curriculum, service providers lack a common performance baseline and passengers cannot expect consistent, dignified treatment across their journey. A training programme certificate endorsed by ICAO, for example, would attest that trainees possess verified proficiency in accessibility best practices, aligning with ICAO Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and the ICAO strategy to emphasize both physical and digital accessibility, blending evolving Standards and technologies.

2.5 iPADIS believes ICAO should translate high level commitments into consistent, measurable action. By endorsing and supporting the co-development of community-driven programmes, ICAO and its Member States will reinforce their dedication to inclusive air transport, capacity building, and sustainable facilitation, realizing the full promise of the accessibility strategy and the Doha Declaration.

APPENDIX

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO A42/XX DRAFT RESOLUTION
IN APPENDIX E OF A42-WP/15**

9. *Urges* Member States and ICAO to prioritize the inclusion and accessibility of air transport services to persons with visible and non-visible disabilities and reduced mobility by ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes, ensuring multi-stakeholder cooperation and civil society engagement, fostering data collection and sharing, and advancing standardized personnel training, among other efforts in order to achieve a disability-inclusive air transport system;

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