



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

STRENGTHENING FACILITATION THROUGH REGULATORY STRUCTURES AND NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS: THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S EXPERIENCE

(Presented by the Dominican Republic and supported by 18 Latin American Civil
Aviation Commission (LACAC) Member States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* remains a challenge for many States, particularly with regard to interagency coordination, the adoption of clear regulatory frameworks and consistent compliance with the standards. This working paper analyses how regulatory frameworks and national governance mechanisms can strengthen air transport facilitation.

The experience of the Dominican Republic and its adoption of a comprehensive approach based on the implementation of a National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP), executive regulations and a technical inspection manual is given here as an example.

Attention is also drawn to the strategic role of the National Facilitation Committee, which has been a key forum for interagency coordination in the effective resolution of operational concerns at airports.

A proposal is made for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to recognize this structure as a study benchmark and explore the possibility of integrating these elements into its guidance material or technical assistance projects.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- recognize the need to strengthen the implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* by means of regulatory instruments and effective national governance structures;
- take note of the experience described as an example of replicable best practice; and
- invite ICAO to consider developing guidelines or technical references to assist States in preparing national facilitation programmes in line with Annex 9.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Any financial implications will depend on action on this matter being approved by ICAO in its 2025–2027 budget.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Resolution A41-17, <i>Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies related to facilitation</i> Doc 9957, <i>The Facilitation Manual</i>

¹ Spanish version provided by the Dominican Republic.

² Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Compliance with Annex 9 — *Facilitation* requires Member States to adopt national rules and procedures to facilitate the transit of aircraft, passengers, cargo and mail. However, effective implementation comes up against common obstacles: absence of mandatory regulatory frameworks, weak interagency coordination and lack of technical tools for inspection and oversight.

1.2 The experience of some States has shown that the existence of a formal national programme, a clear legal basis and a coordinating structure can significantly improve Annex 9 compliance and facilitation outcomes.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 One of the main obstacles faced by ICAO Member States in the implementation of Annex 9 — *Facilitation* is the absence of mechanisms to coordinate the bodies responsible for facilitation, such as immigration, public health, customs, civil aviation and security authorities. In addition, there is a lack of legally binding national regulations to ensure uniform application of facilitation rules and of technical tools for effective oversight.

2.2 In July 2025, Amendment 30 to Annex 9 — *Facilitation* entered into force, introducing important updates in several key areas. These include definitions and general principles, entry and departure of aircraft, persons and baggage, provisions on airport services for transit, and specific measures on passenger name records (PNR), advance passenger information (API), trafficking in persons and health-related provisions. In addition, the health-related content has been reorganized in a new Chapter 10, consolidating elements previously dispersed across other chapters.

2.3 It should be noted that, under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944), Contracting States are required to adopt the standards contained in the Annexes by incorporating them into their national legislation or regulations. In the case of Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Standards 8.13 and 8.14 provide that each State must establish a National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP).

2.4 The basic purpose of the NATFP is to ensure that the movements of aircraft, passengers, crew, cargo and mail within the State's airport system is efficiently managed, that the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 9 are enforced and that effective coordination exists among the agencies responsible for air transport facilitation.

2.5 In this context, it is proposed that States establish a minimum structural framework, comprising four basic components:

- 1) a national facilitation programme (NATFP) that defines public policy and assigns responsibilities;
- 2) national regulations making the programme mandatory;
- 3) an interagency committee to coordinate the work of the various agencies; and
- 4) a technical manual to guide compliance inspection and oversight.

Experience of the Dominican Republic

2.5 The Dominican Republic has developed a robust regulatory structure and a model for interagency coordination in the area of air transport facilitation, in compliance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of ICAO Annex 9. This process has been spearheaded by the National Facilitation Committee, a body attached to the Civil Aviation Board and bringing together all local authorities involved in passenger transport and cross-border control activities, along with the ministers of Tourism and Public Health and Agriculture. The National Facilitation Committee has played a key role as a conflict resolution

and institutional coordination mechanism. It has resolved complex issues not effectively addressed at the Airport Facilitation Committee level, serving as a model of collaborative governance.

2.6 These actions have been coordinated by the National Facilitation Committee, an interagency body attached to the Civil Aviation Board (JAC), that brings together the primary authorities involved in air transport and border control. The Committee has proved to be an effective mechanism for the resolution of operational conflicts and for the harmonious implementation of facilitation measures.

Impact and benefits

2.7 The implementation of this structure has allowed the Dominican State to improve the efficiency of airport procedures, remove unnecessary obstacles and delays, raise the level of compliance with SARPs and enhance the passenger experience. It has also created a more collaborative institutional environment that is aligned with the strategic objectives of security, facilitation and sustainable development of air transport.

2.8 The main benefits observed include:

- 1) greater predictability and fluidity in aircraft and passenger traffic;
- 2) more effective coordination between public and private entities;
- 3) enhanced compliance; and
- 4) continuous improvement based on standardized technical tools.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Dominican Republic's experience demonstrates that the development and implementation of national regulatory instruments, when accompanied by institutional coordination mechanisms, is an effective strategy to strengthen air transport facilitation in accordance with ICAO Annex 9. This structure can serve as a replicable model for other States seeking to meet their international commitments and improve the efficiency and quality of their airport procedures.

3.2 It is recommended that ICAO recognize this experience as a good practice and integrate these elements into future guidance material or technical assistance projects. In addition, States are encouraged to consider adopting a similar structure, adapted to their national situation, to move forward in a sustainable manner in the implementation of facilitation standards.

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