



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 24: Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Priority Initiatives

ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF CIVIL AVIATION ACCIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

(Presented by Morocco)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective support for victims of an aviation accident and their families must be timely and seamlessly coordinated. This support encompasses material, psychological, and logistical assistance, along with clear and confidential communication. Its effectiveness depends on close collaboration between airlines, aviation authorities, emergency services, judicial bodies, and, when applicable, diplomatic representatives.

A comprehensive and structured emergency response plan is essential to ensure the delivery of these measures. This includes promptly notifying families, consolidating communications through a dedicated information center, offering psychological support, and providing practical solutions for accommodation and transport. It also involves maintaining accurate, empathetic, and consistent messaging—particularly in interactions with the media and the international community.

Actions: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) raise awareness among States about the importance of effective coordination between accident investigation authorities and civil aviation authorities (oversight bodies), with should establish comprehensive assistance framework for victims of civil aviation accidents and their families; and
- b) review and reclassify the provisions of PQ 6.383 related to the establishment of a comprehensive assistance system for victims of civil aviation accidents and their families, so that they are incorporated under the appropriate domain, the aerodromes and ground aids (AGA), instead of their current placement under the accident and incident investigation (AIG) domain in the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme - Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP CMA) programme USOAP CMA checklist.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Goal <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> .
<i>Financial Implications:</i>	None.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Annex 13 — <i>Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation</i> Annex 14 — <i>Aerodromes</i> Checklist Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA)/accident and incident investigation (AIG)

¹ English and French versions provided by Morocco.

Doc 9973, <i>Manual on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families</i> Doc 9998, <i>ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families</i> .

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Assistance to victims of an airplane accident and their families should be prompt, compassionate, and well-coordinated. It includes material, psychological, and logistical support, as well as clear and confidential information. To be effective, this assistance relies on close coordination between airlines, aviation authorities, emergency services, the judiciary, and embassies when foreign nationals are involved.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Within the framework of Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, ICAO assesses the level of States' compliance with international Standards related to investigation management, including aspects related to victim assistance. Although this annex primarily focuses on the technical aspects of the investigation, ICAO also verifies whether specific assistance provisions have been established, such as the existence of a national assistance plan, the designation of a focal point or responsible organization, and the integration of these elements into emergency plans.

2.2 Additionally, Annex 9 — *Facilitation* imposes obligations on States regarding passenger processing and emergency management, with a particular focus on assistance to families, issuance of travel documents, and consular cooperation. These elements are monitored by ICAO under the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP) programme.

2.3 This verification process also relies on Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* concerning aerodromes, which requires airport emergency plans to include concrete measures for victims and their families. Accordingly, through its audits, ICAO ensures the presence of appropriate infrastructure such as dedicated reception areas for relatives, secure communication channels, and effective coordination between airport operators and emergency services.

2.4 In this regard, Protocol Question (PQ) 6.383, which aims to establish a comprehensive assistance system for victims of aviation accidents and their families, is based on both Annex 9 on Facilitation and Annex 14 on airport emergency plans.

2.5 While ICAO Annexes 9 and 14 address the issue of family assistance, this responsibility currently falls under the accident and incident investigation (AIG) domain. However, this assignment actually pertains to oversight authorities. This division creates an inconsistency in the application of mandates. Furthermore, ICAO requires independence between investigation authorities and oversight authorities.

2.6 Although ICAO has a robust regulatory framework through Annexes 9, 13, and 14, and implements monitoring mechanisms such as Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)/USAP, structural inconsistencies remain. The assignment of PQ 6.383 to the AIG domain, while its implementation depends on oversight authorities, results in a misalignment of responsibilities and risks hindering the overall effectiveness of its implementation.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The adoption of this proposal would strengthen coordination between civil aviation accident investigation authorities and oversight authorities, thereby facilitating the creation of a comprehensive assistance system for victims of civil aviation accidents and their families, with a more integrated and responsive crisis management.

3.2 It would also provide an opportunity to reassess and adjust the provisions of PQ 6.383 in order to align them with the requirements of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme - Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP CMA) programme, which are currently assigned to the AIG domain, while considering their reclassification into the more appropriate AGA domain.

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