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INFORMATION PAPER

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**Thirteenth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting
(NACC/DCA/13)**

Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 4 al 7 de agosto de 2025

Agenda Item 7: Air Transport (AT) Regulation and Air Connectivity

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STRENGTHENING CARIBBEAN AIR TRANSPORT: REGIONAL COOPERATION,
MODERNIZATION, AND MARKET PANEL**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This information paper details the methodology to be used in the panel on Strengthening Caribbean Air Transport: Regional Cooperation, Modernization, and Market, as a follow-up to the previous 2024 Air Transport Panel conducted in the NACCDCA/12 meeting.

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| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Economic Development of Air Transport |
| <i>References:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Declaration to promote connectivity through the development and sustainability of air transport in the Pan-American region – Vision 2020-2035Doc 9082 ICAO’s Policies on Charges for Airports and Air NavigationTwelfth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting (NACC/DCA/12) (Placencia, Belize, 9-11 July 2024) |

1. Introduction

1.1 At the Air Transport (AT) Panel held during the NACC/DCA/12 meeting, it was mentioned that enhancing air connectivity and promoting air transport liberalization in the Caribbean required coordinated action across multiple areas. The region’s fragmentation, limited market size, and infrastructure challenges make these goals complex but essential for economic integration, tourism growth, and regional resilience.

2. Considerations for Air Transport Development

2.1 The NACC/DCA/12 AT Panel discussed several solutions toward enhancing air connectivity and promoting air transport liberalization in the Caribbean, that should include:

- a) Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: Implement the Regional Multilateral Air Services Agreement like for example: the CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement. This should allow fifth freedom rights, open skies within the region, and fewer restrictions on capacity, frequency, and designation. Also to harmonize Aviation Policies and Regulations: Align national laws and policies with ICAO's AT Regulation guidelines and promote mutual recognition of certifications, safety oversight, and security programs.
- b) Institutional Cooperation and Regional Integration: To strengthen Regional Organizations, empowering regional bodies like CARICOM, ECCAA, and the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) to support liberalization efforts and regulatory harmonization, while coordinating joint strategies, conduct regulatory reviews, and promote regional air service development.
- c) Infrastructure and Airspace Modernization, investing in Airport Infrastructure and Capacity by modernizing key airports to support increased traffic and inter-island connectivity and focusing on cost-effective solutions for smaller islands, such as shared ground services or remote towers, as well as promoting integration of airspace management and operational efficiencies across the Caribbean Flight Information Regions (FIRs).
- d) Market Stimulation and Airline Sustainability by lowering excessive charges on passengers and airlines (e.g., departure taxes, overflight fees) that discourage intra-regional travel, encouraging Public-Private Partnerships and Airline Alliances and incentivizing New Routes and Air Service Development
- e) Stakeholder Engagement and Advocacy by building political will and public understanding of the economic benefits of liberalization and better connectivity and including Tourism, Trade, and Finance Sectors

2.2 In this regard, advancing air transport liberalization in the Caribbean requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach to unlock the full economic potential of regional connectivity. Given the region's geographic dispersion and the prevalence of small island economies, seamless regulatory alignment, infrastructure modernization, and market access liberalization are essential to facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods.

2.3 Air Service Agreements (ASAs) play a critical enabling role in liberalization in the Caribbean by supporting the safe, efficient, and cost-effective movement of aircraft across multiple States. Given the fragmented geography and closely spaced FIRs in the Caribbean, seamless cooperation in air navigation services is essential to unlock the benefits of liberalized air transport.

2.4 The ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN), launched in 2008, provides a centralized, multilateral platform for States to conduct bilateral, regional, or plurilateral air services negotiations and consultations. Held annually, ICAN brings together policymakers, regulators, air operators, and service providers to negotiate air services agreements (ASAs), exchange experiences, and discuss emerging trends in international air transport. For the Caribbean States, ICAN offers a strategic opportunity to advance shared liberalization goals, align regulatory practices, and explore new air service opportunities that enhance regional connectivity. By participating in ICAN, States can streamline negotiations, build consensus on common interests, and accelerate the implementation of liberalized air transport frameworks that support economic integration, tourism, and trade. This year, ICAN will be hosted by the Dominican Republic from 10-14 November 2025 in Punta Cana.

3. Panel Methodology

3.1 The 40-minute panel will follow up on the outcomes of the NACC/DCA/12 meeting to assess progress in the implementation of Air Transport liberalization initiatives and explore practical strategies to enhance regional air connectivity. The discussion will focus on removing regulatory and operational barriers, stimulating market access, and fostering greater alignment among Caribbean States to support a more integrated and competitive air transport market.

3.2 The panel will also highlight the importance of regional cooperation and integration in achieving sustainable connectivity. Strengthening collaboration among States and regional institutions is essential to harmonize policies, pool resources, and coordinate development efforts. In parallel, modernizing aviation infrastructure, particularly at key airports and inter-island hubs, is critical to accommodate future growth and improve service quality. Ensuring market sustainability through supportive regulatory environments, cost-efficiency measures, and incentives for airline viability will be central to unlocking the full economic potential of a liberalized Caribbean air transport system.

3.3 The Panel will be introduced by the Secretariat to set the stage and introduce the moderator and the panelists, who will have a 4-minute initial intervention which can be accompanied by some slides. Some questions are considered to be launched in the panel

3.4 Some topics to be covered by the Panel are:

- a) policy and regulatory reform to enable liberalized and competitive air transport markets
- b) strengthening international and regional cooperation for integrated air transport development
- c) infrastructure modernization to support increased connectivity and operational efficiency
- d) market stimulation and airline sustainability for long-term connectivity