



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

ASSISTANCE TO AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES

(Presented by Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and supported by Ecuador, Uruguay and Colombia, Co-sponsored by Aruba (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico and Nicaragua)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper reports on the implementation of the Protocol/ Plan for Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families. According to the Air Transport Facilitation Plan of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and the relevant provisions in the policies of ICAO, an aircraft accident is an unforeseen catastrophic event that inflicts loss, pain and suffering. The main job of operators in such an event is to offer immediate assistance and quickly attend to the needs of the victims and their families.

The Protocol seeks to harmonize and standardize operator procedures so as to avoid duplication of efforts and overlapping responsibilities in the immediate aftermath of an accident, emphasizing key aspects such as timely notification, rapid recovery and identification of victims, safe-keeping and return of personal effects, commemorative gestures, as well as on-going care for the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of victims and their families and provision for their basic needs at all times.

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) is committed to improving the facilitation system, and specifically to developing the Protocol for Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families as guidance for aircraft and airport operators. The Protocol gives instructions and indicates avenues available for providing assistance, to better prepare all parties involved, facilitate coordination, and describe the scope of involvement, citing legislation, regulations and policies pertaining to aircraft accident victims and their families.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information in this working paper, and;
- b) consider these best practices of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) for possible implementation in other States.

¹ English and Spanish version provided by Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective: <i>Aviation Security and Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 9 – <i>Facilitation</i> • 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> • Bolivian Aviation Regulations RAB 997 and RAB 999

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Air transport facilitation comprises a set of problems and tasks that States must undertake to comply with the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention relating to facilitation.

1.2 Article 22 of the Convention places an obligation on each State to “*adopt all practicable measures, through the issuance of special regulations or otherwise, to facilitate and expedite navigation by aircraft between the territories of contracting States, and to prevent unnecessary delays to aircraft, crew, passengers and cargo, especially in the administration of the laws relating to immigration, quarantine, customs and clearance*”.

1.3 In October 1998, the 32nd Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) examined the matter of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, and found that ICAO policy should require the Organization and its contracting States to consider and care for their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. As the outcome of those discussions, Assembly Resolution A32-7:

- calls on contracting States to reaffirm their commitment to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members;
- urges contracting States, in cooperation with ICAO and other States, to promptly review, develop and implement regulations and programmes to provide such support, and;
- urges the Council to develop material citing the need for the establishment of regulations and programmes by contracting States and their air carriers to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members.

1.4 Moreover, the *Manual on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* (Doc 9973) guidance to States in achieving objectives such as *reaffirming the commitment to provide timely and appropriate assistance to the victims of civil aviation accidents and their families, improve procedures and coordination among parties involved in an air accident, and strengthen compliance with Annex 9*.

1.5 As a national imperative, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) has developed and is implementing the Protocol/ Plan for Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families, approved by the Bolivian Aviation Authority, in order to comply with the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) as well as the Bolivian Facilitation Regulations as regards basic training approved by the Civil Aviation Administration (CAA).

1.6 This draft version is presented as a basis for a possible reference document for member States.

2. MEASURES ADOPTED

2.1 ICAO has designated 20 February as the International Day Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families as a way to honour victims and highlight the importance of assistance to families.

2.2 Respect for accident victims, and the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of their families are of the utmost importance to ICAO. To rise to this challenge, States must act to coordinate and standardize procedures among aircraft and airport operators and institutions involved in providing victim and family assistance. This takes teamwork.

2.3 Accordingly, the Directorate General for Civil Aviation, together with domestic and international aircraft operators and airport operators, has adopted a set of measures based on ICAO Annex 9 Standards, leading to the development of the Protocol/ Plan for Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families for air and airport operators. The Protocol ensures that procedures will be properly implemented and timely assistance extended in the event of an accident, in particular the sharing of information and coordination of support for victims and family members.

2.4 The Protocol/ Plan for Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families is applicable to all national and foreign operators providing air transport services, airport operators and border control agencies.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The SAM Regional A41 Preparatory Meeting recommends that the 41st Assembly of ICAO (Montreal, Canada, 27 September 2022 – 14 October 2022):

- a) take note of the information in this working paper, and;
- b) consider these best practices of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) for possible implementation in other States.

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