



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN AVIATION

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper highlights the importance of social responsibility issues such as gender equality; youth empowerment; worker's welfare; humanitarian assistance; biodiversity and wildlife protection; inclusion, accessibility and mobility to persons with disabilities and an aging population etc. to the long-term sustainability of air transport. It encourages the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to give more visibility to these issues and implement a more effective platform for consultation and collaboration with civil society organizations consistent with the United Nations (UN) principles and processes.

The paper further reiterates that enhancing accessibility is both a matter of social importance and an economic imperative for international air transport. It emphasizes the importance of enabling infrastructure, harmonised accessibility regulations, procedures and best practices as well as collaboration among ICAO member States, aviation and civil society stakeholders and communities representing persons with disabilities. It requests ICAO to take the lead in promoting a culture of inclusion and awareness of accessibility challenges in international air transport.

The Assembly is invited to take into account the recommendations in paragraph 3 of the paper.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective: <i>Security and Facilitation</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ICAO Annex 9 – <i>Facilitation</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aviation is a key driver of global trade and tourism and a major direct and indirect contributor to nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Continuing access to the socio-economic benefits of aviation is important to all the nations and peoples of the world. However, the long-term sustainability of air transport like any other sector depends on its ability to continually meet its social responsibility to the society.

1.2 In addition to the existential challenges of environmental sustainability and climate change, civil society desires an air transport industry that offers robust protection for the rights of consumers of its services, promotes gender equality, youth empowerment, worker's welfare, humanitarian assistance, biodiversity, wildlife protection, inclusion, accessibility and mobility to persons with disabilities and an aging population. In this regard, financial profitability cannot be the only measure of corporate success. Obviously, the youth of today and of future generations will reward those companies that add net value to society.

1.3 The United Nations (UN) rightly accords a lot of importance to social responsibility issues and collaborates actively with civil society organisations (CSOs) and stakeholders. Enhancing social responsibility in Aviation is one of the strategic objectives of iPADIS and like other CSOs we support and promote the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

1.4 Accordingly, iPADIS encourages ICAO and its member States to demonstrate leadership and give more visibility to issues of social responsibility in international civil aviation. ICAO should implement an effective platform for consultation and collaboration with civil society organizations consistent with the UN principles and processes.

2. ACCESSIBILITY IN CIVIL AVIATION

2.1 Persons with disabilities face significant challenges due to poor culture of inclusion and lack of awareness in many countries and societies. They face significant barriers to mobility including in Air travel due to lack of enabling infrastructure, and harmonised accessibility regulations, procedures and best practices. It is therefore time for the civil aviation sector to take bold steps and lead.

2.2 It is important to note that persons with various forms of disabilities constitute over 15% of world population and the aged population is increasing globally. These significant segments of the society constitute a growing market of air travellers. Accordingly enhancing accessibility is both a matter of social importance and an economic imperative for international air transport.

2.3 Accessibility is one area where iPADIS has done significant work in collaboration with organisations representing the disabled communities. iPADIS will be pleased to collaborate and share experience with ICAO and other aviation stakeholders. iPADIS supports the recommendations in A41- WP/079 presented by Czechia and others relating to persons with disabilities and urges the Assembly to adopt the proposed draft resolution. This would be consistent with States commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 ICAO should give more visibility to issues of social responsibility in international civil aviation and implement an effective platform for consultation and collaboration with civil society organizations consistent with the UN principles and processes.

3.2 ICAO should lead collaboration among member States, aviation and civil society stakeholders and communities representing persons with disabilities to promote a culture of inclusion and awareness of accessibility challenges in air transport and facilitate enabling infrastructure and harmonised accessibility regulations, procedures and best practices.