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ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Item 13: Facilitation Programmes

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN BRAZIL CIVIL AVIATION

(Presented by Brazil)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Air transport plays a vital role in social development, and thus accessibility has gained more expression worldwide. Given the experience gained during the Paralympic Games in 2016, Brazil has been taking further actions in order to improve accessibility at the Brazilian airports, aimed not only at reducing physical barriers, but also improving operational management. Therefore, an important partnership with a renowned national university was established with the support of airports, airlines, and organizations in the sector. All this work will result in an Operational Manual containing the best practices to serve as a guide for airports and airlines regarding how to deal with users who require assistance in all their journey.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective — Security and Facilitation
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Disability is part of the human condition and, historically, there is a significant challenge to include persons with disabilities. Despite progress in recent decades in better understanding what disability is and what the rights of persons with disabilities are, there are still numerous barriers that limit their activities and restrict their participation in different environments and life situations. Like any other citizens, persons with disabilities are entitled to have access to services with dignity, including air transport.

1.2 Since they represent an expressive part of the population, it is widely recognized that there are still opportunities for improving accessibility, especially when travelling by air t. It is also important to highlight that human rights policies have been increasingly implemented in order to ensure non-discriminatory care and to meet specific user's needs.

1.3 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in article 9, calls for equal access to transport and "removal of barriers" for persons with disabilities. In the same token, Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention provides for standards and best practices related to accessibility. Actions focused on accessibility in civil aviation have gained more expression in Brazil since the creation of the Subcommittee on Accessibility This group plays a key role in promoting accessibility in Brazil, working to overcome the challenges that undermine reliability, safety, comfort, and ease of access to air transport for persons with disabilities.

1.4 However, some of the persistent and emerging barriers that hinder the usability of air transport by persons with disabilities are anchored in cross-cutting aspects of civil aviation, such as the complex and integrated nature of the global and national air transport network, differences in aircraft design, the rapid pace of change in the provision of air services, and the fragmentation of the system, policies, and practices along regional and national lines.

1.5 It is essential to highlight that Brazil went through a remarkable process of learning and improving accessibility by hosting the Paralympic Games in 2016. Although the country has already hosted other major events, such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games represented the major challenge in the sector, especially considering the number of paralympic athletes that required assistance in the same flight.

1.6 It is also important to highlight the impacts that COVID-19 brought, especially to those passengers in need of assistance. The sanitary measures put in place to prevent contamination imposed additional challenges to provide support for those who needed assistance.

2. ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL

2.1 Given all this learning process, the Brazilian Government took further steps towards improving accessibility at the Brazilian airports, not only related to issues of physical barriers, but also highlighting the operational management side.

2.2 In this direction, the Subcommittee on Accessibility has defined as a priority to study and conduct a project to improve the Brazilian Civil Aviation Accessibility. The main purpose of this initiative is to develop research about the best practices considering the accessibility in the Brazilian national and international airports.

2.3 Considering this scenario, the Brazilian Government has established an important partnership with a renowned national university, with the support of airports, airlines, and organizations in

the sector. All this work will result in a Brazilian Operational Manual containing the best practices to serve as a guide for airports and airlines on how to deal with users in need of assistance. They have been developing a broad study whose main objectives are:

- Understanding the main obstacles to the access of passengers with disabilities at the Brazilian airports.
- Developing a manual with criteria, guidelines and best practices for accessibility in the context of national civil aviation.
- Developing a methodology for assessing accessibility at airports/flights and verifying the adoption and implementation of best practices.
- Developing support material for training airlines and airport operators.

2.4 The study consists of 5 phases, namely:

- Phase 1 – Exploratory: Reviewing previous studies, identifying good practices in accessibility in air transport and defining appropriate methodologies for the following phases of the project.
- Phase 2 – Diagnosis: Deepening the results obtained in phase 1 and evaluating the reality of the Brazilian civil aviation and the feasibility of implementing the good practices identified.
- Phase 3 – Prognosis: Articulating the current stage of accessibility in the Brazilian civil aviation with the desired future state in the sector.
- Phase 4 – Dissemination: Circulating the results of the previous phases from a web platform in the civil aviation sector.
- Phase 5 – Evaluation: Assessing the level of adherence of airlines and airport operators to the National Civil Aviation Accessibility Policy and evaluating the methodologies developed.

2.5 The main products are:

- Pictograms: visual identity, using as references technical standards of accessibility and signage and examples of visual identity found in national and international airports.
- Training: guidelines to deal with these processes, in order to ensure the quality of care, investing in the qualification of the support personnel in the various stages of the flight, supporting educational actions in the improvement of the service provided to these passengers.
- Accessibility platform: consolidation of the knowledge, supporting training material for air and airport operators.
- Accessibility Seal: Quality Assessment Model for airlines and airports for assessing the level of adhesion to the guidelines and policies. It is expected that those involved in the process will work to obtain those seals, increasing their position in the ranking, therefore generating competition and improvements for everyone involved.

2.6 All this work will result in a Brazilian Operational Manual containing the best practices on how to deal with users who need assistance in all their steps, reinforcing the importance of promoting accessibility in civil aviation, and ensuring the rights of all people to make their trips safely and with autonomy. In this regard, the document presents methods, procedures and tools that identify factors that create difficulties and facilitate factors for persons with disabilities during the travel journey. The goal of the document is to support users, airport, and aeronauts to understand, learn and meet the needs of persons with disabilities during all stages of travel.

3. **MANUAL - STRUCTURE AND CONTENT**

3.1 As for the format and content of the manual, Chapter 2 presents the concepts of Disability, Reduced Mobility and Accessibility.

3.2 Chapter 3 presents the complicating and facilitating factors in air travel from the perspective of persons with disabilities and air passengers and flight attendants. This research identified difficulties of passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility in their experiences in air transport, and also flight attendants in the work of serving these customers. Recognizing such difficulties becomes important to identify, for example, training needs, changes at the airport infrastructure, as well as aspects related to management, such as increasing the number of air transport, improving the communication process, among others. It is also important to identify facilitators, as they can guide the decision-making process for implementing changes, for example, in serving these passengers.

3.3 Chapter 4 dedicates to existing accessibility practices in air transport, practices relating to the infrastructure aspects of airports and airlines, and the attitudinal aspects. They seek to provide conditions for spatial orientation, interpersonal communication, displacement and use of spaces, furniture, equipment, buildings, and transport.

3.4 In addition, a visual identity work was developed to propose a communication strategy to map accessibility facilities at the airport, to guide passengers at key points of the airport, to mediate interpersonal communication between passengers and attendants, to anticipate information to passengers in the planning of the trip, and to define visual communication to facilitate the understanding of the concepts, structure and applicability of the products of this project.

3.5 Chapter 5 presents an essential part of the management program concerning training. In the context of air transport, training is necessary to ensure the quality of care for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility, investing in the qualification of support personnel present in the various stages of the flight. The training, development and education processes guide managers, coordinators, and personnel management professionals, supporting educational actions in improving the service provided to these passengers.

3.6 Finally, in Chapter 6, the manual assesses accessibility in air transport. The approach adopted was the creation of performance indicators associated with the structures and processes of airports and airlines. It was necessary to understand the distinct functions of each participant in the chain of services aimed at the care of passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility, considering the aspects of spatial orientation, communication, displacement, and use, integrating users, operators, and airlines in the travel cycle.

3.7 Two instruments have been developed that should be applied by airport operators, airlines and outsourced companies that assist passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. The Instrument Assessment of Spatial Accessibility in Civil Aviation aims to evaluate accessibility in airports from the

experiences of these passengers, considering the related standards in force. The Questionnaire of Accessibility Management Indicators aims to evaluate the management and performance of the airport operation concerning accessibility and care to people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

4. **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The Civil Aviation Best Practices Manual will support Brazilian airports in improving access to air transport, minimizing obstacles for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility. The Project reinforces accessibility in civil aviation, ensuring everyone's right to travel safely and independently. Thus, it presents methods, procedures and instruments that identify the factors that create difficulties and act as facilitators for people with disabilities during the travel cycle. The goal is to support users, airlines and airport operators to understand, learn and meet the needs of persons with disabilities during all stages of travel.

4.2 The States, through public policies, can promote and develop the sector, helping consolidate air transport as an essential instrument for the objective of national integration. Air transport should thus be seen as a vector for the integration of inaccessible regions, enabling the displacement of all citizens, and even promoting support to those who need assistance when using this modal.

4.3 Finally, this Information Document aims at giving extensive knowledge of the work being developed by Brazil.

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