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INDUSTRY  
**SKY**TALKS

# Accelerating accessibility in aviation and architecting an inclusive future for the next 100 years .

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## Narrative and key message breakdown

UAE President declared 2025 as the Year of Community. Dubai and the UAE exemplify leadership inspiration, regulatory innovation, and movement mobilization to ensure inclusive and accessible social spheres, aligning with the CRPD, SDGs, NUA, WHO's age-friendly cities framework, UAE Vision 2031, and Dubai's economic and social agenda, D33.

Dubai aims to be the world's most accessible and inclusive destination. Emirates, partnering with the airport, economic, tourism, regulatory, and security authorities, is committed to this mission. The presentation emphasizes Emirates' belief that ICAO's mission, mandate and multilateralism can establish robust policy frameworks for universal accessibility in aviation, travel, and tourism, addressing the evolving global challenge.

We'll discuss architecting a new foundation to build an inclusive future to serve humanity for the next century.

Expected outcomes:

- Conference attendees gain insights into aviation accessibility and compliance complexities, and are inspired by the UAE's "make it happen" philosophy, Dubai's possibilities mindset, and Emirates' progress(-ive approach).
- Ideas and provocations inspire reflection to build an effective legal framework, transform strategies for the next 100 years, and accelerate a global plan to address significant experience gaps in the first decade (2026-35).
- The perspective emphasizes the need for critical intellectual infrastructure and capacity building to address the global accessibility challenge and progressively evolve inclusivity across the industry.



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# Inspiring hope, impacting humanity .

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- Giving the world a bold new vision and architecture
- Accelerating a global plan to address the experience gaps
- Investing and weaving accessibility into the fabric of civil aviation
- Inviting commitments and delivering actionable strategies and initiatives

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# Emirates perspective

01



## VISION, DETERMINATION, ACTION

- UAE leadership role in rapid, transformative shift
- Dubai's ambition and model for accessible, inclusive destination
- Emirates' progressive approach, journey and progress (so far)

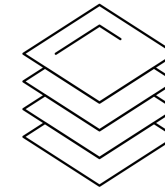
02



## ACCESSIBILITY TODAY

- Current state of accessibility
- Barriers and opportunities

03



## THE FUTURE

- How we architect the next 100
- How we accelerate the next 10





Going beyond identifiable needs  
and more for what they are yet to experience .

## Vision, Determination, Action

**Emirati culture values inclusion. It is a shared mission in the UAE. Leadership drives rapid transformation by mobilizing citizens, communities, civic societies, and corporations to translate laws and policies into actionable strategies and initiatives.**

**Societal impact:** Rapid, transformative shift

- Nation Brand: The next 50 years and “make it happen” philosophy
- UAE Vision 2031: An inclusive and cohesive society
- Dubai D33: Be the world’s best city for living and visiting

**Aviation impact:** a model accessible-inclusive hub and destination

- Inaugural industry symposium to advance dialogue
- Annual dialogue -Dubai Accessible Travel and Tourism Conference
- Global games/events (SOWG, WPAC, Expo, AccessAbilities Expo)
- Hidden disabilities -Autism Certified- airline, airport, and city!





How far has the world moved,  
how far do we need to move the world .



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## Accessibility today, 25+ years of reform & dev.

**Aviation accessibility regulation is complex and doesn't serve its intended audience. Fundamental experience gaps remain!**

### Current state of accessibility

- ICAO Annex 9, Doc 9984, A41-15, LTSP 2026-50
- Compliance complexities, sometimes conflicting (*example: separate accessibility and safety policy agendas and regulatory frameworks*)
- Experience gaps persist and grow

### Barriers persist but opportunities remain to do better, and more

- Structure: legal framework, global standard, regulatory innovation, investments
- Infrastructure: airport design, cabin design, digital design (+IFE)
- Culture: mindset, language, information, signage, awareness

## Example experience gaps

### Information, guidance gap

the struggle to find reliable, trusted information or access to expert guidance

### Autonomy gap

the inability to travel independently and the need for assistance to navigate barriers

### Travel time gap

the additional time needed for planning journeys including extra waiting, delays or slowdown

### Comfort, consistency gap

the constant need to familiarize with products, transport services, spaces, equipment, and facilities

Regulatory sandbox needed to shift from prescriptions and solve for **principles** (Emirates examples)



**Emirates Cube Concept**

## Respect and dignity

Emirates disability- and age-inclusive language and interaction guide

INCLUSION

## Understand hidden disabilities

Autism-Certified Airline, Airport, and Destination

FACILITATION

## Train for safe handling of wheelchairs



***Aim: Mobility devices shall never be damaged during air transportation.***

PURPOSE/  
INNOVATION

## Right to information

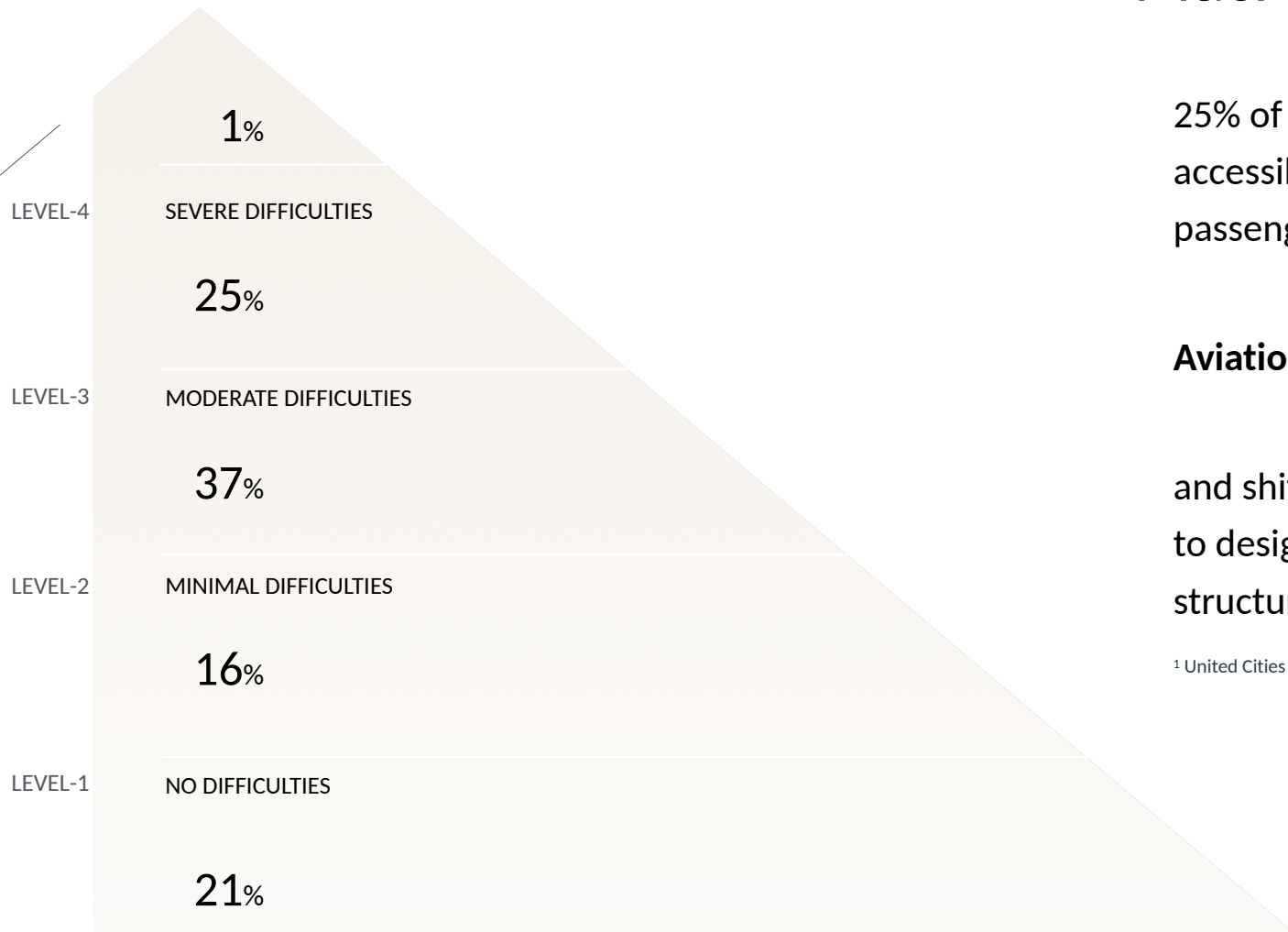
LLM for accessible travel and tourism information

TRANSFORMATION



How we'll serve humanity for the next century .





Source: 'Population Pyramid' from University of Cambridge, Engineering Design Centre, Inclusive Design Toolkit to represent appropriate design response to diversity - reproduced from Hosking et al (2010)

## Macro socio-economics

25% of the global population<sup>1</sup> can benefit from accessibility and inclusive design. By 2050, 4 billion<sup>2</sup> passengers with accessibility requirements will travel.

### Aviation Accessibility needs an architectural foundation

and shift the focus from [wheelchair] 'assistance' model, to design for human diversity and dignity across structural, infrastructural, and cultural pillars.

<sup>1</sup> United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), <sup>2</sup> Emirates view based on ICAO 2026-50 projections

## 3 main arguments and required interventions

Aviation primarily focused on the  
'assistance' model and regulatory  
**prescriptions**

Un-intended structural,  
infrastructural, cultural barriers  
entering the **ecosystem**

Significant and fundamental  
experience gaps remain to solve for  
**principles**

Codification of essential elements and  
introducing of a general aviation  
accessibility regulation (+ reg. refresh)

Ref: UAE2031, D33

Facilitation of regulatory learning and  
innovating for an architectural  
foundation to inform design standard

Ref: UAE RegLab/Dubai Futures

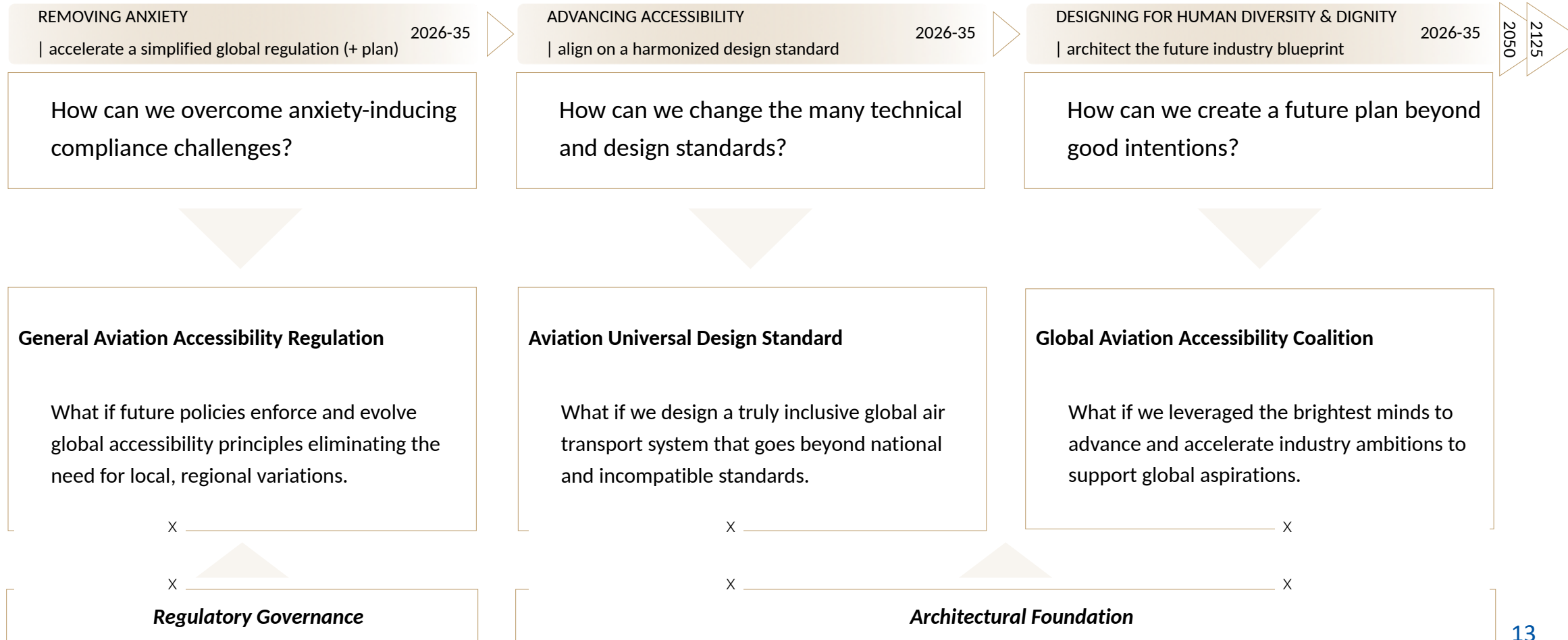
Creative coalition to serve human  
diversity and dignity and to advance  
inclusivity across aviation

Ref: Emirates/Dubai principles



# The future: Architecting the next 100, accelerating the next 10

## 3 missions!





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Emirates presentation: Accelerating accessibility in aviation and architecting an inclusive future for the next 100 years.

*ICAO Facilitation Conference, Doha -Apr2025, Agenda item-9 - Accessibility in international civil aviation*

***Audience:** Policy makers, regulators, civic societies and advocacies, aviation leaders, industry associations, airport operators, airlines*

***Relevance:** The presentation aligns with ICAO's mandate to promote uniformity in civil aviation regulations, standards, procedures, and organization. It supports ICAO's resolution for accessible and dignified travel for persons with disabilities and older persons, and its long-term strategic plan 2026-50.*