

## PRESS RELEASE

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## RESPONDING TO AVIATION EMERGENCIES

Flying is one of the safest forms of travel, thanks to strict adherence to standardized operating procedures, sound regulatory oversight, extremely high levels of mechanical reliability, and the unremitting efforts of well trained staff. In 2005, over 2 billion passengers flew safely, and the worldwide accident rate fell to its lowest ever level, at one aircraft loss for every 1.3 million flights. Over the past five years, the hull loss rate for AAPA carriers was even better, at 0.36 per million flights, or one accident for every 2.8 million flights, in line with the performance of other major airlines based in North America and Europe.

Every accident is, of course, one too many, but we must always be prepared for such emergencies, however infrequent. The 2<sup>nd</sup> AAPA Aviation Emergency Response Conference being held 20-21 September 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand is organised by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) and co-hosted by Thai Airways International. The conference brings together over 160 professionals drawn from the aviation industry and other sectors, to share and exchange ideas and information on effective responses to aviation emergencies. The emphasis of the conference is on working together, reaffirming the industry's commitment to good teamwork as the key to effective crisis management.

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Apart from aircraft accidents, aviation emergency response planning has been widening its scope to cover a range of other operational emergencies that may affect the travel and tourism industry. These could include natural disasters, health-related crises, or unusual security alerts, all of which can have a major disruptive impact on airline operations. In all such cases, various crisis management and contingency planning skills can be applied to both prepare for and manage such emergencies.

AAPA believes in working closely together with other stakeholders including government organizations such as public health agencies, security agencies and emergency services, as well as travel and tourism industry partners. Strong relationships and good communications channels need to be built long before any crisis hits.

The conference was officially opened by guest of honour, Mr. Pridi Boonsue, Vice President, Alliance Department of Thai Airways International. In his welcoming remarks, Khun Pridi said:

"It is a pleasure to welcome all participants to Thailand and to thank everyone for their valuable contributions to this important event. This is a rare opportunity to learn from each other and apply best practices in emergency response planning. The timing of the conference also coincides with an important milestone in the long history of the successful development of aviation in Thailand with the forthcoming opening of the new Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport, which will further strengthen our position as a major tourist destination and regional aviation hub. We look forward to an engaging and successful conference."

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In his introductory remarks, the Director General of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines, Mr Andrew Herdman, said:

“The airline industry has repeatedly demonstrated exceptional resilience in the face of major crises, thanks to effective contingency planning and a good track record of everyone in the industry pulling together when an emergency occurs.”

Mr. Herdman also added that:

“AAPA member airlines play a very significant role in global aviation, accounting for one-fifth of global passenger traffic and one-third of global cargo traffic. Sharing experiences, and strengthening our links with partner organisations, are the key to ensuring that we remain vigilant and well prepared for any future emergency. This is reflected in the theme for this year’s conference: “Meeting New Challenges: Moving Beyond Compliance to Best Practices”.

### **Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)**

The AAPA is the trade association of 17 scheduled international airlines based in the Asia-Pacific region. The AAPA permanent secretariat is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with international representation in Brussels and Washington, D.C. Collectively, AAPA member airlines carry 270 million passengers and 10 million tonnes of cargo representing approximately one-fifth of global passenger traffic and one-third of global air cargo traffic respectively, and thus play a critically important role in the ongoing development of global aviation.

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