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SARS – Asia Pacific Carriers Urge Coordinated Precautionary Measures

The member airlines of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines today urged governments, health authorities and airports to work together to develop a comprehensive plan of action to deal with any fresh outbreak of SARS.

The Director General of the AAPA, Richard Stirland said:

“The most important fact to establish at the outset is that to date SARS has not returned, but if it does, the situation is very different to that which prevailed the last time.”

“The health authorities are vastly more knowledgeable about cause, contagion and prevention. They are ready to act immediately at the first sign of infection. That is tremendously reassuring for the traveling public and the airlines.”

“The second fundamental difference is that all our member airlines have contingency plans, and know precisely what steps need to be taken in the event of an outbreak.”

Royal Brunei Airlines, EVA Airways, China Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Japan Airlines, Dragonair, Korean Air, Malaysia Airlines, All Nippon Airways, Air New Zealand, Asiana Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Qantas Airways, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways International, Vietnam Airlines.

PRESS RELEASE

The Director General continued:

“Having said that, there will always remain room for improvement and the areas where we see this is the information flow from the health authorities to airlines, hotels and others dealing with the public, secondly a comprehensive plan for standard, coordinated methods of checking passengers at airports; and thirdly a commitment by governments to avoid hasty and arbitrary measures of quarantine and containment, which in retrospect, last time proved unnecessary and counter productive.”

He added:

“We are working with IATA, PATA, the WHO, ICAO and Airports Council International on all these issues. A lot has already been done, but we need to consider every angle. The AAPA and its member airlines are totally committed to ensuring the safety of travel should, and I emphasize should, another outbreak occur.”

Note: The AAPA has recently been awarded a Travel Industry Award by a major travel publication for its work earlier this year in tackling the subject of on-board transmission of SARS and also in pressing for cost concessions to the hard hit airlines.

For further information, please contact:

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