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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2003**  
*- for immediate release -*

AAPA/SARS//BULLETIN 7

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**AAPA STRESSES NEED FOR ACCURACY IN SARS REPORTING**

In a statement issued today, the Director General of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA), Mr Richard Stirland, voiced the widespread concern of the aviation industry about potentially misleading statements on SARS.

“Obviously, in the light of what happened earlier this year, we are sensitive to headlines such as ‘*AIR TRAVEL FUELLED SARS SPREAD*’ or ‘*DURATION OF FLIGHT INCREASES SARS RISK*’,” said Stirland.

He continued :

“Reports which accurately convey the known facts are welcome because we believe the aviation industry has a good story to tell in respect of SARS. Unfortunately, the dictates of brevity and a punchy headline often militate against the complete picture emerging. This needlessly alarms the public”.

“Both these headlines originated in media reports of the publication in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) of a study concerned with transmission of SARS in flight. The AAPA has examined the study in detail and is firmly convinced that it conveys a reassuring message for the travelling public which regrettably is not reflected in these particular headlines or perhaps even in the related news stories,” added Stirland.

The AAPA Director General went on to point out that the study, conducted by an eminent team of doctors and reported in the NEJM, stated that the risk, if any, of in-flight transmission is unknown, but there is almost certainly little or no risk if an infected passenger has no symptoms. He added that the study listed “duration of flight” as only one of five or more possible influences on the risk factor; it was purely speculative.

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.

“The study calls for measures to reduce the risk of in-flight transmission. Those measures have been taken long ago by airlines and airports; the risk has not just been reduced but eliminated as far as humanly possible. News reports should reflect this,” concluded Stirland.

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**About the AAPA**

The AAPA is a grouping of 17 scheduled international airlines based in the Asia-Pacific region. It is the trade association of the region's airlines, created to represent their interests and to provide a forum for all members to exchange information and views on matters of common concern. For more information about the AAPA, please visit the web site at [www.APAirlines.org](http://www.APAirlines.org).

The 17 members comprises Air New Zealand, All Nippon Airways, Asiana Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Airlines, Dragonair, EVA Air, Garuda Indonesia, Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Malaysia Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Qantas Airways, Royal Brunei Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways International and Vietnam Airlines.



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