

PRESS RELEASE

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AAPA Targets Obstacles to Efficient Air Transport Industry Development

Governments and industry must work together to face challenges

Tokyo, Japan – Asia-Pacific carriers have managed to achieve significant growth over the past year, despite intense competition and regulatory policies that often undermine industry development. At a time when carriers could greatly benefit from the removal of unjustified taxation, an uncoordinated patchwork of legislation and unwanted complexity in passenger facilitation, new challenges and uncertainties have emerged in the areas of safety and health pandemics.

Safety remains the industry's highest priority and in the wake of the tragic loss of MH17, AAPA strongly believes in the need for better intelligence sharing in connection with flights over conflict zones. The disappearance of MH370 also highlights the need for improved practices on aircraft tracking. A series of uncoordinated and reactive restrictions introduced by governments in the face of a perceived health pandemic threat from the Ebola virus against the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) have also elicited concern amongst Asian carriers.

New resolutions on these critical issues are being adopted at the conclusion of the 58th Assembly of Presidents in Tokyo today, together with strong and renewed calls on governments to remove the burden of unfair taxation, distorted regional and national environmental schemes, obstacles to passenger facilitation and excessively burdensome visa regimes that constrain the freedom of individual travel.

Mr. Andrew Herdman, AAPA Director General said, "AAPA carriers operate in a highly competitive environment and are experiencing pressure on profitability. Still a lot can be done to improve the regulatory framework for the industry. Unfortunately, some governments still have little regard for the burdens that poorly-conceived policies place on the air transport industry. Unjustified taxes and regulations negatively impact the travelling public by making air travel less affordable. Excessive regulation is also a disincentive to innovation by the airlines."

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On safety, Mr. Herdman commented, “As highlighted by unprecedented aircraft losses this year, the industry always needs to remain vigilant on safety. It is critical to learn from these tragic events, with AAPA determined to see practical improvements in the way in which intelligence about flying over conflict zones is shared by governments with airlines.”

RESOLUTIONS

FLIGHT SAFETY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Airlines and air navigation service providers plan the most appropriate flight routings through international airspace, including operations over conflict zones. Subject to published airspace restrictions, airlines are responsible for deciding where to fly based on comprehensive risk assessments and established safety management systems. The present Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) system remains fit for this purpose, but could benefit from further enhancement.

AAPA urges governments to improve efforts in the sharing of accurate intelligence and information related to flight safety on a global basis and to support the development of an augmented distribution system for the enhanced sharing of conflict zone risk information. The Association also calls on governments to take the necessary actions to identify and bring to justice those accountable for aggressive acts against civil aviation, as well as strengthen international laws and conventions governing the usage of military weapons such as surface-to-air weapons to avoid future attacks on civil aviation.

AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND SURVEILLANCE

Recent events including the unprecedented loss of MH370 have highlighted difficulties in tracking and locating aircraft which have lost contact or are in distress. As a result, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has established a special ad hoc working group on aircraft tracking to review the roles and responsibilities of governments, airlines, air navigation service providers and search and rescue authorities in both routine and non-routine aircraft tracking situations. In support, the air transport industry established an aircraft tracking task force to assess the current state of global aircraft tracking capabilities and recommend further performance based enhancements of appropriate aircraft tracking options.

International civil aviation routinely operates under the direction of ground based air traffic control services throughout all phases of flight, but aircraft operating in oceanic regions and other remote airspace can often be beyond the range of existing surveillance systems, relying on older technologies including periodic position reports made by the flight crew using voice communications. Looking ahead, ICAO has established the Global Air

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Navigation Plan (GANP), that provides guidance on further capacity and capability enhancements to global air navigation, which will be progressively implemented over the next 15 years.

AAPA urges governments to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to strengthen and periodically test established procedures to respond effectively to aircraft lost or in distress. The Association further urges aerospace manufacturers to develop improved location and data retrieval systems to expedite the recovery of flight data for accident investigations. It also urges governments to review and where appropriate accelerate implementation and deployment of new capabilities envisaged in the ICAO GANP.

HEALTH PANDEMICS

In response to the recent Ebola virus outbreak, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended that there should be no general ban on international travel or trade, as this could cause unnecessary disruption and economic hardship. Contrary to WHO recommendations to focus on containing the disease at source, several countries have nevertheless imposed measures, such as flight bans and the introduction of more onerous visa requirements or restrictions of visa applications by nationals from Ebola-affected countries.

AAPA calls on governments and health authorities to collaborate and coordinate with WHO and other governments in managing the potential impact of health pandemics by focusing collective efforts and resources on fighting the spread of such diseases at source and by properly informing and educating the general public. The Association also calls on governments and health authorities to coordinate contingency planning measures, whilst avoiding measures that would have disproportionate collateral impact when compared to the actual risk level. In addition, governments are urged to seriously consider the implications when issuing travel advisories and avoid adopting measures which have the potential to cause needless disruption to normal economic and social activities.

UNFAIR TAXATION

Airlines and the travelling public today already bear the burden of numerous taxes and charges imposed by governments, as well as those by monopolistic service providers and other agencies. Despite past exhortations, there has been a proliferation of taxes in many countries on air passengers, several of which can be categorised as taxes on the sale or use of international air transport in contravention of ICAO policies on taxation.

AAPA renews the call on governments to carefully consider the overall economic effects of putting further financial strain on the travelling public and the aviation industry and to refrain

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from increasing the burden of aviation levies in any form. The Association calls on governments to adhere to ICAO policies on taxation and ensure such recommendations are followed by all relevant taxation authorities, as well as to avoid imposing unjustified or discriminatory taxes on international aviation that impede mobility and damage global tourism and trade.

ENVIRONMENT

ICAO is recognised as the most appropriate UN forum for governments to work together and achieve a consensus on an effective multilateral agreement on a global approach to aviation and the environment. As such, governments meeting at ICAO's 38th Assembly reaffirmed collective aspirational goals and agreed on a comprehensive strategy to progress all elements of the basket of measures: technology, operations, infrastructure and alternative fuels. The air transport industry has also demonstrated its commitment to addressing climate change through a resolution on "Implementation of the Aviation Carbon Neutral Growth Strategy" passed at the 69th IATA Annual General Meeting in 2013.

AAPA urges governments to continue to work in partnership with the air transport industry to develop and implement environmental measures that support sustainable economic growth. The Association also renews the call to build on the ICAO 38th Assembly consensus and work together to develop a global market based measure for aviation for adoption in 2016 and implementation in 2020. Such a scheme will need to be implemented in a way that is fair and equitable, avoids competitive market distortion, and reconciles the differing interests and perspectives of developed and developing nations.

PASSENGER FACILITATION

Government agencies, including immigration, customs and health departments play a key role in all countries in facilitating the smooth flow of both air passengers and cargo. The development by ICAO of common standards for passenger data, including machine readable travel documents, has helped expedite the facilitation of international passengers and crew members through border controls. Cooperative efforts are being made by the aviation industry and other stakeholders to use new technologies, including biometrics and other machine readable data, to enhance the travel experience and streamline passenger processing. Even with the comprehensive personal information of both crew and passengers transmitted to governments well ahead of travel, airline crews and air travellers continue to be faced with lengthy border processing times on arrival in airports. Several governments have introduced more onerous visa and quasi-visa requirements for passengers, as well as the imposition of additional fees or taxes.

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AAPA calls on government agencies to consult widely with the aviation industry in order to maintain a proper balance between national border control objectives and the need for efficient passenger facilitation. Governments need to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated towards both inbound and outbound crew and passenger processing at border controls, taking into account the growth in passenger numbers over time. In addition, governments are encouraged to extend visa-waiver arrangements, whilst refraining from introducing or increasing visa-related fees, thereby boosting the important contribution of travel and tourism to the wider economy.

ENDS

Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)

The AAPA is the trade association for 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, the region's airlines carry 1,012 million passengers and 19 million tonnes of cargo, representing one-third of global passenger traffic and two-fifths of global air cargo traffic respectively, and thus play a critically important role in the ongoing development of global aviation.

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