

PRESS RELEASE

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AAPA 63rd Assembly of Presidents / Resolutions

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AAPA Steadfast in Supporting Carriers Facing Tough Market Conditions

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Asia Pacific carriers have developed an outstanding reputation for effectively and flexibly responding to challenges over many decades and as a result, remain at the forefront of the global air transport industry today. The industry is now entering a challenging phase, with strategic development and profitability being threatened by a slowing global economy, political uncertainties and a multiplicity of operational constraints.

Set against this demanding backdrop, leaders of AAPA member carriers gathered at the 63rd AAPA Assembly of Presidents meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 22 November 2019 focused on a number of important issues seen as obstacles to industry development in the Asia Pacific region and around the world. In particular, the Assembly passed resolutions on Environment, Cybersecurity, Infrastructure, Slots, Passenger Facilitation and Taxation.

“The emergence of Asia as a powerhouse driving the global economy during the 21st century naturally creates a sense of optimism for the region’s dynamic air transport industry in the long term,” said Andrew Herdman, AAPA Director General. “However, success cannot be automatically assured without robust efforts to support carriers, who continue to face an ever increasing number of challenges to achieving strategic development and growth. Given the significant contribution that air transport makes towards wider economic and social development, governments need to adopt a much more positive attitude towards the industry, and work meaningfully towards removing obstacles that hinder the sustainable growth of the industry.”

continued /-

25 November 2019
Issue 2019: 16

RESOLUTIONS

Aviation Infrastructure

With air travel demand projected to more than double over the next two decades, and the Asia Pacific region expanding at an even faster rate, there is a clear need for airport and air traffic management (ATM) infrastructure development to keep pace with such demand. Airspace modernization is a global challenge, and improving the capacity and efficiency of international ATM infrastructure and services requires a long term strategy supported by appropriate commitment, funding, planning and resources. The failure to fully address this issue will result in increasing congestion and flight delays with adverse consequences for the travelling public and the wider economy.

AAPA calls upon Asian governments and all industry stakeholders to work more closely together to deliver effective ATM services to meet present and future operational requirements; and to collaborate beyond national borders and commit to the development and implementation of enhanced Asia Pacific air traffic flow management systems.

Environment

With anxieties about the impact of climate change gaining increasing momentum around the world this year, AAPA is calling on governments and industry stakeholders to collaborate more closely in collective efforts to address aviation's climate impact and promote sustainable aviation. The Association sees it as being critical to ensure the integrity of the ICAO CORSIA scheme and avoid the duplication of requirements being placed upon international aviation CO₂ emissions. The ICAO CORSIA scheme agreed in 2016 is now being implemented worldwide, with full emissions reporting by all international carriers having begun in January this year.

AAPA calls on governments and operators to work together towards the effective implementation of CORSIA in a way that is fair and equitable, avoids competitive market distortion, and recognizes the interests of developed and developing nations. AAPA also calls on governments to refrain from applying duplicative requirements on international aviation CO₂ emissions.

continued /-

25 October 2019
Issue 2019: 16

Cybersecurity

The civil aviation sector is increasingly reliant on complex information and communications technology systems, as well as on maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of data. Today, cybersecurity threats to civil aviation are continuously evolving, whether targeting operational safety, business disruption or the theft of information for other motivations. Maintaining safe, secure, and resilient operations is always a top priority for the air transport industry. AAPA strongly believes that strengthening cybersecurity requires governments, industry and other stakeholders to work collaboratively together.

As such, AAPA urges governments, industry and other stakeholders to establish a global and regional approach to cybersecurity built on the basis of trust and transparency, and to work together to enhance cyber threat awareness, promote cybersecurity culture, and strengthen cyber resilience.

Air Travel Accessibility

Air travel is now an essential means of transport with over four billion passengers travelling worldwide by air annually. Airlines are continuously improving their service offerings for all passengers and committed to delivering a seamless travel experience that is safe, reliable and dignified. Nevertheless, the proliferation of different policies or requirements for the facilitation of air passengers with disabilities introduced by many governments, border control agencies and airports has resulted in overlapping and conflicting entitlements resulting in operational complexity and confusion for air passengers.

AAPA calls on governments to work closely with other aviation stakeholders towards a shared long term vision of harmonised international practices on the facilitation of passengers with disabilities, with the aim of achieving a more inclusive air transport system. Additionally, AAPA calls on governments to support ICAO efforts to develop a work programme on improving accessibility for passengers with disabilities, in a safe, secure and dignified manner, using evidence-based approaches that are practical and cost-effective.

25 October 2019
Issue 2019: 16

Slots

An increasing number of capacity constrained airports around the world require a process for allocating airport slots. Although overall slot coordination is generally managed in accordance with well-established global principles, deviations from these standards can adversely affect the efficiency and predictability of air transport operations to the detriment of the travelling public.

AAPA calls on governments and slot coordinators to manage the allocation of slots in an independent, transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner in line with ICAO guidance and established international standards and procedures such as the Worldwide Airport Slots Guidelines, recognising the benefits of a single, globally harmonised approach to slot management involving all stakeholders to optimise the efficiency and predictability of air transport services. In addition, AAPA calls on governments to ensure timely investments in the development of aviation-related infrastructure, including airport runways and terminal capacity, as well as modernising air traffic management systems, to meet the projected growth in demand for air transport, to the benefit of the wider economy.

Taxation

Airlines and the travelling public continue to bear the burden of numerous taxes and charges imposed by governments, as well as monopolistic service providers and other agencies. Recently introduced or increased taxes on air travel include Malaysia's Departure Levy, the New Zealand International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy and the imposition of various levies by different governments such as France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, often under the guise of environmental initiatives. Further, a number of airports are imposing or increasing passenger service charges as pre-funding mechanisms to finance future infrastructure facilities.

At a time when the industry is already having to cope with an increasingly challenging business environment, and recognizing the adverse impact on the wider travel and tourism sector, AAPA renews its call on governments to refrain from increasing the burden of aviation levies in any form on international air travellers.

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continued /-

25 October 2019
Issue 2019: 16

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 1,623 million passengers and 23 million tonnes of cargo, representing over one-third of global passenger and air cargo traffic, and thus play a leading role in the ongoing development of global aviation.

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