

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
COVID-19 / Air Travel Recovery

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Air Travel Recovery Requires International Coordination ***Government and industry collaboration critical for rebuilding confidence***

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Aviation drives economic and social development, as part of a much wider travel and tourism sector, which in turn supports global trade, development and business activity. The early restart of aviation will spur global recovery from the current crisis.

The growing view is that this pandemic will take time to abate, and we must all learn to adapt accordingly. Governments will need airlines to underpin a wider economic recovery, connect manufacturing hubs and support tourism. However, the progress of the pandemic will vary in each country. Accordingly, when travel does resume it may be a slow and sporadic process.

The relaxation of mobility restrictions needs careful consideration, and in the case of international flights will necessarily involve governments working together to develop common standards and re-establish mutual trust.

AAPA Director General, Mr. Subhas Menon, said, “Work must begin on a multilateral basis to develop the necessary protocols to safeguard public health whilst restoring international connectivity including air services.”

Mr. Menon added, “The key to success is close collaboration with the many stakeholders which make up the global air transportation system, including aeronautical authorities, airlines, airports, and other service providers as in-depth knowledge and close integration with established business systems are essential.”

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The air transport industry is actively engaging with governments and international regulatory authorities, including public health and medical experts, to discuss the measures needed to restore public confidence in the safety of air travel, and develop comprehensive plans for safe and orderly resumption of air services.

The recovery will be led by domestic travel, followed by regional and intercontinental services as governments progressively remove restrictions. However, whilst new national health security protocols may be sufficient to restart domestic travel, a separate framework will be needed for international air travel. Cross-border flights can only resume in earnest when governments are ready to lift blanket travel bans and relax other restrictions on international travel.

Part of the response will be to reassure travellers that appropriate measures have been put in place to safeguard their journey and more broadly facilitate cross-border travel. There is a developing consensus on the need to develop a set of measures that are internationally coordinated, coherent and consistently applied across the world.

Various possible measures are currently being discussed, including modifications to inflight procedures where necessary. We need to follow an evidence-based approach incorporating appropriate guidance from medical and public health professionals.

Departure screening measures, in whatever form, are just one part of the precautions to be taken. Other aspects of the journey such as security checkpoints, immigration and other facilities at airports may need to be revised in line with updated recommendations on social distancing and hygiene standards.

These measures are expected to remain in place for a considerable period but would need to be kept under regular review and updated in accordance with expert guidance from public health and medical experts.

AAPA Director General, Mr. Subhas Menon, concluded, "The Asia Pacific aviation community is strongly committed to continuing to work closely with governments, public health authorities, and other international bodies charting a course for a timely and measured restoration of air services."

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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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