

## PRESS RELEASE

Issue 2020: 12

Monday, 11 May 2020  
*For Immediate Release*  
COVID-19 / Restarting Air Travel

**Association of Asia Pacific Airlines**  
(Reg. No. 587)  
Level 27-1, Menara Prestige  
1 Jalan Pinang  
50450 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA  
Tel +603 2162 1888  
Fax +603 2162 6888  
[www.aapairlines.org](http://www.aapairlines.org)

### **AAPA Calls for Standardised Health Measures to Facilitate Air Travel**

*Measures must be Consistent, Pragmatic and Risk Managed*

**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia** – The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected global economic activity, including trade, tourism and employment levels. Indeed, the grounding of flights and drastic reduction in air links has wider detrimental effects on society and the economy. Aviation supports 65.5 million jobs around the world, with one job in the industry supporting 24 other jobs in the wider economy, but these livelihoods are now jeopardized due to the drastic plunge in travel demand. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation sees tourism declining as much as 80% this year. The progressive resumption of air travel would be key to helping jumpstart economic activity.

The Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) recognizes that public health measures such as widespread testing, contact tracing and social distancing are now progressively being implemented by governments across the world. Similar measures are also being discussed as conditions to the resumption of air travel, but such measures need to be consistent, coherent and coordinated amongst governments working closely together with airlines, airports and health authorities, in line with the relevant World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. To address public confidence concerns over the safety of air travel, any measures should be practical and based on accepted medical standards, as part of a robust risk management framework.

Commenting on the situation, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General said, “Wherever possible processes such as travellers’ health declarations should be automated and made available on mobile devices for the convenience of the travelling public. Departure screening procedures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 should preferably be applied before travellers board their flights. Precautionary measures onboard are being discussed, and will likely include the compulsory wearing of masks by all travellers and airline crew. Other measures such as leaving the middle seat empty

have been suggested, but would make air travel much more costly without any meaningful public benefit in terms of risk reduction.”

Mr. Menon added: “The restart of aviation is likely to be sporadic, reflecting uncertainties in the stabilization of the pandemic and public confidence levels. The resumption of flights is likely to start in the Asia Pacific region given that the region has had more time to deal with the pandemic. A number of governments in the region are already undertaking joint discussions for the resumption of cross border travel, and we applaud these efforts to jumpstart the wider economy, recognizing the crucial role played by the aviation industry.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic is probably the greatest challenge that the global air transport industry has ever faced. The industry must introduce and adapt processes to minimize risk while at the same time restoring confidence and trust in air travel. Travelers should be able to undertake journeys with full confidence that measures are being undertaken to protect their wellbeing.”

“The resumption of international air travel requires a global approach and harmonized measures across borders. AAPA calls on governments to work closely together and collaborate with industry in developing measures that are standardized, pragmatic, based on accepted medical standards and a robust risk management framework, in our common objective of serving the travelling public and reviving the wider economy” concluded AAPA Director General, Mr. Subhas Menon.

**END**

**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.

For further information, please contact:  
Office of the Director General  
Tel +603 2162 1888 Fax +603 2162 6888  
Email: [odg@aapa.org.my](mailto:odg@aapa.org.my)  
Website: [www.aapairlines.org](http://www.aapairlines.org)  
Twitter: @aapairlines