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only<sup>1</sup>

## ASSEMBLY — 35TH SESSION

### ECONOMIC COMMISSION

#### Agenda Item 29: Facilitation

### FACILITATION AND QUALITY OF SERVICE AT AIRPORTS

(Presented by the Airports Council International)

#### SUMMARY

Facilitation is not limited to the activities of border control authorities. It should cover the entire passenger journey, with the objective of improving quality of service, utilization of resources and capacity. ACI supports ICAO's work in the field of facilitation and cooperates in ICAO standard-setting activities, especially through ICAO's Facilitation Panel and the Technical Advisory Group on MRTDs.

Suggested action by the Assembly is in paragraph 22.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. World air traffic is once again growing rapidly, after recovering from the shock of 9/11. Although the recovery is fragile, reflecting the state of the world economy, and may be limited by recent rapid oil price increases, it is likely that more capacity will be needed at most airports. At the same time, customers demand the improvement (or maintenance at a high level), of facilitation and quality of service provided. A dual approach to airport capacity is necessary: building of *new* capacity (terminal, airside and landside) will be required in many cases, although the planning and construction process is subject to heavy restrictions (e.g. environmental, financial, availability of land), which usually result in long lead times. Therefore, the second part of the approach is equally important – to optimize the use of *existing* airport capacity, for example by increasing efficiency and expanding the use of automated services – this also minimizes input of new capital, and costs for users.

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<sup>1</sup> English, French and Spanish versions provided by ACI.

2. In ACI's view, Facilitation (i.e. facilitating traffic) does not just apply to the activities of Government Inspection Services (Customs, Immigration, etc), but should apply to the entire passenger journey in a consistent, seamless way, with the objective of improving the passenger's experience, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Convenient and expedited travel is a "core value" for airport operators.

3. In order to carry out this mission (also in accordance with Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS) of ICAO Annex 9), airport operators should take the leading role in convening and conducting meetings of Airport Facilitation Committees, and should work closely with National Facilitation Committees, convened by States.

4. Airports are an integral part of the entire travel chain. Air passengers should have a seamless travel experience during their entire journey, including surface transport to and from airports. Efficient surface transportation is crucial, including public transport, taxi services, rail transport, rental cars and tour buses. Access and inter-modal transport connections at airports must also be given close attention.

5. Many airports are short of capacity at certain times of the day, days of the week or parts of the year. Improving and speeding up passenger processing allows for increases in effective passenger flow capacity, and operational efficiency, thereby reducing (or at least deferring) the need for capital-intensive capacity development programmes, such as new or expanded passenger terminals. This provides additional justification for good facilitation. Moreover, schedule coordination (and slot allocation where necessary), is of fundamental importance to airport operators. Airport slots give airlines access to the infrastructure resources of an airport, and the airport operator must play a leading role in the efficient allocation of slots to airlines. The airport operator has the right to define and declare airport capacity limitations, in terms of hourly movement rates for runways (aircraft movements), terminals (passenger movements) and aprons (number of aircraft parking stands), in consultation with airlines, ATC and other appropriate authorities as necessary.

## QUALITY OF SERVICE

6. Quality of service is becoming a vital factor in its own right. Passengers and shippers demand higher standards of service, and, where they have a choice, will tend to choose the airlines, airports and routes which give the best quality of service. Airport operators have a vital interest in the development of service quality standards for the whole airport.

7. In November 2000, the General Assembly of ACI adopted a resolution on quality of service at airports. Its key clause states that "Airport operators should monitor a wide range of factors related to quality, according to the needs of users and the characteristics of the airport. Where airports have no direct control, they should strengthen their existing cooperation with all other organizations and agencies which have a guardian role for service delivery at the airport, in order to develop a "seamless airport service" with agreed minimum service standards. They should also develop airport business continuity plans which are comprehensive and coordinated with all parties".

8. In January 2000, ACI published detailed guidance on how to implement a Quality of Service programme, in the handbook "Quality of Service at Airports: Standards and Measurements". This handbook draws on the experience of many airports in using both *subjective* measures of service (customer approval ratings) and *objective* measures, as well as formal quality approval programmes such as described in the ISO 9000 standards.

9. Since the beginning of 2004, ACI and IATA have been offering the AETRA customer service monitoring programme. This programme enables airports, for a modest cost, to compare themselves with other airports and so make needed corrections to optimize the range of services provided. Further information is available at [www.aetra.aero](http://www.aetra.aero).

## **SIMPLIFYING PASSENGER TRAVEL**

10. ACI is cooperating with a range of other international organizations on a project known as ‘Simplifying Passenger Travel’ (SPT), aimed at improving passenger satisfaction, reducing operating costs, and avoiding costs of new facilities and additional staffing. The SPT Interest Group comprises individual airports, airlines, technology suppliers and customs and immigration authorities which are interested in promoting international cooperation on automated border control using biometrics, integrated with improved airline processes such as check-in and boarding, using specifications for advanced technology travel documents developed through the ICAO MRTD programme. Further information on the SPT initiative is available on [www.simplifying-travel.org](http://www.simplifying-travel.org).

11. The emphasis of SPT is on sharing information and the development of pilot projects, to test the effectiveness of different technologies, and of business models for delivering them to users. ACI believes that the use of automated airline and border control systems should not be limited to frequent flyers, but apply to all travellers, to ensure that the benefits arising from the efficient use of airport capacity will be maximised. This would not preclude special approaches to frequent flyers, if helpful for efficiency and traffic flows.

## **MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (MRTDs)**

12. The ICAO MRTD programme, in which ACI participates actively through the TAG/MRTD, has developed international standards for passports, visas and official travel documents. MRTDs are making a growing contribution to improved facilitation and security at airport border control points around the world, due to the large numbers of MRTDs in circulation, now exceeding 700 million issued by some 110 States, supported by document readers linked to national Immigration systems. The ICAO MRTD specifications in Doc 9303 are endorsed as ISO Standards through the mechanism of cooperation between ICAO and ISO. ACI hopes that the deadline contained in the proposed Recommended Practice to encourage all States to start issuing MRTDs by 2010, can be advanced, in the interest of further improving facilitation and security.

13. The incorporation of Biometric identification into MRTDs should help airlines, airports, and control authorities to operate more efficiently and speed up processing, so enhancing passenger convenience, while simultaneously improving border security at international airports. ICAO's adoption of a ‘blueprint’ for Biometric ID in MRTDs in May 2003, after extensive work undertaken since 1997, represents an important step forward in machine-assisted identity confirmation. This involved the selection of facial recognition as the globally interoperable biometric technology, in combination with contactless IC chips for data storage in a logical data structure (LDS), using a modified public key infrastructure (PKI) scheme to prevent unauthorized alteration. This combination of elements in the ‘blueprint’ assures global interoperability, and covers requirements for document issuance, renewal and border control inspection. All of these elements are made more secure by the use of biometric identification.

14. The ICAO Facilitation Division in 2004 covered these issues and recommended new Annex 9 SARPs, which will be acted on by the ICAO Council (as indicated in WP/11, paragraph 2.5.2). ACI fully agree that it is important that States which wish to issue ‘biometric’ MRTDs should do this in accordance with ICAO specifications, and use facial recognition as the primary biometric technology for global interoperability. Those States wishing to supplement facial recognition with a secondary biometric in support of ID confirmation with an MRTD may select fingerprint or iris recognition.

15. In addition to the recommendations of the FAL Division, ACI invites the Assembly to agree to another Recommended Practice being initiated encouraging States to introduce travel document and biometric reading systems as soon as possible, at border control points at their international airports. Regardless of whether a State has itself started to issue biometric MRTDs, this should assist any State in verifying the identity of persons holding a biometric passport issued by another State. ACI also recommends that the border control authorities concerned consult airport operators to ensure efficient traffic flows in terminal buildings when these systems are used, including automated border control systems.

## **STREAMLINING AND UPDATING OF ICAO ANNEX 9**

16. Through the ICAO Facilitation Panel, significant progress has been made in streamlining and updating the SARPs of ICAO Annex 9. For instance, important work has been completed for cargo (mainly in Chapter 4), aligning ICAO SARPs with the provisions of the World Customs Organization’s revised Kyoto Convention. The revised provisions in Annex 9 reflect the use of information technology, risk management and information exchange between government authorities, airlines and airports. They should have a significant impact on the speed and efficiency of customs clearance of cargo shipments at international airports.

17. ACI is particularly interested in the revision of Chapter 6 of Annex 9, entitled ‘International airports - Facilities and services for traffic’. ACI has presented to the ICAO Facilitation Panel a suggested redraft of this chapter, produced by a group of airport experts. The redraft includes many possible improvements, and ACI will contribute actively in further work undertaken by ICAO on Chapter 6.

18. Among many important parts of the text, ACI notes that Recommended Practice RP 3.31 which established a goal of clearance ‘within 45 minutes of disembarkation from the aircraft of all passengers requiring not more than normal inspection (regardless of aircraft size and scheduled arrival time)’ was revised on the recommendation of the Facilitation Panel, to apply to all airports, not just major airports. ACI continues to believe that this RP should be upgraded to a Standard. Moreover, ACI urges Government Inspection Services to provide sufficient of their staff at the control channels and infrastructure provided, so as to meet the 45 minutes goal at all times.

## **AIRPORT SIGNS/PICTOGRAMS**

19. A task was previously established by ICAO to review the ICAO/IMO ‘International signs to provide guidance to persons at airports and marine terminals’ (Doc 9636), which is referred to in Annex 9. It is important that passengers see the same signs at airports around the world, and ACI supports the use of standardized signs. It is important to ensure that the recommended signs, last reviewed in 1993, meet today’s needs and that any additional signs or adjustments required are incorporated in Doc 9636 for standardized use worldwide. ACI will be pleased to assist ICAO in the preparation of an updated document meeting today’s airport needs.

## **DYNAMIC FLIGHT INFORMATION DISPLAY SYSTEMS**

20. Airport flight information display systems (FIDS) need to be updated regularly, to increase their capacity, utilise new and more efficient forms of display monitor, in order to present arriving and departing flight information for passengers in as full and useful a manner as possible. New demands have been made on display systems, such as code-share flights and alliance partnerships, compounded by the general growth in flights and new numbering systems for flights using additional characters. Airport operators have responded to the demands and many have introduced new FIDS systems in recent years. These new demands are not reflected in the existing ICAO Doc 9249 ‘Dynamic Flight-related Public Information Displays’ which should be updated. A task was previously established by ICAO to update Doc 9249. ACI will be pleased to assist with this work.

## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

21. ACI supports ICAO’s guidance for accommodating persons with disabilities at airports and easing their access to airports, principally contained in Annex 9, chapter 8, section G. This ICAO guidance is consistent with ACI’s own long-standing guidance material contained in the ACI publication ‘Airports and the Disabled’. A new edition of this publication, entitled ‘Airports and Persons with Disabilities’, was published in 2003.

## **ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY**

22. The Assembly is invited to:

- a) support a broad view of Facilitation in the ICAO Facilitation programme, covering all aspect of quality of service for passengers and cargo (not just border controls), and that Annex 9 should reflect this approach in particular in Chapter 6 of the Annex (a review of which is in progress);
- b) call for the development of a new Recommended Practice encouraging the introduction of MRTD and biometric reading systems at border control points (suggested wording: *States should introduce reading systems for travel documents incorporating biometrics, according to ICAO specifications, at border control points, as soon as possible. Border control authorities concerned should consult airport operators to ensure efficient traffic flows at airports where these systems are used*). This would follow up on the proposed RP on issuance of biometric MRTDs agreed by the FAL Division in April 2004; and
- c) support the review and updating of ICAO/IMO Doc 9636 (International Signs to Provide Guidance to Persons at Airports and Marine Terminals), as well as the guidance in ICAO Doc 9249 (Dynamic Flight-related Public Information Displays), as proposed in paragraph 19 and 20 above.

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