WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF LIBERALIZATION

Montreal, 24 to 29 March 2003

**Agenda Item 2:   Examination of key regulatory issues in liberalization
                        2.4: Consumer interests**

PROVIDING FACILITATION AND QUALITY SERVICE TO PASSENGERS: THE AIRPORTS' CONCERNS

(Presented by Airports Council International (ACI))

SUMMARY

While customer service issues raised in ATConf/5-WP/13 mainly concern airlines, this paper describes the main points of ACI's policies that aim to protect the interests of passengers and airlines alike by providing them with quality service at airports.

Action by the Conference is in paragraph 2.

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Quality of service and facilitation at airports are vital to passenger convenience and are essential for successful air transport liberalization. Airport operators are the only entities in a position to establish comprehensive overall quality standards at airports in cooperation with all other organizations and agencies present on their premises. This paper describes the main points of ACI's policies and actions aimed at providing facilitation and quality service to passengers at airports. ICAO Annex 9 - Facilitation also contains essential Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) directed at achieving these objectives.

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[1] French and Spanish versions provided by Airports Council International (ACI)

2.   **ACI POLICIES**

2.1   **Quality of service**: Airport operators monitor a wide range of factors related to quality, according to the needs of users and the characteristics of the airport. ACI's publication "*Quality of service at airports: standards and measurements*" provides further information in this respect.

2.2   **Code-sharing and alliance airlines** should use the same terminal facilities whenever the airport operator considers this arrangement compatible with the smooth overall operation of the terminals. Collaborative and code-sharing arrangements should be fully transparent to passengers. It is the responsibility of airlines to provide passengers with full written information on their flights.

2.3   **Simplifying Passenger Travel (SPT)** is an industry initiative in which ACI is an active participant. Its objectives are to simplify and streamline the passenger process; help improve aviation security; increase customer satisfaction; make better use of existing airport space and resources; and make the transport system more efficient and reduce costs.

2.4   **Maximum clearance times at international airports**: ICAO Annex 9 Recommended Practice 3.31 which sets a goal for clearance within 45 minutes from disembarkation for all arriving passengers requiring not more than normal inspection, is so important to the efficiency of air transport that it should be upgraded to a Standard. ICAO Recommended Practice 3.28 sets a goal of 60 minutes for completion of departure formalities for departing international passengers, including airline check-in.

2.5   **Improving baggage delivery**: Baggage delivery systems should be viewed as a whole to permit the minimum delivery time for arriving and transfer bags. Wide, fast and reliable baggage belts, conveyors and baggage transporters should be used, and the design of baggage delivery areas should allow for flexibility and expansion. Depending on local circumstances, arriving baggage feed points could be located close to aircraft. However, to achieve shorter delivery times and handle transfer bags within minimum connection times, it may be necessary to use baggage feed points closer to the sortation system. Compliance with delivery standards should be monitored at each terminal and performance records exchanged between airlines and airports.

2.6   **The dual channel or red/green system of customs clearance** should be implemented in all countries in order to speed up passenger flow. Guidelines should be drawn up for the most appropriate design of dual channel facilities which offer customs administrations the maximum surveillance possibilities of passengers awaiting their checked baggage. Additional guidance should be given to passengers on the functioning of the system.

2.7   **Simplification of procedures for inbound passengers on international flights**: Where identity documents are machine readable, document readers should be used to speed up border controls, and the information captured before flight departure should be sent to the destination airport in advance of the flight, as Advance Passenger Information. States should provide necessary government inspection services (personnel and/or automated systems) free of charge at all international terminals at any time in response to reasonable commercial demand - not just during pre-established working hours. Where appropriate, separate immigration channels should be established for nationals and aliens in order to speed passenger flow. States should offer visa waiver arrangements to the maximum number of countries.

2.8   **Elimination of outbound passport and customs controls**, with due consideration to security, or separate channels for nationals and aliens, would speed up passenger and baggage flows and allow for simpler layout and routings within airport terminals. Some authority must be responsible for

ensuring that only persons who have been screened may proceed beyond the security checkpoint.

2.9   **Passenger service charges** should be made known to passengers and included in air fares. If this is not feasible, payment of such charges should be made possible either in local currency, in foreign currencies acceptable in the region, or by credit card.

2.10   **Existing sign systems** such as in ICAO *International Signs to Provide Guidance to Persons at Airports and Marine Terminals* (Doc 9636) should be considered first before new ones are developed at airports.

2.11   **Control of shoppers, well-wishers, meeters and greeters** should be kept in mind when designing terminals and planning the allocation of terminal space, so that passenger flow is not obstructed. A balance should be struck between the income generated by these visitors and facilitation and security goals.

2.12   **Airport facilities for persons with disabilities and those with special needs** should be provided and, as far as practicable, allow such persons to use passenger terminals in common with other passengers. More detailed recommendations are found in ACI's booklet "Airports and Persons with Disabilities"

2.13   **Airport facilities for tour operators** should not obstruct the main passenger flows. Wherever possible, tour groups should be allocated separate arrival and departure facilities. When a new airport is constructed or an existing airport remodeled, an area should be reserved for tour operators. If possible, and subject to security considerations, tour group check-in may be conducted off the airport.

2.14   **Airport handling arrangements**, in line with ICAO Annex 9 provisions, should allow airlines the choice of providing their own ground handling services, "subject to reasonable limitations which may be imposed by the airport authorities" including limits on the number of ground handling services providers (GHSPs) and self-handling airlines. Free and fair competition between GHSPs should be the norm, provided that space at the airport allows, and that GHSPs meet minimum safety and security standards. If the airport operator provides handling services, it should also compete on a free and fair basis. Wherever a concession fee is charged, equal treatment implies that such a fee should be charged on all GHSPs, including the local carrier when it provides such services to other carriers.

2.15   **Ground transportation** to, from, between and within airports should be coordinated among the various bodies involved in its provision.

2.16   **Consultations between agencies on new procedures** should take place at the earliest possible stage, whenever new government-mandated procedures require changes in facilities, including changes of layout within existing facilities. Governments should establish national facilitation committees, airport facilitation committees or similar coordinating bodies, in line with ICAO Annex 9 provisions. Airport operators should take the leading role in convening and conducting meetings of airport facilitation committees.

3.   **CONCLUSIONS**

3.1   Comprehensive implementation of ICAO Annex 9 - Facilitation SARPs will significantly enhance the quality of service provided to passengers at airports by airlines, airport operators and government agencies, and thus contribute to air transport liberalization.

4.   **ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

4.1   The Conference is invited to:

   a) note ACI's support for ICAO's SARPs regarding passenger facilitation at airports and ACI's policies in this area; and

   b) urge ICAO Contracting States to implement all ICAO SARPs concerning passenger facilitation as soon as possible, protect passengers' interests and encourage air transport liberalization.

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