



ICAO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PIO 03/03

WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE TO DEVELOP FRAMEWORK FOR THE LIBERALIZATION OF GLOBAL AIR TRANSPORT

MONTREAL, 18 March 2003 - The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will host a Worldwide Air Transport Conference on "Challenges and Opportunities of Liberalization", from 24 to 29 March 2003, at its Montreal Headquarters. Delegations from ICAO's 188 Contracting States and more than 30 international organizations have been invited. The Conference agenda is attached.

The Conference will be preceded by a two-day public seminar on 22 and 23 March during which prominent speakers from industry, government and academia will discuss various strategic issues facing today's transport industry and its regulators.

The objectives of the Conference are to develop a framework for the progressive liberalization of international air transport, to include safeguards for fair competition, safety and security, and measures for the effective and sustained participation of developing countries.

The agenda includes: a comprehensive examination of key regulatory issues and policy options in light of the experience of liberalization during the past decade and recent international developments; a discussion on the concept of template air services agreements; and a global framework for ongoing liberalization.

"Building on the foundation laid by the previous Conference in 1994, our work will focus on 'how to' rather than 'whether to' liberalize. The resulting framework will serve to guide future regulatory reform in international air transport," explained Dr. Assad Kotaite, President of the Council of ICAO.

Dr. Kotaite noted that the Conference is being held during turbulent times for the air transport industry. "At no time in the history of civil aviation has there been a greater need for continuing evolution of a stable regulatory environment for air transport operations," he stressed.

NOTE TO PRESS:

The Conference and the Seminar are open to the press. Those wishing to be accredited are invited to contact the Public Information Office, tel. 514-954-8221, fax. 514-954-6376 or e-mail dcooper@icao.int.

ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of civil aviation in the world. A specialized agency of the United Nations, it sets international standards and regulations necessary for the safety, security, efficiency and regularity of air transport and serves as the medium for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 188 Contracting States.

- END -

ICAO WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
(Montreal, 24 to 29 March 2003)

Challenges and Opportunities of Liberalization

AGENDA

1. Preview

1.1 Background to and experience of liberalization: Basic concept and approaches; issues in regulation and commercialization of air carriers, airports and air navigation service providers; benefits and drawbacks; influence of broader regulatory environment including trade, fiscal, competition, social and labour policies.

1.2 Safety and security aspects of liberalization: Safety and security implications of commercialization, outsourcing and transnational commercial arrangements.

2. Examination of Key Regulatory Issues in Liberalization

2.1 Air carrier ownership and control: Alternative criteria for designation and authorization; inward (foreign) investment; right of establishment; nationality of aircraft.

2.2 Market access: Traffic rights (primarily beyond third and fourth freedoms but including, for example, routing and operational flexibility); capacity/frequency; airport access and slot allocation; airline alliances, codesharing and franchising; leasing; specific aspects relating to air cargo and express services and to intermodal transport.

2.3 Fair competition and safeguards: Safeguards against anti-competitive practices (such as in pricing, capacity provision, sales and marketing); application of competition laws/policies (including implications for multilateral cooperative arrangements amongst air carriers); sustainability of air carriers and assurance of service (including provision of State aid); preferential measures for, and effective participation of, developing countries.

2.4 Consumer interests: Consumer rights and obligations (including conditions of carriage); measures to safeguard consumer interests.

2.5 Product distribution: Commercial presence; electronic business to customer (B2C) commerce (including computer reservation systems and the Internet).

2.6 Dispute resolution: Alternative dispute settlement mechanisms and their inter-relationship (in the context of bilateral, regional or multilateral arrangements).

2.7 Transparency: Registration of agreements/arrangements (including obligations under Article 83 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation) and access to information.

3. Review of Template Air Services Agreement

3.1 Comprehensive template air services agreement containing alternative approaches for discretionary use by States (selectively or in full) in a bilateral, regional or multilateral context.

4. Consideration of a Global Framework for Ongoing Liberalization

4.1 Mechanisms to facilitate further liberalization: Role and future work programme of ICAO; relations with other international organizations (multilateral and regional, governmental and non-governmental).

4.2 Declaration of global principles for international air transport: Adoption of a declaration based on a draft text prepared in advance, but taking into account discussions on all above Agenda items.