FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION

Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004

Agenda Item 3:   **Implementing modernized provisions for facilitation and security in air cargo operations**
3.1:   **Facilitation of cargo clearance**
3.2:   **Security**

**A COMMUNITY HUB AS THE FACILITATOR OF ADVANCE
CARGO INFORMATION (ACI)**

(Presented by SITA)

SUMMARY
The fragmented nature of the air cargo industry has resulted in there being no single source of information to satisfy the requirements of government agencies. This paper presents a proposal for a community hub approach to ACI.
Action by the Division is in paragraph 3.

INTRODUCTION

1.1   SITA is a neutral cooperative owned and managed by more than 750 members of the air transport industry. For over 50 years, it has provided data communication services to link air transport players involved in the international supply chain.

1.2   The disparate nature of the air cargo supply chain has resulted in key components that make up the information requirements of governments agencies being fragmented amongst the different players. The need for each player in this chain to protect its 'territory' has historically meant that only the minimum amount of information necessary to facilitate the movement of goods along the chain is shared between each player.

1.3   Generally, it is the freight forwarder, not the airline, that is in possession of the details of the shipment. Typically, the forwarder will consolidate freight for shipment from multiple suppliers and create one booking with the airline. Each shipment from a supplier is detailed in a House waybill (HWB), but the forwarder then creates a single Master air waybill (AWB) for the airline, which gives no detail of the individual shippers or shipments.

2.   **CONSIDERATIONS**

2.1   It is apparent that different links in the supply chain own different pieces of the information jigsaw required by government agencies. In preference to compelling forwarders to pass onto airline operators the commercially sensitive, detailed information, of each individual consignment, whilst also burdening the airlines with compiling it, SITA believes a neutral community hub system that can bring the pieces together and construct the complete data set for onward distribution to the relevant authorities, offers the most effective and acceptable solution to all interested parties.

2.2   Government agencies' demands for cargo information are still evolving and while there has been some unilateral development of ACI systems it will be some time before requirements and messaging formats become globally accepted and more importantly, harmonized. A community hub, based on open systems, allows the handling of multiple formats and protocols ensuring that all the necessary parts of the chain can connect using existing IT infrastructure. This in itself will speed up deployment and compliance of ACI initiatives.

2.3   Whilst it is understandable for an individual State to take action to tackle an immediate threat, the unilateral imposition of longer-term security measures can be counter-productive. The international supply chain touches all parts of the world and its security is truly a global problem requiring a global solution. The collective focus must be on ensuring that concerted action is taken in a coordinated and unified way.

3.   **ACTION BY THE DIVISION**

The Division is invited to:

a) investigate the benefits of a community hub approach;

b) recommend, as far as possible, that development of ACI systems are based on internationally accepted standards;

c) ensure Contracting States' requirements for ACI are coordinated and harmonized;

d) encourage the use of established systems and technology to expedite the deployment of ACI as rapidly as possible; and

e) recommend that Contracting States planning to develop an ACI system look beyond the short-term and consider the longer-term benefits that an international solution would bring.

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