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World's airports encouraged to become carbon neutral

BUENOS AIRES, 6 November 2007 – A call for a series of environmental commitments for the world's airports was among the resolutions voted on today at the annual assembly of airport executives in Buenos Aires. These commitments will provide focus areas for airports around the world to further environmental programmes and encourage the goal of carbon neutral airports.

Responding to recent public concerns about the environmental impact of the aviation sector, particularly regarding climate change, ACI Director General Robert J Aaronson had this to say: "In many ways, the attention focused on aviation is disproportionate – our industry accounts for only around two percent of world CO₂ emissions.

"But we do have an impact on the environment and I believe the industry is responding appropriately with investment in cleaner technologies and more efficient operating practices. Airports have had active environmental programmes in place for many years and we have a good track record. It is now time to make that an outstanding track record."

As part of the resolution passed by the general assembly, airports are encouraged to make commitments in the following areas: ground service equipment and vehicle fleet emissions reduction, electrical power and pre-conditioned air supply to aircraft at gates, ground transportation, public transport, sustainable development, energy-efficient infrastructure, environmental management systems, encouragement of good environmental practice across the airport community, strategies to reduce carbon emissions, recycling and developing the airport natural habitat. Many airports have already implemented such initiatives.

Aaronson said, "The commitments outlined by ACI airports here today are the foundation for a step-change in the way we think about our environmental performance. The key is to keep doing what many of us are already doing, but to expand and improve. The ultimate goal, in my opinion, is carbon neutral airports.

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An airport operator can achieve carbon neutral status by reducing carbon emissions from operations and buildings to a strict minimum and for the remaining emissions that cannot be further reduced can employ economic and market-based measures while industry develops long-term technological solutions.

He added, "This is a reasonable and achievable goal – already accomplished by at least one of our members in Sweden – and works alongside programmes in place in other parts of the aviation sector. The reality is, many positive environmental decisions are also positive business choices. Energy efficiency can reduce costs and sustainable development provides long term planning viability for airport operators."

ACI also called on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to 'exercise leadership on aircraft noise and emissions to the fullest extent possible' – a reference to airport frustration over the relatively conservative approach to noise and emissions stringencies that have been set by the organisation. Aaronson explains, "For many years, ACI, on behalf of airports, has been asking for the phased withdrawal of older, nosier and dirtier aircraft and stricter design standards for aircraft currently on the drawing board. We encourage ICAO to exercise its standards setting capacity in a more ambitious and determined manner."

First ACI recommended practices - CUPPS

The executives gathered at the world assembly also voted in an ACI recommended practice in the area of common use passenger processing systems (CUPPS). Developed by ACI, IATA and ATA, the new recommended practice replaces previous common use terminal equipment (CUTE) guidelines and reflects new technology that has been developed for the common use of passenger processing systems. This technology allows airports to provide a common IT platform for all airlines that can then use the same equipment for areas such as check-in and gate displays, giving greater flexibility and more cost efficient use of passenger processing operations.

ACI resolutions on safety and security

In two resolutions on safety, ACI calls on airport operators to implement Safety Management Systems even if their Civil Aviation Authority does not yet require it. The second resolution calls on States to avoid over-regulation, additional layers of regulation and an excessively prescriptive approach to safety, allowing airports to add their own measures to implement safety best practices.

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A security resolution called on ICAO to proceed with renewed urgency to achieve global aviation security standards, particularly with respect to the on-board liquids, aerosols and gels security restrictions that came into place following the foiled London bomb plot in August 2006. It also called on countries around the world to rapidly implement recognition of security procedures in other countries. "We want to ensure that flying remains an enjoyable activity. Each new security restriction that is not globally harmonized takes us one step backwards and a lack of international coordination is damaging our industry and the customer service provided to millions of passengers," Robert Aaronson commented."

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Notes for the editor

- Five ACI Resolutions, which can be downloaded from the ACI website, include:
 - [Resolution 1](#), AIRPORTS AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT
 - [Resolution 2](#), PROMOTING SAFETY AT AIRPORTS - WORKING WITH GOVERNMENTS
 - [Resolution 3](#), PROMOTING SAFETY AT AIRPORTS - AVOIDING OVER-REGULATION
 - [Resolution 4](#), AIRPORTS SEEK EFFECTIVE ACTION TO HARMONISE AVIATION SECURITY RESTRICTIONS
 - [Resolution 5](#), APPRECIATION TO THE HOST
- For further information about ACI, please contact Nancy Gautier in Geneva (ngautier@aci.aero, +41 22 717 8562) or Haldane Dodd in Buenos Aires (hdodd@aci.aero, +41 79 429 8710).
- The carbon-neutral airport operator referred to in the release is LFV of Sweden. Click here for a case study on this airport.
- A series of case studies on what airports are doing to improve environmental performance can be found on the ACI website here.
- ACI is the global trade representative of airports. It has 573 members operating over 1640 airports in 178 countries and territories. In 2006, ACI members handled 4.4 billion passengers, 85.6 million metric tonnes of freight, and 72.2 million aircraft movements.
- ACI is working with airlines, aircraft manufacturers and air navigation organisations on a communications initiative on aviation's environmental record – www.enviro.aero