AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

Media Release

ACI World releases preliminary 2017 world airport traffic rankings

Passenger traffic: Indian and Chinese airports major contributors to growth

Air cargo: Volumes surge at major hubs as trade wars threaten

London, 9 April 2018 – Demand has continued its robust year-on-year growth across the world's major airports both in terms of passenger numbers and air cargo. Passenger traffic at the world's 20 busiest airports grew by 5.2% in 2017. With almost 1.5 billion passengers passing through their terminals in 2017, this group of 20 represents 17% of global passenger traffic.

Download the preliminary traffic results for the top 20 busiest airports (total passenger traffic).

- Based on reports from 1,202 airports worldwide, ACI's preliminary passenger traffic results for the most-traveled airports in 2017 reveal that Atlanta-Hartsfield-Jackson (ATL) has secured top spot again. With almost 104 million passengers, the airport is within a two-hour flight of 80% of the United States' population. Beijing (PEK), holds second spot and Dubai (DXB) remained in third position. As a major connection point for long-haul international flights, Dubai International Airport is also the world's busiest in terms of international passengers. Total passenger traffic at DXB grew 5.5% in 2017.

- Delhi (DEL) jumped from 22nd to 16th solidifying its status as one of the fastest growing airports in the world for passenger traffic; Guangzhou (CAN), in China, grew by 10.3% making it the second fastest growing airport among the top 20.

Scroll down for the full passenger traffic briefing note.

Air cargo – strengthening trade, e-commerce, and the reliability factor

Air cargo volumes at the 20 busiest airports grew by 6.8% in 2017. These airports handled a combined 51 million metric tonnes of cargo. This represents 43% of global air cargo volumes.

- Hong Kong (HKG) occupies top spot as the largest air cargo center handling more than five million metric tonnes of cargo in 2017. Volumes at HKG grew by

9.4% year-on-year. Shanghai (PVG), Chicago (ORD) and Doha (DOH) all experienced double digit growth of 11.2%, 12.6% and 15.0% respectively.

Air cargo experienced a revival across many of the world's airports in 2017 and into 2018. Even with the uncertainty regarding the threat of trade wars and the growth of protectionist sentiments across the world, business confidence has remained strong through inventory build-ups and increased export orders in 2017.

A strengthened economy in the United States (US), together with an increase in global industrial production, and a strong US dollar have boosted inbound air cargo markets in recent years. Key air cargo centers, such as Chicago – O'Hare (ORD), experienced growth of 12.6% for 2017. The airport, which has significantly expanded its air cargo facilities, is centrally located geographically serving regional manufacturing within an intermodal transport network. The airport has also benefitted from international trade with China and other Asian countries. ORD's international freight volumes increased by 12.2% in 2017.

Scroll down for the full air cargo briefing note:

Download the preliminary traffic results for the top 20 busiest air cargo airports.

Global summary: Preliminary year-over-year growth for 2017, compared to 2016

- Total passengers: +6.6%
- Total international passengers: +8.4%
- Total cargo (includes mail): +7.9%
- Total international freight: +9.9%
- Total aircraft movements: +2.4%

"The surge in cargo volumes and passenger numbers across many of the world's airports is testament to heightened business and consumer confidence, at least in the short term," said Angela Gittens, Director General, ACI World. "The world's airports continue to be a vital link in the economic multiplier effect that aviation provides and the role it plays as an enabler for global commerce is growing".

"The universal access to online retail and e-commerce platforms represents a competitive pressure to the traditional brick and mortar retail shops in certain markets but the huge growth in e-commerce has fuelled the air cargo side of the airport business. This has resulted in increased global activity, especially in major markets such as China and the US."

Gittens added, "The spectre of uncertainty regarding trade policy among major economies comes at a time when global commerce and our industry has recently thrived. The trans-pacific link, for instance, is an important ingredient in boosting international passenger traffic and international freight volumes".

"Connecting people, business and places still remains paramount to the aviation sector despite the recent threats of a step backwards in market liberalization in some major economies," Gittens concluded.

Notes for editors

1. Airports Council International (ACI), the trade association of the world's airports, was founded in 1991 with the objective of fostering cooperation among its member airports and other partners in world aviation, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation. In representing the best interests of airports during key phases of policy development, ACI makes a significant contribution toward ensuring a global air transport system that is safe, secure, efficient and environmentally sustainable. As of January 2018, ACI serves 641 members operating 1,953 airports in 176 countries.

2. Please note that all figures and percentages are extrapolations based on summed monthly data submissions by the world's major commercial airports (1,202 airports). The final confirmed report will be published in summer 2018 and will include 2000+ airports; therefore, figures are subject to variation.

3. Preliminary rankings of the world's busiest airports organized by total passengers, international passengers, total air cargo, international air freight and aircraft movements can be found below.

4. Visit the ACI World Annual Traffic Data page.

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Table 1 – Total passenger traffic 2017 (preliminary)

RANK 2017	RANK 2016	AIRPORT CITY / COUNTRY / CODE	PASSENGERS (Enplaning and deplaning)	Percent change
1	1	ATLANTA GA, US (ATL)	103 902 992	-0.3
2	2	BEIJING, CN (PEK)	95 786 442	1.5
3	3	DUBAI, AE (DXB)	88 242 099	5.5
4	5	TOKYO, JP (HND)	85 408 975	6.5
5	4	LOS ANGELES CA, US (LAX)	84 557 968	4.5
6	6	CHICAGO IL, US (ORD)	79 828 183	2.4
7	7	LONDON, GB (LHR)	78 014 598	3.0
8	8	HONG KONG, HK (HKG)	72 663 955	3.4
9	9	SHANGHAI, CN (PVG)	70 001 237	6.1
10	10	PARIS, FR (CDG)	69 471 442	5.4
11	12	AMSTERDAM, NL (AMS)	68 515 425	7.7
12	11	DALLAS/FORT WORTH TX, US (DFW)	67 092 194	2.3
13	15	GUANGZHOU, CN (CAN)	65 887 473	10.3
14	13	FRANKFURT, DE (FRA)	64 500 386	6.1
15	14	ISTANBUL, TR (IST)	63 872 283	6.0
16	22	NEW DELHI, IN (DEL)	63 451 503	14.1
17	19	JAKARTA, ID (CGK)	63 015 620	8.3
18	17	SINGAPORE, SG (SIN)	62 220 000	6.0
19	20	INCHEON, KR (ICN)	62 157 834	7.5
20	18	DENVER CO, US (DEN)	61 379 396	5.3
TOP 20 FOR 2017			1 469 970 005	5.2

Table 2 – Total international passenger traffic 2017 (preliminary)

RANK 2017	RANK 2016	AIRPORT CITY / COUNTRY / CODE	INTL PASSENGERS (Enplaning and deplaning)	Percent change
1	1	DUBAI, AE (DXB)	87 722 023	5.6
2	2	LONDON, GB (LHR)	73 187 198	3.0
3	3	HONG KONG, HK (HKG)	72 462 116	3.4
4	4	AMSTERDAM, NL (AMS)	68 401 146	7.7
5	5	PARIS, FR (CDG)	63 697 227	5.5
6	6	SINGAPORE, SG (SIN)	61 574 000	5.9
7	7	INCHEON, KR (ICN)	61 520 572	7.6
8	8	FRANKFURT, DE (FRA)	57 122 348	6.4
9	9	BANGKOK, TH (BKK)	48 811 600	7.8
10	10	TAIPEI, TW (TPE)	44 479 754	6.2
11	11	ISTANBUL, TR (IST)	44 254 473	7.5
12	14	KUALA LUMPUR, MY (KUL)	42 354 534	14.6
13	12	LONDON, GB (LGW)	41 476 858	5.3
14	15	MADRID, ES (MAD)	38 479 159	6.7
15	13	DOHA, QA (DOH)	35 262 164	-5.3
16	16	MUNICH, DE (MUC)	34 721 745	6.6
17	17	BARCELONA, ES (BCN)	34 527 018	6.8
18	18	TOKYO, JP (NRT)	33 090 944	3.4
19	19	NEW YORK NY, US (JFK)	32 431 419	2.1
20	22	TORONTO ON, CA (YYZ)	29 655 141	8.1
TOP 20 FOR 2017			1 005 231 439	5.7

Table 3 – Total air cargo traffic 2017 (preliminary)

RANK 2017	RANK 2016	AIRPORT CITY / COUNTRY / CODE	CARGO (Metric tonnes) (Loaded and unloaded)	Percent change
1	1	HONG KONG, HK (HKG)	5 049 898	9.4
2	2	MEMPHIS TN, US (MEM)	4 336 752	0.3
3	3	SHANGHAI, CN (PVG)	3 824 280	11.2
4	4	INCHEON, KR (ICN)	2 921 691	7.6
5	6	ANCHORAGE AK, US (ANC)*	2 713 230	6.7
6	5	DUBAI, AE (DXB)	2 654 494	2.4
7	7	LOUISVILLE KY, US (SDF)	2 602 695	6.8
8	8	TOKYO, JP (NRT)	2 336 427	7.9
9	11	TAIPEI, TW (TPE)	2 269 585	8.2
10	9	PARIS, FR (CDG)	2 195 229	2.8
11	10	FRANKFURT, DE (FRA)	2 194 056	3.8
12	13	SINGAPORE, SG (SIN)	2 164 700	7.9
13	14	LOS ANGELES CA, US (LAX)	2 158 324	8.1
14	12	MIAMI FL, US (MIA)	2 071 722	2.9
15	15	BEIJING, CN (PEK)	2 029 584	4.5
16	16	DOHA, QA (DOH)	2 020 942	15.0
17	19	LONDON, GB (LHR)	1 794 276	9.4
18	18	GUANGZHOU, CN (CAN)	1 780 423	7.8
19	17	AMSTERDAM, NL (AMS)	1 778 382	4.9
20	20	CHICAGO IL, US (ORD)	1 721 807	12.6
TOP 20 FOR 2017			50 618 497	6.8

*includes transit freight

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Table 4 – Total international air freight traffic 2017 (preliminary)

RANK 2017	RANK 2016	AIRPORT CITY / COUNTRY / CODE	FREIGHT (Metric tonnes)	
			(Loaded and unloaded)	Percent change
1	1	HONG KONG, HK (HKG)	4 937 428	9.2
2	4	SHANGHAI, CN (PVG)	2 906 553	15.2
3	2	INCHEON, KR (ICN)	2 825 955	8.6
4	3	DUBAI, AE (DXB)	2 654 494	2.4
5	5	TOKYO, JP (NRT)	2 262 899	8.6
6	6	TAIPEI, TW (TPE)	2 253 144	8.3
7	8	SINGAPORE, SG (SIN)	2 125 200	7.9
8	7	FRANKFURT, DE (FRA)	2 066 168	4.0
9	10	ANCHORAGE AK, US (ANC)*	1 997 656	5.1
10	11	DOHA, QA (DOH)	1 994 457	14.5
11	9	PARIS, FR (CDG)	1 967 904	2.7
12	12	MIAMI FL, US (MIA)	1 754 559	2.2
13	13	AMSTERDAM, NL (AMS)	1 752 571	5.4
14	14	LONDON, GB (LHR)	1 697 356	10.2
15	15	BANGKOK, TH (BKK)	1 392 897	10.6
16	16	LOS ANGELES CA, US (LAX)	1 301 188	10.5
17	17	CHICAGO IL, US (ORD)	1 223 052	12.2
18	19	LEIPZIG, DE (LEJ)	1 047 486	7.7
19	18	NEW YORK NY, US (JFK)	1 046 803	7.4
20	21	ISTANBUL, TR (IST)	1 029 630	16.5
TOP 20 FOR 2017			40 237 400	8.2

*includes transit freight

Table 5 – Aircraft movements 2017 (preliminary)

RANK 2017	RANK 2016	AIRPORT CITY / COUNTRY / CODE	MOVEMENTS	
			Take-off and Landings	Percent change
1	1	ATLANTA GA, US (ATL)	879 560	-2.1
2	2	CHICAGO IL, US (ORD)	867 049	-0.1
3	3	LOS ANGELES CA, US (LAX)	700 362	0.5
4	4	DALLAS/FORT WORTH TX, US (DFW)	654 344	-2.7
5	5	BEIJING, CN (PEK)	597 259	-1.5
6	6	DENVER CO, US (DEN)	574 966	1.7
7	7	CHARLOTTE NC, US (CLT)	553 817	1.5
8	8	LAS VEGAS NV, US (LAS)	542 994	0.3
9	9	AMSTERDAM, NL (AMS)	514 625	3.6
10	10	SHANGHAI, CN (PVG)	496 774	3.5
11	11	PARIS, FR (CDG)	482 676	0.7
12	12	LONDON, GB (LHR)	475 915	0.2
13	15	FRANKFURT, DE (FRA)	475 537	2.7
14	16	TORONTO ON, CA (YYZ)	465 555	2.0
15	23	GUANGZHOU, CN (CAN)	465 295	6.9
16	14	ISTANBUL, TR (IST)	460 821	-1.0
17	18	SAN FRANCISCO CA, US (SFO)	460 343	2.2
18	20	TOKYO, JP (HND)	453 126	1.0
19	13	HOUSTON TX, US (IAH)	450 383	-4.3
20	19	MEXICO CITY, MX (MEX)	449 664	0.3
TOP 20 FOR 2017			11 021 065	0.5

Briefing notes:

Passenger:

Indian passenger traffic – The Bengal tiger awakens

Growing rapidly in relatively short period of time, India is poised to be one of the largest aviation markets in the world in the years to come. With an astounding population base of over 1.3 billion inhabitants, the move towards a more liberalized aviation market coupled with stronger economic fundamentals has helped to awaken the Bengal tiger to become one of the fastest growing markets in the world. ACI's World Airport Traffic Forecasts predicts that the country will represent the third largest aviation market, in terms of passenger throughput, after the US and China by 2020.

Delhi (DEL), the country's busiest airport for passenger traffic, grew by 14.1% year-over year pushing it up from 22nd to the 16th busiest airport in the world. Even with this rapid growth in throughput, DEL was also ranked first in Airport Service Quality for airports above 40 million passengers per annum. The award, which is also shared with Mumbai (BOM), the second busiest Indian airport, is based on a derived score from a battery of passenger satisfaction metrics.

Calcutta (CCU), Hyderabad (HYD), Bangalore (BLR), Madras (MAA) also ranked among the fastest growing airports in the world. Year-over-year growth of 26.9%, 19.6%, 12.9% and 10.5% respectively was achieved in 2017.

Chinese passenger traffic – Aviation's center of gravity continues its eastward shift

Chinese airports are the largest contributors to both passenger traffic and air cargo volumes growth. Boasting over 10 airports with over 20 million passengers per annum each, air transport demand continues to make large strides. After Beijing (PEK) and Shanghai (PVG), Guangzhou (CAN) is the third busiest airport in China. Just shy of 66 million passengers in 2017, the airport accommodates China's burgeoning domestic market. The airport's total passenger traffic grew by 10.3% in 2017. Other Chinese airport hubs that occupy a significant proportion of domestic traffic also experienced double digit growth. Hangzhou (HGH), Xi'An (XIY), Nanjing (NKG) and Tianjin (TSN) grew by 12.6%, 13.2%, 15.5% and 24.5% respectively.

The growth of Chinese aviation has also boosted international traffic on market segments with other regions such as North America. Asian airlines continued to make important inroads on key international and trans-Pacific segments across a number of airport pairs between US cities and China especially.

Subject to capacity considerations, according to ACI's World Airport Traffic Forecasts 2017–2040, the Chinese appetite for air transport services has the potential to add an additional 3 billion passengers by 2040. This represents a 21% share of the contribution to projected global passenger traffic growth that is forecasted by 2040.

Cargo:

Given that many Asia-Pacific airports act as exporters of air cargo with North American airports acting as importers, growth in international freight traffic for each region was significantly affected by this occurrence. Both Asia-Pacific and North America experienced a jump of 11.4% and 10.3% respectively for international freight volumes in 2017. Shanghai, a major city centre for trade and business, continues to thrive. Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG), the world's 3rd busiest air cargo airport experienced an increase of 11.2% in volumes. The airport has moved up to second rank in terms of international freight volumes in 2017 after an increase of 15.2% year-over-year in volumes.

The world's largest air cargo hub continued to be Hong Kong (HKG), with a robust increase of 9.4%. This was followed by Memphis (MEM, +0.3%), which was the only cargo hub to show a modest increase among the top 20 busiest airports. The airport is home to FedEx, a major express package delivery firm. Increased competition among express delivery companies has become a reality especially due to the inroads made by Amazon, a major e-commerce firm. The company occupies strategic airports in North America such as Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), located in the Midwest for its operations. Even though Amazon's air cargo facilities will not be operational until 2020, the airport is among the fastest growing in the world in terms of air cargo volumes. CVG's freight volumes grew by 27.3% in 2017. In Asia, Alibaba also continues to seize opportunities at regional hubs. The online retail giant centers its logistical operations at airports in China and recently Malaysia.

The reliability factor and the efficiency guarantee associated with express parcel deliveries that are generated from online purchases are an important driver in the upward surge in volumes shipped by air. Moreover, there is no doubt that a temporary substitution effect away from ocean cargo in 2016 and 2017, as a result of marine industry consolidations and bankruptcies, also helped to boost air cargo volumes over the short-term.

Aircraft movements – Consolidation and efficiency:

ATL is the world's busiest airport for aircraft movements, ahead of ORD. Both airports experienced a decline of 2.1% and 0.7% respectively. The top 20 airports inched up by only 0.5% year-over-year in 2017 as compared to 2016. Though there has been weaker growth in aircraft movements especially in certain North American and European markets following the Great Recession, this is consistent with the move toward consolidated operations and a curbing of capacity by aircraft operators to increase aircraft load factors and improve yields. Adoption of larger aircraft especially for long-haul operations has also contributed to this phenomenon especially among Middle Eastern and Asian airlines.

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