

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Air transport supports four million jobs and has the potential to provide for sustainable development across Latin America

**Geneva, 21 March 2012** – In Latin America and the Caribbean more than four million jobs and \$107 billion in GDP are supported by aviation, according to a new report released today at the Aviation and Environment Summit in Geneva. The report, *Aviation: benefits beyond borders*, was produced by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) and Oxford Economics. It outlines an industry that plays a larger role in both the Latin American, Caribbean and global economy than many would expect.

In Latin America and the Caribbean alone aviation directly employs over 465,000 people,” says Paul Steele, Executive Director of ATAG, the global association that represents air transport. “If we include indirect employment at suppliers to the industry, induced employment from spending by aviation industry employees and the jobs in tourism that air transport makes possible, this increases the regional figure to 4.6 million jobs.

“Of course, aviation’s economic benefits spread far beyond the monetary aspects outlined here. When you take into account the further benefits gained through the speed and reliability of air travel, the businesses that exist because air freight makes them possible and the intrinsic value to the economy of improved connectivity, the economic impact would be several times larger,” adds Steele.

For Latin America and the Caribbean forecasts indicate that passenger numbers are expected to almost triple from 145.9 million in 2010 to 438.9 million in 2030. Meanwhile, cargo volumes are projected to rise at a rate of 6.1% per annum. The report, available at [www.aviationbenefitsbeyondborders.org](http://www.aviationbenefitsbeyondborders.org), also outlined the role aviation plays at a global level, supporting 56.6 million jobs worldwide and \$2.2 trillion of the world’s GDP. There are some 1,500 commercial airlines using nearly 24,000 aircraft to serve 3,800 airports around the globe.

Alex de Gunten, Executive Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA) adds, “The findings of this report certainly bear great news but while the aviation industry in Latin America continues to reach major milestones and grow at significant rates, there are many variables that can still negatively affect the industry. We renew our call on governments to proactively keep up with the growth of the industry in the region. Without their collaboration on issues related to infrastructure, taxation and lack of harmonisation of regulations across the region, the progress we have achieved during the last two decades is at risk.”

Javier Martinez Botacio, Director General of Airports Council International, Latin America and the Caribbean says, “Figures in the report show that the region is rightly characterised as the “growth” star of the global aviation sector. The improvement of the economic and social indicators in most of the LAC countries has had a positive impact on the demand for air transportation. As a result, some countries have an investment deficit in the development of airport capacity; however we see that major airport operators are taking big steps to overcome this challenge, including Brazil. Airport operators clearly understand that investment in runways and other airport facilities is key to ensuring the continued rapid expansion of the aviation sector and the long-term jobs and economic growth that air transport can bring to the region”.

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Paul Steele says, “It is clear that air transport plays a vital role in the economic development of all countries, but especially in fast-growing emerging economies such as Brazil. Aviation provides connections within the country and between Brazil and its trading partners regionally and worldwide. It is very important that the air transport sector is given the support by governments to grow responsibly so that its benefits can be made available to more people.

“Latin America’s aviation sector is growing faster than the global average and that potential for growth has not yet been exhausted. Brazil, for example, has significant untapped potential. The average US citizen travels by air 1.8 times each year, while the average Brazilian takes 0.3 flights. As the Brazilian economy strengthens, with a population of over 190 million, there is great scope for both the aviation industry to grow and for the economic knock-on effects in areas like trade and tourism to also benefit.”

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