



MEDIA RELEASE

Global air transport on the path to sustainability

15 May 2002 – Today's United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) launch of 22 sector reports prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) is a landmark event in aviation history, says Philippe Rochat, Executive Director of the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) – responsible for the aviation report to be presented to the WSSD.

The UNEP initiative is the first international multi-stakeholder exercise, where business, in cooperation with the UN and environmental groups, assess the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) with the view to balancing their respective impacts.

ATAG's report addresses sustainable development for aviation by measuring the industry's strengths and weaknesses. The report illustrates that air transport is in the lead in terms of:

- highest demand of all transport modes;
- access to world markets for developed and developing nations; and
- eco-efficiency.

Aviation has connected communities and business globally in an unprecedented way. Travellers learn, in person, the value of cultural diversity and environmental quality worldwide. However, infrastructure bottlenecks (both airports and air traffic control) create environmental concerns and could jeopardise the contribution of air transport to global economic and social progress.

Although airplanes made today are significantly quieter, noise around airports remains an important issue. As a priority, therefore, ATAG promotes a better and broader dialogue between all stakeholders, including residents around airports and environmental groups to achieve a suitable compromise between the local costs and the regional benefits of air transport.

The transport industry has always been interested in improving fuel efficiency, initially from an economic point of view. But when we consider emissions and climate change, we add the environmental motivation of reducing greenhouse gases. There are many good examples of how aviation reduces its impact despite its sustained growth:

- There has been a 65% improvement in fuel efficiency in 30 years since 1970.
- IATA airlines have agreed to achieve a 10% fuel efficiency improvement in their total fleet over the next 10 years.
- Airframe and engine manufacturers are continuously improving the aerodynamics and environmental performance features of aircraft through new wing design, cleaner engines and new material reducing weight.

- Cooperation between air and rail is also an important element in providing more sustainable ground access to airports and in developing complementary transport services.

Given the many challenges ahead, including the restoration of passenger confidence post-September 11th, ATAG proposes three partnership solutions:

- Partnerships with other industries to improve aviation's performance.
- Partnerships with other transport modes to develop infrastructure and complementary services.
- Partnerships with local communities and other interest groups around airports to reduce local impact and better share air transport benefits.

Such partnerships can yield very positive results as they combine the best performances of the various partners and also minimise the duplication of efforts to benefit society at large.

The full aviation report is available from ATAG and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): www.unep.org

**For further information, please contact
Anna Stewart, Communications Manager, ATAG
Tel: +41 22 799 2097
Email: stewart@atag.org**

The Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) is an independent coalition of organisations throughout the air transport industry that have united to support aviation infrastructure development and capacity improvements in an environmentally-responsible manner. Its members include airports, airlines, manufacturers, air navigation services, airline pilot and air traffic controller unions, chambers of commerce, travel and tourism organisations, ground transportation and communications providers. Its funding members are Airbus, Boeing, CFM, IATA and Rolls-Royce.

**Route de l'Aéroport 33, P.O. Box 49, 1215 Geneva 15, Switzerland
Tel.: (41 22) 770 26 72 Fax: (41 22) 770 26 86 E-mail: information@atag.org
www.atag.org**