



4th Aviation & Environment Summit

Summit Communiqué

Preamble

On the occasion of the fourth Aviation & Environment Summit in Geneva, Switzerland held from 31 March to 1 April 2009:

Nearly 400 leaders and environment experts from all parts of the aviation industry met with representatives of civil society, governments and suppliers.

At a time when the industry is experiencing the worst economic conditions in its history, environment remains at the top of the industry agenda along with safety and security.

The delegates recognised the important work that all industry sectors and governments must undertake in the lead up to the UNFCCC climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009. The aviation industry has been working at an unprecedented pace to reduce its emissions. Delegates urged policy-makers to support these efforts by developing and adopting a global sectoral approach to aviation emissions at Copenhagen.

The focus at this summit has been on assessing progress since last year's Aviation Industry Declaration on Climate Change. There has been vigorous debate on how to make further strides in the areas of technology and infrastructure and how to accelerate the certification, secure supply and deployment of sustainable biofuels for aviation.

The main conclusions of the meeting are:

Technology

Delegates called for increased aerospace research funding from governments through universities and research institutions to speed up the development of revolutionary technologies and their implementation into the next generations of commercial airliners. Delegates recognised that airlines must have access to capital markets and sufficient liquidity to be able to renew their fleets with new fuel efficient and lower emissions aircraft.

Operations

The industry continues to identify and implement operational improvements to reduce fuel burn and reduce emissions. The volatility of fuel prices and the high percentage that fuel represents of operating costs acts as an added incentive.

Delegates called upon all parts of the industry – manufacturers, airlines and infrastructure providers – to recognise these efforts and to continue to develop new technologies that enable aircraft to fly more efficiently, particularly new satellite-based technologies.

Infrastructure

Two significant announcements were made at the Summit that demonstrate how cross-industry collaboration can deliver tangible emissions reductions in the air traffic management arena. An agreement to introduce continuous descent approaches at 100 airports across Europe, will cut CO₂ emissions by half a million tonnes per year.

A global agreement on the introduction of performance-based navigation brings together 19 partners from all sections of the industry – airports, unions, air navigation service providers, airlines and ICAO – to optimise operational procedures that reduce fuel burn and lower emissions.

Delegates called on governments to support these efforts and to implement them in other parts of the world as soon as possible. Delegates also stressed that governments must implement significant emissions-reduction projects such as the Single European Sky and NextGen in the USA as soon as possible.

Sustainable Biofuels

Over the past 18 months significant strides have been made in the development and testing of alternative fuels for aviation, particularly new generation sustainable biofuels. Tests on the ground and in flight have been successful and certification of blends of these fuels with current jet fuel has accelerated as a result.

Summit delegates underscored the strong demand from the airline community for such fuels and set the industry a target of the end of 2009 for a set of environmental sustainability standards. These must ensure aviation biofuels do not compete for land and water with food crops.

Delegates also requested that policy makers support industry efforts to accelerate the commercialisation and implementation of aviation biofuels by providing research and development to enable scaling-up of pilot projects to demonstrate commercial viability.

Delegates strongly expressed their request that the use of sustainable biofuels in commercial flights would become a reality by the time the Kyoto Protocol replacement agreement came into force in 2012 and that market viability of a significant supply of biofuel in the jet fuel mix would be a reality before 2020.

Policy Framework / Economic Measures

In the run-up to the UNFCCC climate change negotiations in December, delegates at the Summit debated different policy approaches to reducing CO₂ emissions from aviation. The delegates underscored the absolute necessity of a global sectoral approach for aviation rather than the patchwork of national and regional emissions management schemes that are currently emerging. Such schemes are generally ineffective in reducing emissions from truly global industries such as aviation, are complicated for a global industry to administer and could lead to competitive distortion.

The Summit called on ICAO through its GIACC process to urgently renew efforts to recommend an appropriate global sectoral framework. This must provide equal treatment of airlines whilst recognising the special needs of developing nations.

Delegates reaffirmed that the industry stands behind the leadership of ICAO on this issue and urged GIACC to redouble its efforts to produce substantive proposals by its next meeting in May 2009.

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