

CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMICS OF AIRPORTS AND AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

(Montreal, 19 - 28 June 2000)

Agenda Item 5.2: Elements for consideration with regard to ICAO policy

CONSULTATIONS WITH USERS

(Presented by Airports Council International)

SUMMARY

Consultations are the cornerstone of a productive working relationship between airports and their users. ACI believes that consultations, and the desirability of addressing important air transport issues in a spirit of partnership between airports and their users, should be prominent in ICAO guidance material.

1. Introduction

1.1 Consultations are the cornerstone of a meaningful relationship between an airport and its user community. The “*Statements by the Council to Contracting States on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services*” (Doc. 9082/5) recognize the importance of consultations for the setting of charges and for airport planning.

1.2 ACI is satisfied with the guidance on consultations in ICAO Doc. 9082/5. Paragraphs 22 and 23 contain clear language about the nature and desirability of consultations, both on contemplated changes in airport charges and on major capital investment projects.

1.3 The underlying philosophy of the consultative process is for all parties to have sufficient transparency of information so that they can make informed decisions. The timely provision by the airport of financial and traffic information should serve as a basis for meaningful consultations. For their part, airlines through their representative organisations, should provide airports with consolidated planning information on a medium/long-term forecast basis.

1.4 The goal of consultations should be twofold: to inform concerned parties on a timely basis of intended airport actions and; to provide the opportunity for concerned parties to express their opinions. It

is recognized that agreement cannot always be achieved, but decisions that are made following consultations should, as far as possible, give consideration to users' views. Where the users' views are not accepted, the reasons should be explained. ICAO policy in document 9082/5 states that, failing agreement, an airport would be free to impose a revision of charges.

2. Timing and nature of consultations

2.1 Where significant changes in charges levels or structure are being contemplated, appropriate prior notice should be provided and final notification of the new charges should be given at least two months before implementation.

2.2 It is important to note that consultations are a process and not an event where a decision already taken is announced and subsequently implemented. The airport should seek comments on a proposal, take these comments into consideration, and reach a decision based on an understanding of the different stakeholders' interests weighed against the airport's responsibility to the travelling public and the community in which it is located.

2.3 It is not possible to lay down a particular format or procedure for consultations since each case is different, depending on the local legal, regulatory or financial framework within which an airport functions. However, various "best practices" among airports do exist, and ACI will continue to keep its members informed of these practices as appropriate.

3. Recommendations and conclusions

3.1 During the consultation process, airports and airlines should exchange historical, current and projected traffic, cost and capital expenditure data as appropriate, so that a meaningful dialogue on future operations can occur.

3.2 The benefit of such a process to the airports is that they will implement changes to their charges levels or structures based on a well-informed decision. The benefit to the airlines is that they will know what they are paying for and will have been given ample opportunity to provide comments.

4. Action by the Conference

4.1 The Conference is invited to recognize the significance of consultations between airports and their users and reflect this fact in its recommendations concerning the content of relevant ICAO guidance materials.