

CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMICS OF AIRPORTS AND AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

(Montreal, 19 - 28 June 2000)

Agenda Item 4: Determinants of the economic regulation of airports and air navigation services

THE GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING OF AIRPORTS, AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES AND GROUND HANDLING SERVICES: THE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

(Presented by the International Labour Office)

1. The International Labour Organization is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system dealing with social and labour issues. The ILO has a tripartite structure in which employers and workers participate on an equal basis with governments.
2. The Sectoral Activities Department of the ILO has main responsibility for activities of a sectoral nature. The Department is to facilitate the exchange of information among ILO constituents (employer and worker organizations and relevant government departments) on labour and social developments relevant to particular economic sectors. The Department seeks to promote an international tripartite consensus on sectoral concerns and, on that basis, to provide guidance for national and international policies and measures to deal with the issues and problems addressed.
3. This conference on the economies of airports and air navigation services follows logically from the conclusions of the 4th World-wide Air Transport Conference organized by ICAO in 1994.
4. The approach of ICAO on economic regulation in 1994 was to examine the process of liberalization within a clear framework of safeguards for national economic interests and aviation safety. The Conference also recognized that liberalization has major effects for aviation employees, and that employees play a vital role in any process of restructuring. For this reason the Conference explicitly recognized that labour is a major stakeholder in aviation and should be a participant in any discussions on the future economic regulation of the industry.
5. As part of its regular programme of activities, the International Labour Office organized in September 1999 a Symposium on the Social and Labour Consequences of Technological Developments, Deregulation and Privatization of Transport. One of the conclusions of this Symposium, which have been approved by the Governing Body of the ILO, was that the Office should expand and enhance its cooperation and collaboration with other relevant international agencies “so that, in developing and undertaking their transport-related activities, including the development of policies and standards, the social and labour

dimensions of transport are fully taken into account, including the importance of tripartite consultations and continuous social dialogue.”

6. The jobs, working conditions and livelihoods of the people employed by airports and air navigation services are affected by the current process of restructuring. The unique safety and security environment of airports and air navigation services means that the impact of restructuring on employees requires consideration beyond its effect on jobs and working conditions. It is important that the economic, social and safety effects of privatization and liberalization be examined carefully and that national governments retain their key responsibilities for economic regulation, security and safety oversight and social rights. Civil aviation is an industry in which small mistakes can have major consequences for passengers and employees.

7. The ILO calls upon ICAO member states to include among the conclusions of this Conference a recommendation that the governments of ICAO member states should:

- meet their obligations under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up with a view to having a positive impact on social and labour conditions in the transport sector;
- promote tripartite consultations and continuous social dialogue in the process of restructuring of airports and air navigation services.

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