

MEDIA RELEASE

Air transport supports 2.4 million jobs and \$130 billion in Middle East economic activity

Geneva, 2 October 2018 – The Middle East is benefitting from air transport connections as over 170 million passengers travel in the region, supporting 2.4 million jobs in aviation and related industries, and 4.4% of the region’s economic activity. These findings are in a new report, *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders*, released by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) today.

Launching the report at the ATAG Global Sustainable Aviation Summit in Geneva, ATAG’s Executive Director, Michael Gill, said: “Let’s take a step back and think about how advances in air transport have changed the way people and businesses connect with each other – the reach we have today is extraordinary. More people in more parts of the world than ever before are taking advantage of safe, fast and efficient travel.”

“The Middle East has seen real benefits in embracing the role of air transport, not least as a hub connecting the European and Asia-Pacific markets. Airlines from the Middle East are some of the most ambitious in the world. Passengers in the region have taken advantage of the reduction in the price of tickets over the past decades which enables more people to travel, see the world and do business outside of their own country.”

“By 2036, aviation in the region is expected to support 4.3 million jobs and \$345 billion in economic activity. Key to this growth will be sustainable development of air transport as part of national growth plans, including improvements in infrastructure and political commitment to market liberalisation.”

Abdul Wahab Teffaha, Secretary General of the Arab Air Carriers’ Organization, said: “Aviation is a vital component of the Arab world’s economy, bringing millions of passengers into the region and connecting the world through the Middle East. At the same time, the industry supports millions of jobs across the Arab world and around \$150 billion in economic activity. This is equivalent to 6.6% of total GDP across the Arab region – including North Africa – around double the average global contribution. The Arab region is a vast one that lacks interregional advanced railway and road systems. Therefore, the air transport is not only playing the role of a contributor to the economic and social wellbeing of the peoples of the region, but it is indeed the backbone of interconnecting those peoples, and a crucial lever for their economy.”

Airports Council International Asia-Pacific Regional Director, Patti Chau, said: “We are excited to see the tremendous opportunities this growth has for the region’s communities. Asia-Pacific and the Middle East airports are already coping with enormous capacity constraints and expanding their facilities in the face of this growth. ACI is continuing to work with our members in their capacity building efforts, seeking to more sustainably contribute to the economies of the region and world at large.”

AIR TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP | Geneva, Switzerland | +41 22 770 2672 | www.atag.org

ATAG is a coalition of organisations and companies throughout the air transport industry that drive the sustainable development of the air transport sector. Funding members include ACI, Airbus, ATR, Boeing, Bombardier, CANSO, CFM, Embraer, Honeywell Aerospace, GE, IATA, Pratt & Whitney, Rolls-Royce and Safran.

Simon Hocquard, Deputy Director General of the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, said: “The Middle East is the fastest growing air traffic region but future growth and the resulting economic benefits will only be realised if States invest in air traffic management infrastructure and harmonise airspace. CANSO is asking States to cooperate with each other; organise airspace according to operational requirements rather than national borders; and allow more flexible use of military airspace”.

Globally, the air transport sector 65.5 million jobs and \$2.7 trillion in economic activity, including over 10 million women and men working directly for the industry itself. Aviation carries 35% of world trade by value, but less than 1% by volume and 57% of world tourists travel to their destinations by air.

The report, which can be downloaded at www.aviationbenefits.org, was prepared by ATAG along with other aviation industry associations and builds on extensive research by Oxford Economics.

ends

- Media enquiries: Haldane Dodd (doddh@atag.org / +41 79 429 8710)
- The Air Transport Action Group represents the entire aviation sector: airlines, airports, air traffic management organisations and the makers of aircraft and engines. It coordinates common industry positions on the sustainable future of air transport. www.atag.org