

# ACI World releases policy brief proposing immediate responses to lay groundwork for industry recovery

As the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the cessation of flights and closures of airports the world over, the impact on the airport sector has been devastating. In 2020, passenger traffic is expected to decline close to 40% and revenue is expected to fall by US\$77 billion year on year.

Airports are essential to the transport of goods and people, and despite the current decrease in passenger travel this importance has not ceased.

Airports Council International (ACI) World, which has been working with governments on behalf of airports to realize crucial aid during this time, has now published a policy brief outlining a road map for the airport industry's recovery.

The brief, called *COVID-19: Relief Measures to Ensure the Survival of the Airport Industry*, ACI outlines the following six focused policy responses that need to be implemented to ensure that the airport industry can be sustained through the crisis, and to lay the foundation for recovery.

- 1. Protection of airport charges and revenues:** Airports need to continue to function and provide basic services. Of concern is that alleviation of these fees through suspension or blanket discounts will hamper current operations.
- 2. Tax relief:** Immediate tax relief will help give airports enough breathing room to continue operations and safeguard jobs.
- 3. Concession fee waiver:** Airport rents and concession fees should be waived or postponed for a defined period
- 4. Temporary suspension of slot usage requirements:** Airport slot usage requirements in this current situation are unreasonable and untenable. ACI requests their suspension at global level, until 30 June 2020 with a reassessment of the situation based on data-driven evidence to follow.
- 5. Continuity of air cargo operations:** Air cargo operations continue as essential goods are transported around the world. Airports should thus continue levying charges on air cargo operations in order to maintain essential airside and cargo facilities.
- 6. Comprehensive financial relief:** ACI requests financial aid including wage subsidy, in order to allow continued operations and prepare for a rapid return to full operations. Non-discriminatory financial relief in the form of grants and subsidies, secured financing, loans at preferential rates, and bank guarantees should be made available to all.

"Airports are important engines of economic growth, wealth creation and employment and the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the industry and broader economy has halted the airport industry at global level," ACI World Director General Angela Gittens said. "Passenger traffic has collapsed but many airports are open for some scheduled operations, humanitarian and repatriation flights, and cargo operations and these activities continue to induce costs for airports.

"The millions of jobs provided by airport operators must be preserved and essential operation must

be sustained in the most effective way to allow for these crucial operations to continue and for the foundation to be laid for a rapid recovery.

“The relief measures that have been put forward will ensure that financial assistance does not benefit one part of the industry over another in the aviation ecosystem so that a balanced, global recovery can be created.”

The Policy Brief COVID-19: Relief Measures to Ensure the Survival of the Airport Industry is available free of charge on the ACI World website.