

# AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, THE VOICE OF THE WORLD'S AIRPORTS

Since 1991, following the merger of two former organizations, one voice has spoken for airports worldwide. The Geneva-based **Airports Council International (ACI)**, currently with 417 airport and airport authority members operating almost 1,000 facilities in 139 countries. In 1993, they handled some two billion passengers and 30 million tons of freight.

Its Director General is **Oris W. Dunham, Jr.**, an airport industry veteran with over 25 years of hands-on involvement, having managed three of the world's busiest airports: Seattle, Los Angeles, and Dallas Fort Worth. In this interview during a recent visit to Montréal, he explains the role of ACI in the world of civil aviation, its achievements to date, and challenges for the future.

## **What exactly is the role of ACI?**

As the single organization of the world's airports, our aims are to promote a safe, secure and environmentally compatible air transport system. Also to develop unified airport policies, foster cooperation between all the world's civil airports, and maintain close and

effective contact with other international organizations such as ICAO.

*How and why was it created to succeed two former organizations? Namely, the Airport Operators Council International and the International Civil Airports Association.*

It was really prompted by the growing need for a unified voice to speak on behalf of all airports in an industry increasingly marked by consolidation and mergers. Today, we have observer status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council and ICAO and we work closely with IATA in a spirit of cooperation that has already brought tangible results.

Moreover, ACI's five Standing Committees, encompassing economics, environment, facilitation, security and technical/safety, cover all aspects of airport operations. They monitor international developments and their implications for airports, help shape our policies, and provide our members with specific expertise.

And in order to enhance the level of aviation security and safety worldwide, we have also set up a

special fund for developing nations' airports, aimed at facilitating training for their personnel.

*ACI recently opened a Liaison Office with ICAO in Montréal. Why?*

Worldwide civil aviation is regulated by international standards issued by ICAO and most national regulations issued by civil aviation authorities draw on these standards. As such, ICAO is the most important partner of ACI and it is imperative that we keep in constant touch.

Our new Montréal office is also intended to further enhance the interface between the two organizations and contribute to a greater awareness in ICAO of the airports' policies and concerns.

*What are some of ACI's major achievements in recent years?*

Let's start with airport capacity. For years airports were blamed for causing flight delays due to insufficient capacity. That was until ACI forcefully demonstrated that in many cases these delays were actually due to reasons beyond the airports' control, such as air traffic control delays or industrial disputes involving airline personnel.



**Oris W. Dunham, Jr.**  
Director General  
Airports Council International