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MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE SIGNS NEW AIR AGREEMENTS WITH U.S.A.

Francis Fox, Minister for International Trade, today signed two new air transport agreements between Canada and the United States.

The first agreement establishes an experimental trans-border air services programme at Mirabel. Canadian and U.S. air carriers will have an opportunity to establish new services from Mirabel to major U.S. destinations and to experiment with innovative pricing and service concepts that will provide consumers with more options, particularly to vacation destinations.

This will put into effect in an immediate and practical way the air transport liberalization policy announced in June of this year by the Minister of Transport. Quebec vacationers will now be able to book flights to their favorite holiday destinations, whether on the U.S. east coast in summer or the sunny beaches of Florida in winter. With the exception of certain points specifically excluded from the agreement (Boston, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Miami and Chicago), air carriers can now offer flights from Mirabel to any U.S.A. destination under a more flexible price regime.

The new programme is expected to contribute significantly to the planned increase in passenger activity at Mirabel airport, paralleling growth in freight operations which were 24 percent higher in 1983 than in 1982.

The second agreement provides a simplified administrative process for smaller air carriers wishing to operate regional, local and commuter services linking smaller communities on either side of the border to larger centers. In recent years, regional and commuter carriers have enjoyed rapid growth and the new bilateral air agreement provides communities, carriers and governments with a flexible arrangement designed to facilitate the further expansion of secondary air services between Canada and the United States.

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The agreements were signed by Mr. Fox for Canada and H.E. Paul H. Robinson Jr., United States Ambassador to Canada.

Following the signing ceremony at the International Civil Aviation Organization headquarters in Montreal, Mr. Fox told guests: "I am personally very pleased with these new agreements. Not only do they incorporate the concept of liberalization of air services, which is the goal of my colleague Lloyd Axworthy, the Minister of Transport, but they also open up exciting new possibilities for passenger service out of Mirabel. I hope many airlines will take advantage of the new rules which enable them to offer flights to a variety of new destinations at reasonable prices".