

# Not bad for starters

As expected, delegates at December's global climate change gathering in Copenhagen, COP15, failed to come up with a definitive treaty, or officially sanction a deal that would cover aviation. But the industry remains optimistic amid signs there is widespread support for a global sectoral approach to the issue of airlines and their carbon footprint.

**TOM BALLANTYNE reports**

**W**hen negotiators from 193 countries finally reached consensus

on supporting a climate change deal brokered by U.S. President Obama and leaders from China, India, South Africa and Brazil, it was far from an agreement designed to answer all the world's global warming problems.

"It may not be everything everyone had hoped for, but this decision is an important beginning," declared U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, following the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen.

That is how the global aviation industry saw it, too. The Copenhagen Accord has been generally welcomed by aviation industry leaders.

And while aviation emissions were not specifically addressed in Denmark, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said it was "an important step in the right direction". More importantly, according to IATA director general, Giovanni Bisignani, there was "consensus among the delegations that a global sectoral approach should be established for aviation emissions by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), the UN's specialized agency for aviation".

He said IATA was "encouraged by the level of support for the industry's global sectoral approach and targets. We will continue to press states to include these global targets in any future deal".

Bisignani said IATA will work closely with ICAO to prepare a global framework for managing aviation's emissions for the ICAO Assembly to consider in September 2010 and will urge governments to ensure this framework is presented to COP16 in Mexico in December.

"In the meantime we continue to urge governments to avoid creating a patchwork of national and regional solutions and to ensure aviation's emissions are dealt with as a sector and across the world. A global sectoral approach supported by tough targets is the only sensible way forward for a global industry," he said.

Bisignani's message was underscored by a legal challenge launched the day after COP15 concluded by U.S. airlines against European Union (EU) regulations that will cap allowable jet emissions and force carriers to pay for exceeding limits.

The U.S. carriers' trade group, the Air Transport Association, and three airlines – American, United and Continental – filed the suit in

London. The EU scheme goes into effect in 2012.

U.S. airlines want the European Court of Justice to review the matter. They say the plan is overly broad, logistically complex and too expensive at a time when the industry is losing billions of dollars annually. They argue ticket prices for flights into and out of EU nations would jump sharply to account for costs associated with the emissions trading formula.

It is widely expected that airlines from other parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific, will also mount legal challenges. Andrew Herdman, director general of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA), said the association would be "closely monitoring developments in the case". Herdman welcomed the Copenhagen Accord. He said the united industry plan of action offers challenging and ambitious targets that will deliver an improvement in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions efficiency of 1.5% each year to 2020; carbon neutral growth from 2020; and a halving of net emissions by 2050.

"Copenhagen served to remind us all that reaching political consensus on climate change initiatives, reconciling the differing interests of developed and developing nations, can be extremely challenging. For



**IATA encouraged by the level of support for the industry's global sectoral approach and targets [in Copenhagen]**

**Giovanni Bisignani**  
Director General  
IATA

our part, the aviation industry is keen to move ahead and will be working hard towards meeting our shared commitments. We urge governments to follow that lead by committing to a plan of action to implement a global sectoral approach to aviation emissions."

Angela Gittens, director general of Airports Council International (ACI), called for renewed engagement across the aviation sector for managing environmental commitment. "During the COP15 meeting we have heard scientific, economic and political views on the 'why, what, and how' of tackling climate change. All, however, seem to agree on one point: now is the time to act.

"ACI pledges to continue to pursue industry collaboration through ICAO and with our aviation partners in promoting sensible governmental action as well as achieving reductions in emissions," she said. ■