



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

## News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
<http://www.dot.gov/briefing.htm>

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 144-98

### **Safe Skies Initiative Is Improving U.S.-Africa Air Service, Slater Tells Committee**

President Clinton's initiative to promote aviation safety and airport security in Africa, announced less than four months ago, is already beginning to pay off in improved air links between the United States and Africa, Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said today.

In testimony today before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, Secretary Slater said that the Safe Skies for Africa initiative, which he promoted during his tour of Africa earlier this month, will help the continent become a full partner in the global community. The purpose of the initiative, he said, is to promote sustainable improvements in aviation safety and airport security in Africa in order to foster the environment necessary to expand air links to the United States.

"Air transportation is the clipper ship and iron horse of our day, and better air services -- both passenger and cargo -- are a prerequisite for expanding trade and tourism, two powerful engines of economic growth for African nations," the Secretary said. "Today, fully one-half of all international commerce is conducted by air -- but you can't trade if you can't get there. Furthermore, tourism, the world's largest industry, is rapidly becoming one of the most important and lucrative businesses on the continent, and the development of the tourism sector is a high priority for many African governments. Recognizing that, the African leaders with whom I have met have fully embraced the Safe Skies for Africa initiative as a vehicle to provide for aviation safety and airport security."

Secretary Slater said the goals of the Safe Skies initiative are to quadruple the number of African countries that meet the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for aviation safety oversight, to improve airport security at between eight and 12 airports in Africa within three years, and to improve regional navigation services. Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa are the only sub-Saharan countries certified by DOT's Federal Aviation Administration as meeting ICAO safety oversight standards.

As a result of the initiative, U.S.-Africa air services are already improving, he said. Last month, after Ethiopia was found to meet ICAO standards, Ethiopian Airlines began direct service between Addis Ababa and Washington's Dulles Airport, becoming the fourth sub-Saharan African airline -- in addition to South African Airways, Ghana Airways and Air Afrique -- to serve the United States. U.S. carriers also are showing a greater interest in serving Africa, with Polar Air Cargo recently being authorized to fly between New York and South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. In addition, DOT recently approved a

code-sharing agreement between Northwest Airlines and Kenya Airways, the second code-sharing agreement between a U.S. and African carrier following the American Airlines-South African Airways code share. Other U.S. airlines have commenced code-share service to Africa with their European partners.

Secretary Slater's July 7-15 trip to Africa included regional meetings with African ministers of transport in Harare, Zimbabwe, and Dakar, Senegal, at which he discussed the Safe Skies initiative and other transportation issues. The Secretary also visited Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Angola and Cameroon.

In today's testimony, Secretary Slater also addressed H.R. 3741, the proposed Aviation Bilateral Accountability Act introduced by Rep. William Lipinski of Illinois, which would require congressional review of bilateral aviation agreements. The Secretary said that congressional input has been a key component in U.S. aviation initiatives. The current processes for negotiating international aviation agreements have worked well, he added.

The Secretary also addressed the review by the European Union (EU) of alliances involving U.S. and European airlines. Secretary Slater said that alliances have been an important catalyst in liberalizing the international aviation market and have brought increased competition to thousands of communities. However, he added, European authorities have a legitimate interest in ensuring that international aviation develops in a pro-competitive way, which can include the evaluation of alliances. DOT staff will continue to work with the Commission of the EU on approaches to alliances and their competitive implications, he said.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

Contact : Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 150-98

### **MAJOR U.S. AIRLINES REPORT RECORD FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR FIRST QUARTER 1998 AND 12 MONTHS ENDED MARCH 1998**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) announced that 11 of the 13 major U.S. airlines reported an operating and net profit for the first quarter of 1998, and the combined group attained an all-time high for any first quarter in both operating and net results.

The group also recorded their best financial performance ever for any 12-month period, the department said.

The 13 carriers as a group reported a combined operating profit during the first quarter of \$1.61 billion, up nearly \$193 million from the first quarter of 1997, and a combined net profit of \$852 million, an improvement of \$107 million.

"Our nation's airlines continue to prosper, despite the problems in Asia, because President Clinton's economic policies have promoted a strong domestic economy," Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said. "In addition, the industry has benefited greatly from declining fuel costs, and the airlines' own efforts to cut operating expenses. We expect these trends to continue."

The industry greatly benefited from a sharp 22 percent drop in unit fuel prices, reducing total fuel expenses during the quarter by over \$600 million from the first quarter of 1997.

Every major airline, except for Trans World Airlines, reported an operating profit during the quarter, while every major airline, except for Trans World Airlines and United Parcel Service (UPS), reported a net profit. Six majors (Alaska, America West, American, DHL Airways, Northwest, and Southwest) reported all-time first quarter company records in both operating and net results. US Airways reported a record first quarter operating profit, and Delta reported a record first quarter net income.

Every major carrier attained an operating profit for the 12 months ending March 1998, and all but Trans World Airlines recorded a net profit. Except for DHL Airways, United and UPS, all major carriers experienced year-to-year improvements in both operating and net results.

For the 12 months ended March 1998, the major carriers combined to achieve operating revenues of nearly \$100 billion, and attained an operating profit of \$8.75 billion, \$1.63 billion higher than the previous 12 months. Net income also soared, rising \$1.97 billion from the previous year to \$5.58 billion. DOT said

that these improvements reflect the continued efforts by the airlines to slow the growth of operating expenses, up 4.3 percent, while boosting operating revenues, up 5.7 percent.

Passenger yield climbed 0.4 percent to 12.95 cents per mile. Revenue passenger miles gained 3.4 percent, while available seat mile capacity grew a lesser 2.9 percent, causing the passenger load factor to rise to 70.6 percent.

The quarterly financial review of the major airlines includes for the first time data for DHL Airways, which achieved "major airline" status -- *i.e.*, annual operating revenues exceeding \$1 billion -- effective Jan. 1, 1997. The two other major all-cargo airlines are Federal Express and UPS. The ten major passenger airlines are America West Airlines, American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Trans World Airlines, United Airlines, and US Airways.

The report is available on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov/ost/aviation/analysis.html>.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, September 2, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 159-98

### **NORTHWEST AIRLINK MUST CONTINUE SERVICE, SECRETARY SLATER SAYS**

Commuter carriers operating as Northwest Airlink must reinstate service under federal law to 17 small communities in the Midwest and South, despite code-share partner Northwest Airlines' suspension of operations due to the pilots' strike, Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said today in letters to the carriers.

Under the federal Essential Air Service (EAS) program, carriers Mesaba Airlines and Express Airlines I are prohibited from suspending air service below mandated levels without first filing a 90-day notice of their intent.

"Despite the strike at Northwest, these affiliated carriers must operate service," Secretary Slater said. "We expect that Mesaba Airlines and Express Airlines I will promptly resume flights to the 17 communities which, as a result of their actions, currently have no service."

The carriers, Mesaba Aviation and Express Airlines I, have an agreement with Northwest under which they use Northwest's designator code on flights that feed passengers from small communities into Northwest's hub airports. Mesaba serves Northwest's hubs at Detroit and Minneapolis, while Express I flies to Memphis.

The statutory minimum service levels under the EAS program are two nonstop or one-stop round trips a day to a major hub airport, six days a week. In addition, DOT regulations require carriers to file 90-day notices before eliminating more than one-third of a community's total seats.

DOT asked the carriers to provide a plan to implement the resumption of service by the close of business on Sept. 3.

The communities, the commuter carriers which must resume air service, and the hubs they served are:

Bemidji, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Brainerd, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Duluth/Superior, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Eau Claire, Wis.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Ft. Dodge, Iowa	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Greenville, Miss.	Express I	Memphis
Grand Forks, N.D.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Hibbing/Chisholm, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Houghton/Hancock, Mich.	Mesaba	Detroit/Minneapolis
International Falls, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Jackson, Tenn.	Express I	Memphis
Laurel/Hattiesburg, Miss.	Express I	Memphis
Owensboro, Ky.	Express I/Mesaba	Memphis/Detroit
Rockford, Ill.	Mesaba	Detroit/Minneapolis
Sheffield/Muscle Shoals, Ala.	Express I	Memphis
Thief River Falls, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Watertown, S.D.	Mesaba	Minneapolis

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, September 8, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 164-98

### **U.S. Government Files Suit to Order Northwest Airlink Affiliate into Service**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater and Attorney General Janet Reno announced that the Department of Transportation and the Department of Justice will file suit tomorrow in Minneapolis requesting that Northwest Airlines and its Northwest Airlink affiliate Mesaba Airlines be ordered to immediately reinstate scheduled air passenger service at 13 communities which have been without service since Aug. 31.

The suit is being filed because Northwest and its Airlink affiliate failed to comply with a DOT order requiring the carriers to reinstate service to 13 communities. The departments seek an injunction requiring the immediate reinstatement of service to comply with the order.

The suit requires Mesaba to provide service to the communities, and Northwest Airlines to provide the necessary support for its Airlink affiliates to meet their obligations. The suit regarding Mesaba and Northwest Airlines will be filed in Federal District Court in Minneapolis.

On Friday, Sept. 4, Secretary Slater ordered that commuter carriers operating as Northwest Airlink must reinstate service under federal law to 17 small communities in the Midwest and South, despite code-share partner Northwest Airlines' suspension of operations due to the pilots' strike. Under the federal Essential Air Service (EAS) program, Mesaba is prohibited from suspending air service below mandated levels without first filing a 90-day notice of their intent.

Mesaba has an agreement with Northwest under which it uses Northwest's designator code on flights that feed passengers from small communities into Northwest's hub airports. Mesaba serves Northwest's hubs at Detroit and Minneapolis.

The department is having productive discussions with the other Northwest Airlink carrier, Express Airlines I, to reinstate air service to the remaining EAS communities. DOT will review its options regarding resumption of service to those communities following the conclusion of those discussions.

Under DOT's Sept. 4 order, the services are to meet the minimum levels prescribed by statute and by the department's regulations which require two round trips a day, six days a week, or two-thirds of the capacity that was being offered prior to the hiatus in service, whichever is greater.

The communities, the commuter carriers which must resume air service, and the hubs they served are:

Bemidji, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Brainerd, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Duluth/Superior, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Eau Claire, Wis.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Ft. Dodge, Iowa	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Greenville, Miss.	Express I	Memphis
Grand Forks, N.D.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Hibbing/Chisholm, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Houghton/Hancock, Mich.	Mesaba	Detroit/Minneapolis
International Falls, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Jackson, Tenn.	Express I	Memphis
Laurel/Hattiesburg, Miss.	Express I	Memphis
Owensboro, Ky.	Express I/Mesaba	Memphis/Detroit
Rockford, Ill.	Mesaba	Detroit/Minneapolis
Sheffield/Muscle Shoals, Ala.	Express I	Memphis
Thief River Falls, Minn.	Mesaba	Minneapolis
Watertown, S.D.	Mesaba	Minneapolis

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Contact: Bill Adams

Tel.: (202) 366-5580

DOT 171-98

### **DOT Enforcement Office Settles Cases With United, Lufthansa Over Discrimination Against Disabled Passenger**

The Department of Transportation's Aviation Enforcement Office today announced settlements with United Airlines and Lufthansa German Airlines, a United code-share partner, which have been found to have violated federal law when a disabled passenger was not allowed to board a flight operated by Lufthansa under the code-share agreement.

The orders that resulted from the settlements with United and Lufthansa mark DOT's first finding that a U.S. carrier violated laws protecting the rights of disabled passengers on a flight operated by a foreign code-share partner and DOT's first finding that any airline has violated the statutory prohibition against unreasonable discrimination in foreign air transportation.

Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater, commenting on the orders, stressed that the air transportation system must be inclusive in its service and, therefore, accessible to travelers with disabilities, and that U.S. airlines with foreign code-share partners serving the United States must comply with all applicable disability requirements.

"The department cannot tolerate discrimination against any segment of the public in the provision of air service," Secretary Slater said. "The actions taken here make it clear to all concerned that the horizons of U.S. air travelers with disabilities do not end at the U.S. border."

United agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$3,000 and Lufthansa agreed to pay \$1,000. Although neither carrier admitted any wrongdoing, both agreed to cease and desist from violations in the future.

On June 17, 1997, the passenger, whose partial paralysis necessitates the use of a wheelchair, boarded a United aircraft in Seattle, on which he traveled to New York without incident. There he attempted to transfer to United Flight 3516, operated by Lufthansa while carrying United's code. However, when Lufthansa staff became aware of the passenger's disability, they refused to accept him for the flight.

The enforcement office said that United violated the law by failing to ensure that Lufthansa complied with United's tariff provisions regarding passengers with disabilities that it ticketed. These provisions state that a disabled passenger must be carried unattended unless the passenger has a mobility impairment so severe as to be unable to assist in his or her own evacuation. Since the passenger flew from Seattle to New York

unattended and had no difficulty proceeding through security and down the jetway in preparation for boarding Flight 3516, he at least could have assisted in his own evacuation, the order said. Such discrimination by a U.S. airline against a qualified disabled passenger violates the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986, the enforcement office said. In addition, United's holding out of service between Seattle and Frankfurt and failing to ensure that the service would be provided as promised constitutes a prohibited unfair and deceptive practice, the order said.

In approving the United-Lufthansa code-share agreement in January 1994, the department required that United's contract of carriage provisions, including tariffs, apply to the international segment of the service operated by the foreign code-share partner for the passengers it tickets.

Although the Air Carrier Access Act applies only to U.S. airlines, all carriers providing air service to and from the United States are prohibited by statute from engaging in unreasonable discrimination. Lufthansa was found to have violated this provision.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, September 28, 1998

DOT Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

NTSB Contact: Matthew Furman

Tel.: (202) 314-6100

DOT 176-98

### **Secretary Slater, Chairman Hall Present Status of Families Task Force Recommendations**

Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chairman James E. Hall today reported that less than one year after a task force issued recommendations to improve the treatment family members receive after an aviation accident, all of the recommendations in the ten key recommendation categories have been completed or are substantially underway.

On Oct. 29, 1997, the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters issued 61 recommendations to ensure that the families of the victims of aviation disasters receive prompt and compassionate assistance. The Task Force, which was formed in March 1997, built on the February 1997 recommendations of the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, which was chaired by Vice President Gore. Secretary Slater and Chairman Hall were co-chairs of the task force.

"I am proud to accept the anniversary report of the Task Force," Vice President Gore said. "Their outstanding efforts clearly demonstrate that when we take a common sense approach and work together -- the government, the airlines and the traveling public -- all of America benefits."

"The work of the task force, the Clinton administration, the Congress and the airlines has provided a more compassionate response to the victims of aviation disasters," Secretary Slater said at an NTSB symposium in Arlington, Va., on family and victim assistance for transportation disasters. "The implementation of the recommendations shows that, in the words of fellow task force member Kendra St. Charles, 'working together, we can make things better.'"

The Secretary added that a bipartisan effort led the U.S. House of Representatives to pass legislation acting on the task force's recommendations. This includes a requirement that air carriers provide adequate training to their employees and agents to meet the needs of survivors and family members, and an extension of the ban on solicitations of family members by attorneys from 30 to 45 days. The House also passed legislation assuring that each state can provide mental health and counseling services in the event of an accident.

In addition, on Thursday, a new Department of Transportation rule will take effect requiring U.S. and foreign airlines to ask U.S. citizens traveling to or from the United States for an emergency contact name and telephone number. In the event of an aviation disaster, that information must be transmitted to the U.S. Department of State within three hours.

The task force consisted of 22 members, including representatives of state governments, the aviation industry, the media, the legal profession, and a survivor of an aviation disaster and four family members of the victims of aviation disasters.

The report on the implementation of the task force recommendations may be obtained from the Internet



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, October 1, 1998

DOT 180-98  
Contact: Alison Duquette  
Tel.: (202) 267-8521

## FAA Unveils Plan To Enhance Safety of Aging Aircraft Systems

Building on the success of the aging structures program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater and FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey today announced a multi-year effort -- which includes both short- and long-term initiatives -- to address the safety and reliability of systems on commercial aircraft.

The FAA's *Aging Transport Non-Structural Systems Plan* responds to a recommendation by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security chaired by Vice President Gore.

"Safety is President Clinton's highest transportation priority and the 'north star' of our efforts at the Department of Transportation," Secretary Slater said. "This new initiative continues our work to fulfill the mandate of the White House Commission, which is a blueprint to help us make the world's safest aviation system even safer."

The White House Commission specifically recommended that the FAA work in cooperation with airlines and manufacturers to expand the FAA's aging aircraft program to include a variety of systems. These include electrical wiring, connectors, wiring harnesses, and cables; fuel, hydraulic and pneumatic lines; and electro-mechanical systems such as pumps, sensors, and actuators.

"Our aging structures program is successful because of the joint commitment of the government and the aviation industry," said Garvey. "This aging systems plan opens a new era of aviation safety and ensures we are identifying and addressing potential safety risks."

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Thursday, October 1, 1998

The Air Transport Association (ATA), in cooperation with the FAA and the airplane manufacturers, voluntarily launched an initial inspection program to enhance an already excellent maintenance program and identify potential problems with aging systems in the entire commercial fleet.

"The airlines remain relentlessly committed to safety and, in partnership with the FAA and aircraft manufacturers, have pledged their full resources and experience to ensuring the reliability of all commercial aircraft systems – regardless of age," said ATA President and CEO Carol B. Hallett. "The short-term information we are obtaining through our initial inspection program is already providing the building blocks for determining appropriate maintenance improvements, as well as long-term design enhancements to aircraft systems."

Teams of experts will study each specific aircraft model and produce model-specific aging systems actions. Chairing the review will be Kent Hollinger, vice president for quality assurance and engineering at America West Airlines.

The FAA expects to propose regulations by the end of the year to require certain aircraft manufacturers to demonstrate that fuel system designs remain safe and prevent possible ignition sources in the fuel tank. The manufacturer would be required to conduct a design review to determine any additional maintenance practices needed to maintain the integrity of airplane fuel tank wiring. The airlines would be required to comply with the regulations once the maintenance practices are developed.

Typically, air carriers use three types of wiring checks. Zonal inspections, conducted every two years, examine the condition of exposed wire bundles and connectors. Airworthiness Directives (ADs) mandate corrective actions. Inspections of flight critical systems, such as autoland, are routinely conducted by airlines. Research will determine if a service-life limit is warranted for aircraft wiring.

Under the *Aging Transport Non-Structural Systems Plan*, the longer-term initiatives will:

- Enhance airplane maintenance to better address aging airplane systems;
- Improve wiring installation drawings and instructions for continuing airworthiness;
- Evaluate the need for additional maintenance of transport airplane fuel system wiring and address any unsafe conditions;
- Add aging systems tasks to the aging airplane research program; and
- Improve reporting of accident/incident and maintenance actions involving wiring system components.

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Thursday, October 1, 1998

The FAA's Plan is based on one year of extensive research. The FAA held maintenance inspector workshops and meetings with an airplane manufacturer to discuss aging non-structural system issues. These efforts revealed that current maintenance practices for systems are too general and that standard repair practices are needed. In addition, a team of experts from the FAA and The Boeing Company inspected five aging aircraft: three DC-10s, a DC-9 and a Boeing 727, with significant flight hours or age undergoing heavy maintenance. The team did not find any problems that would require taking aircraft out of service but did see a need to improve inspections and maintenance practices.

The FAA's aging aircraft program requires the FAA administrator to prescribe regulations that ensure the structural airworthiness of aging aircraft. This proactive program focuses on defining requirements for maintaining aircraft through improved inspections and repair practices. It ensures that the structural safety level assumed to have existed at the time the aircraft was first FAA-approved is maintained for as long as the aircraft operates. Through the cooperative efforts of government and industry, the FAA's aging aircraft program has improved aviation safety in the United States and throughout the world.

The FAA's *Aging Transport Non-Structural Systems Plan* is available on the World Wide Web at: [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov) under the Office of Public Affairs' "reports & publications" site.

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Contact: Carolee Bush

Tel.: (202) 366-6946

DOT 193-98

### **ASHISH SEN NAMED DIRECTOR OF DOT'S BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS**

Dr. Ashish Sen was confirmed today by the United States Senate as the Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Sen was nominated for the position by President Clinton on Sept. 29th, 1998.

"It is a pleasure to have Dr. Sen join the DOT team," Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said. "I look forward to working with him as he brings a wealth of experience in statistics, mathematics and urban transportation planning to the department."

The BTS director is responsible for directing data collection, analysis and reporting to ensure the most cost-effective use of transportation resources. Specific duties include publishing a comprehensive set of transportation statistics that provide summaries of transportation data and working with DOT modal administrators and state and federal officials to establish and implement long-term transportation data collection programs relating to the performance of the national transportation system.

Before accepting his new position, Dr. Sen was the Director of the statistics and evaluation laboratory at the Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois in Chicago and in 1997, he was named director of the center. He was also a professor of urban planning, mathematics, statistics, and computer science at the university. He held various positions at the College of Urban Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle such as associate professor, acting dean and director of the school of urban sciences. Sen has authored numerous articles and co-authored two books about statistics and transportation.

A native of Delhi, India, Dr. Sen received his school certificate in 1958 from St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, India. He received his B.S. in mathematics in 1962 with honors from Calcutta University, his M.A. in mathematics and his Ph.D. in statistics from the University of Toronto in 1964 and 1971 respectively.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, October 30, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 196-98

### **Secretary Slater Invites Countries to Participate In "Safe Skies for Africa" Initiative**

Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater today announced that eight African countries have been asked to participate in President Clinton's "Safe Skies for Africa" initiative, a program to promote sustainable improvements in aviation safety and airport security across the continent.

The countries invited to participate in the initiative are Angola, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Secretary Slater made the announcement at a news conference in Washington with the ambassadors from the participating countries present.

"In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton emphasized that the global economy requires us to seek opportunities not just at home, but in markets around the world," Secretary Slater said. "By making African skies safer for travelers and for trade, we are not only helping the people of the region -- we are investing all that Africa offers for the American people as well."

The Secretary said that "Safe Skies for Africa" is a key part of the President's larger vision for strengthening America's relationship with Africa for the 21st century. Africa is increasingly turning to democracy and free markets, which will boost the continent's economy and trade with the United States, he said.

President Clinton launched the "Safe Skies" initiative on April 1 while on a two-week tour of Africa. Secretary Slater returned to Africa July 7-15, visiting six countries and holding two regional meetings to further develop the initiative and discuss other transportation issues.

The countries invited to participate in the initiative were selected based on several criteria, including their interest in the program and their ability to improve their air safety systems. The selections were made by an interagency working group consisting of the Departments of Transportation, State and Defense, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Secretary Slater said the initiative has three goals:

- To significantly increase the number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa that meet the safety and security standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

- To improve security at 8-12 airports in Africa within three years.
- To improve regional air navigation services.

Secretary Slater noted that three African countries -- South Africa, Ghana and Ethiopia -- already meet international safety oversight standards and operate direct flights to the United States.

The Secretary added that African nations must assume ownership of the "Safe Skies" initiative by recognizing the importance of aviation safety and airport security to its development. The United States will serve as a technical advisor and facilitator of actions to be taken by the African nations, with assistance from the private sector, regional institutions and international organizations. While host governments will bear primary responsibility for funding the program, the Department of Transportation, through its Federal Aviation Administration, will continue to perform aviation safety and security assessments.

Secretary Slater said he expected that safety improvements will lead to liberalized bilateral aviation agreements with African countries and more air services between the United States and Africa. He noted that since the Safe Skies initiative began, new air service links already have developed. Polar Air Cargo began service this month between New York and South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Previously, no U.S. carrier served sub-Saharan Africa with its own aircraft. In June, Ethiopian Airlines began service between Addis Ababa and Washington, and this week added service to Newark, N.J.

New code sharing services also are increasing the number of travel options available. Last July, DOT approved a new code-sharing alliance between Northwest Airlines and Kenya Airways. Today, the department approved an expansion of that alliance to allow service to additional points in Africa.

The "Safe Skies" initiative is only one program in DOT's effort to help upgrade transportation infrastructure across Africa, Secretary Slater said. The department has been working with African nations to improve railway systems, roadways, ports, inland waterways, and coastal safety and security, as well as aviation.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, November 6, 1998

Contact: Bill Adams

Telephone: 202-366-5580

DOT 200-98

***Environment and Planning***

**U.S. Transportation Deputy Secretary Downey  
Hosts One-DOT Session in Rhode Island**

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—U.S. Transportation Deputy Secretary Mortimer L. Downey today joined U.S. Senators John Chafee and Jack Reed, federal, state and local officials and other interested parties in a listening session to discuss environmental and planning issues related to the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

Today's session was the final of 12 national outreach efforts held around the country as the U.S. Department of Transportation and its agencies begin to implement the new law, which President Clinton signed June 9, 1998. TEA-21 guarantees a record \$198 billion in federal investment over the next six years in surface transportation—in highways, transit, highway safety and other related initiatives.

"Safety is President Clinton's highest transportation priority," Downey said. "This historic legislation is about more than money, just as transportation is about more than concrete, asphalt and steel; it's about people and providing them with the opportunity to lead safer, better, more fulfilling lives in a healthier environment."

Downey also praised Senator Chafee's leadership as chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on a range of transportation-related safety, environmental, equal opportunity and financing issues and Senator Reed's commitment to transit and intermodalism.

To protect the environment, TEA-21 continued the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program with a total authorized funding level of \$8.1 billion over six years. In addition, it continued provisions for transportation enhancements, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, recreational trails and national scenic byways; and it created the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot program.

The fiscal year 1999 budget signed by President Clinton Oct. 21 provides a record \$3.3 billion for programs to mitigate transportation's impact on the environment, a 23 percent increase over 1998. It also includes almost \$2 billion, a 33 percent increase, for highway environmental programs.

TEA-21 outreach sessions earlier took place in Portland, Ore.; Denver; San Diego; Detroit; Harrisburg, Pa.; New Orleans; Northern Virginia; New York; Houston; Chicago; and Minneapolis.

The outreach sessions enable the department to consult with its partners and customers before implementing provisions in TEA-21. Half of the sessions covered a broad range of issues and concerns related to TEA-21, and half, including the meeting in Providence, were called One-DOT conferences because they solicited comments on a more topical basis concerning new program initiatives and revisions to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA).

One-DOT is an initiative of Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater to meld the 10 agencies of the department into a unit that acts as an integrated, purposeful leader in improving transportation efficiency and effectiveness.

Information about the legislation and its implementation is available on the Internet at <http://www.dot.gov/tea21>.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Contact: Bill Adams

Telephone: 202-366-5580

DOT 204-98

### **Transportation Secretary Slater Announces U.S.-Italy Open Skies Agreement**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today announced that the United States and Italy have initialed an agreement on a new open-skies aviation regime.

The new agreement, when implemented, will allow U.S. and Italian airlines to operate to all cities in both countries, with no restrictions on prices they charge or the number of flights they operate. The Italian side has indicated that it would sign and implement the open-skies agreement when an Alitalia alliance is approved and given antitrust immunity by the U.S. government.

"When the newly agreed-upon U.S.-Italy aviation regime becomes effective, U.S. and Italian airlines will be able to respond freely to market forces, bringing competitively determined schedules and prices to consumers and communities on both sides of the Atlantic," Secretary Slater said. "We look forward to strengthening U.S.-Italy aviation ties and to the benefits that such links bring to our economic relationship."

The new agreement will establish an open aviation environment between the United States and its fifth largest European partner, complementing the open-skies aviation regimes already agreed upon between the United States and 13 other European partners. It also allows the U.S. Department of Transportation to consider an anticipated request from Alitalia for approval of, and grant of antitrust immunity for, an alliance with a U.S. carrier.

The two countries also agreed that airlines of each country could operate up to one new daily service between any cities in the United States and Italy beginning on April 1, 1999.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, December 15, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 220-98

### **DOT Enforcement Office Settles Case With Alitalia Over Discrimination Against Disabled Passenger**

The Department of Transportation's Aviation Enforcement Office today reached a settlement with the Italian airline Alitalia over the carrier's failure to transport a passenger due to his disability. This marks the enforcement office's second enforcement action regarding discrimination in foreign air transportation.

The passenger, who uses a wheelchair, filed a formal complaint with the department describing an incident on Oct. 4, 1997, in which he arrived at the airport in Rome well before the scheduled departure for his flight to Newark, N.J. However, Alitalia had no boarding wheelchair available at the gate. The carrier reassigned the seat, located in an emergency exit row, to another passenger, failing to provide the disabled traveler an alternate seat. The passenger was forced to remain in Rome and board the next flight several hours later.

The enforcement office noted that the federal law prohibiting unreasonable discrimination against passengers in foreign air transportation applies to foreign as well as U.S. carriers, and that Alitalia violated this prohibition. Although the carrier did not admit any wrongdoing, it agreed to cease and desist from violations in the future. No monetary penalty was assessed.

"Today's action by the enforcement office sends a clear signal that all disabled passengers in foreign air transportation, whether traveling on U.S. or foreign airlines, deserve to be treated in a non-discriminatory fashion," Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said.

On Sept. 23, the office reached settlements with United Airlines and Lufthansa German Airlines, which were found to violate federal law when a disabled passenger was not allowed to board a flight operated by Lufthansa under a code-share agreement with United.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, December 15, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 221-98

### **All U.S.-Carrier Flights Now Completely Smoke-Free, Secretary Slater Says**

All U.S.-carrier flights, both domestic and international, are now completely smoke-free, Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said today.

In addition, 91 percent of all flights between the United States and foreign destinations, including those by foreign carriers, are smoke-free.

"President Clinton is committed to cleaner air, policies that best ensure protecting the health of the American people, and the Department of Transportation has made eliminating in-flight smoking a top priority," Secretary Slater said. "Just over 10 years ago, it was virtually impossible to find a smoke-free flight; now, it is possible to fly to almost any destination without encountering smoking."

The Secretary added that in June 1997, New Zealand joined an existing agreement between the United States, Canada and Australia to ban smoking on flights operated by their airlines between these countries.

Besides the U.S. carrier actions, most foreign carriers serving the United States have eliminated smoking on most or all of their flights in accord with a resolution of the International Civil Aviation Organization which calls for a total ban on smoking on international flights.

This progress in eliminating smoking on international flights complements the statutory ban on smoking on U.S. domestic flights which took effect in February 1990.

Starting this month, Tower Air became the last U.S. carrier to eliminate all smoking on international flights.

DOT has made available on the Internet a list of countries served by non-stop no-smoking flights by U.S. carriers at <http://ostpxweb.dot.gov/>.

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, December 22, 1998

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT 227-98

### **DOT Rules on Federal Law Issues Regarding Love Field Operations**

The Department of Transportation ruled today that applicable federal law does not permit the local restrictions as presently constituted on air service at Dallas Love Field.

DOT issued its decision, based on federal statutes that the department has the responsibility for administering and enforcing, in order to determine whether current restrictions at Love Field are consistent with federal law. The department relied on federal statutes and Congress' decision that state and local governments should not regulate airline services in a manner that would interfere with airline deregulation.

When Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) opened in 1974, the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth attempted to prohibit interstate flights out of Love Field, which previously had served as the area's principal airport. However, in 1979, Congress enacted the Wright Amendment, which allowed service with large aircraft between Love Field and the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and New Mexico, as well as within Texas. The Wright Amendment also allowed unrestricted service operated with aircraft having a passenger capacity of no more than 56 passengers. The Shelby Amendment of 1997 also permitted flights to Alabama, Kansas and Mississippi, and clarified that the 56-passenger aircraft exemption applied both to aircraft designed or reconfigured to carry 56 passengers.

Following passage of the Shelby Amendment, Fort Worth sued in Texas state court last year to prevent the additional services allowed at the airport. Fort Worth claimed that a 1968 agreement between the cities barred Dallas from allowing airlines to operate the service authorized by Congress in 1997. In order to help resolve the pending litigation, DOT agreed to rule on the major issues of federal law involved in the dispute.

After soliciting public comment on the issue, the department determined that it had the authority and responsibility to rule on the federal laws involved. DOT said that the restrictions sought by Fort Worth are contrary to federal law. Airlines may operate flights within those states specified by the Wright and Shelby Amendments. DOT has already directed airlines not to operate beyond the service permitted by the Wright and Shelby amendments. Carriers also may operate largely unrestricted service with aircraft containing no more than 56 seats.

The Federal Aviation Administration will assure that any additional operations at Love Field do not

reduce the level of safety in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

An electronic version of the orders can be found in the Department's Briefing Room at <http://www.dot.gov/briefing.htm>

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