Welcome

Dear IGHC Colleagues,

It is with great joy that I welcome you to Doha, home of Qatar Airways and to our legendary Qatari hospitality. May your time spent here be enjoyable and rewarding.

The 31st IATA Ground Handling Conference gives us special cause for celebration because it is the first IGHC to be held in the Middle East and it is the first time that Qatar Airways gets to showcase our highly reputed ground handling and ground services business to you.

It is also an opportunity for conference delegates and media from all around the world to see Qatar as it continues its steady growth and development toward hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup and as it continues to grow as a tourist and stopover destination in its own right.

Everywhere you look, right from your first steps into our busy and breathtaking Hamad International Airport, there is growth and development. It is our way of life. Building for the future is our ever-present focus. It inspires us and drives us toward excellence, the results of which we want you to enjoy.

We have a beautiful city, a friendly country, and warm and hospitable people. I hope that you get to experience them all during your time in Qatar.

My hearty welcome and warmest best wishes to you, for a great IGHC 2018.

His Excellency, Akbar Al Baker, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive

“Building for the future is our ever-present focus. It inspires us towards excellence”

HE Akbar Al-Baker, CEO Qatar Airways
GLOBAL AIRPORT AND PASSENGER SYMPOSIUM

ATHENS, GREECE
2-4 OCTOBER 2018

- Examine the impact today’s established process and procedures will have on the future passenger journey
- Hear what passengers want in the unveiling of the Global Passenger Survey results
- Participate in interactive panel discussions that explore the technological solutions that could define and impact airport operations and processes
- Discover how to optimize the use of emerging technologies and design developments in the passenger journey
- Learn about trials and pilots currently underway and exchange best practices
- Vote for the winner of the IATA GAPS STARTUP Innovation Awards
- Network with key stakeholders from the industry value-chain and create new business opportunities

Join us to plan and shape tomorrow’s passenger experience!

www.iata.org/gaps #IATAGAPS gaps@iata.org
**Welcome: Innovation on the ground set to take centre stage**

Airlines make the world a better place, powering economies, connecting cultures, and bringing together friends and family. To produce those benefits, airlines must be safe and efficient. And the platform for such qualities is built from the ground up.

IGHC will discuss the trends, challenges, and opportunities to ensure that the platform is as robust as ever. It is sure to be an exciting and informative few days.

Innovation on the ground will be a key theme for the conference. Fortunately, we are already seeing great ideas. Baggage is benefiting from Resolution 753—which requires airlines to track each item of checked baggage at key points in the journey. Advanced baggage systems are also gaining in prominence, some of which are developing to be bag rather than flight centric.

Meanwhile, the New Experience Travel Technologies (NEXTT) program—a collaboration between IATA and Airports Council International—will bring fresh thinking to many other aspects of operations.

The use of autonomous vehicles (AV) on the ramp promises greater accuracy, which will lead to less damage and more efficient operations. And best of all, by reliably performing day-to-day processes, AVs free up ground staff to make the decisions that make the difference.

Existing initiatives, such as the IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM), are also being reviewed. Discussions are taking place to see how IGOM can be globally implemented. The end goal is for IGOM, together with IATA’s Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO), to ensure a safer and more operationally-consistent industry in the long term.

A revamp of ISAGO 2017—to celebrate its 10th anniversary—further strengthened the program. A core of dedicated, professionally-trained auditors is being established to ensure even greater auditing consistency and depth. The scope of ISAGO has been expanded too, to include catering and other activities that face a safety challenge.

Enjoy the conference. And remember: ground operations really are the platform for a better world.
IGHC Welcome Cocktails
IGHC Innovator 2018 enjoyed an incredible batch of worthy submissions. Three finalists have been selected with the winner announced at 11:15am on Wednesday in the Al Dafna Hall.

INTERNATIONAL BOARDING SOLUTIONS
International Boarding Solutions is a tech company that aims to improve the passenger experience. It has designed a cabin baggage checker to help airlines deal with carry-on luggage. Whether a bag makes it into the cabin is a subjective process that can cause boarding problems and affect airline revenue.

The firm’s electronic device analyzes weight and size in relation to a carrier’s policies. This improves passenger experience by treating each equally and helps airlines by refining the collection of carry-on baggage fees. The device can be adapted to a number of situations and locations, including as an auto check-in kiosk.

This flexibility and affordable costs create a compelling business case that has been backed up by trials to date.

SATS LTD
SATS Ltd has come up with a smartwatch for technical ramp operations. The aim is to minimize human errors; improve safety and productivity; and see resource availability in real time.

The smartwatch enables hands-free communication via a Bluetooth headset that is incorporated into the ear protection via innovative technology.

But it does much more too, including the automatic assignment of ad-hoc tasks, showing where staff are located, and monitoring the time spent on a task. Icons are used to display an array of information, making real-time integrated operations possible. Trials have shown a 10% improvement in productivity.

ASSAIA INTERNATIONAL AG
Assaia International AG has devised an innovative extension of ramp CCTV to help create a timestamp of everything happening on the apron during plane turnaround.

By adding machine learning technology, it will use the CCTV video feed to better understand aircraft turnarounds and to prevent accidents. The program will ensure charges for equipment and services are correct, that service level agreements are adhered to, and can detect and report on hazardous situations as they develop.

Because existing ramp CCTV is used, the project has excellent scalability and easy deployment.

IGHC Innovator was extremely beneficial and an opportunity to share an innovation only limited by your imagination... Overall the awards are a great opportunity to share the world’s best practices and ideas.  
Paul Ferguson, Head of Regional Airports at 2017-finalist, Qantas
Plan ahead for the unexpected

We are all interested in looking ahead. Investments need to be made; operations planned. But the reality is that we run our businesses in a world characterized by radical uncertainty. Geopolitics, asset price bubbles, pandemics and confidence are unpredictable. Knowing the future is difficult.

Big Data and predictive analytics increasingly allow us to better understand consumer behavior. We can better predict consumer responses to changes in product characteristics, like price or service levels, but that does not mean we can better predict the future.

The best response is to ensure business models and balance sheets allow flexibility and agility in responding to changes in the business environment. That means understanding current trends and thinking through scenarios about potentially disruptive factors.

So, what trends have we seen develop and can we identify potential disruptions?

One important trend going into 2018 is strong traffic growth. The key question is how long can this last? Past traffic cycles have typically lasted around eight years before experiencing a downturn, and we are now in the ninth year after the 2009 low point. Barring unpredictable shocks, strong traffic growth looks set to continue on the back of solid economic expansion. In IATA’s December 2017 forecast, we have predicted passenger growth of 6% in 2018.

Strong traffic growth often, but not always, means strong financial performance by airlines. It depends what is happening to profit margins, and last year these were being squeezed by a sharp acceleration in unit costs—fuel and labor. Fuel prices have continued to climb this year, though the expectation is that this will be limited by new supply from US tight oil producers.

If the economy stays strong there is a good chance margins will too, which is why we have forecast that the collective airline industry profit will hit a record $38.4 billion this year.

Economic shocks are always possible. Trade wars have been threatened, but so far have not taken hold. Asset prices have been inflated by the trillions of dollars of central bank quantitative easing operations, the unwinding of which is underway. The possibility of accidents is another factor.

Perhaps the key opportunity in 2018 will be to use still healthy cash flows to prepare for inevitable future shocks, strengthening balance sheets and building flexibility into business models.

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