

Opening Airneth Seminar 12-11-2009

“The Road to Copenhagen: Climate change and aviation”

- On behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs I would like to welcome you to this Airneth Seminar on “The Road to Copenhagen”, and what the process of climate change implies for the aviation industry around the globe.
- The Netherlands and ‘aviation’ go back a long way. Pioneering Dutch companies like Fokker, Spyker and airliner KLM were, and still are, matters of national pride. Therefore we are honoured to be able to host this seminar.
- Climate change is a hot item that is getting lots of attention by science, politics, media and in societies all over the world. The Dutch government finds it highly important that a comprehensive, legally binding instrument will succeed the Kyoto-protocol after 2012. At the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, in Copenhagen, we have the opportunity to take that step.
- The Dutch government has ambitious goals. Together with the EU we support targets for the developed world to reduce CO₂-emissions globally by 30% by 2020, and 80 to 95% by 2050. These targets are relative to 1990.
- The most recent Environmental Council of the EU also decided that global emission reduction targets for international aviation transport should be incorporated into a Copenhagen agreement. A global emission reduction target of 10% in 2020, relative to 2005, is considered by the Council. Last week, during preparatory UNFCCC negotiations in Barcelona, this aviation reduction target was entered in the preliminary text for Copenhagen.
- Part of achieving these global reduction goals, is to put money on the table. The European Union is working hard to come to a full agreement on Europe’s contribution to climate finance. All EU member-states support the financial estimates the European Commission has made. The Netherlands has already promised to contribute €100 million a year from 2010 to 2012. This amount is in line with the highest estimates of the Commission.

- The Dutch government believes that climate finance needs to be additional to existing Official Development Assistance. This will assure continuing and sufficient funding for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.
- We also believe it's important that all countries take responsibility for their emissions. A broadly supported, high level of responsibility among countries will ensure that global targets are met. And it will guarantee a level playing field for international economic actors, like yourselves.
- I can imagine that in the current harsh business climate, it is tempting to let the subject of 'climate change' become less of a priority. Nonetheless I am convinced that today's conditions offer tremendous possibilities for industries to create a sustainable business for the future.
- For aviation, numerous challenges exist to make the business more sustainable. For example it is known that airplanes produce relatively most of their air pollution during the 'Landing and Take-Off cycle'. And that jet-engines produce more pollutants than just CO₂. And what about the use of bio fuels? On these kind of technicalities I'm not an expert, but fortunately you are.
- Since it is you who are the experts, it is you who need to design workable solutions. Solutions which not only lead to the effects desired by society, science and politics, but which are also necessary as a contribution by your sector to keep temperature from rising more than two degrees centigrade.
- To that extent, the Aviation Global Deal can be considered as a good first step. The Dutch government believes the aviation industry is capable of stepping up to the challenges it faces. I encourage you to be ambitious. Because only the highest ambitions will lead to the best solutions. And the best solutions will lead to a healthy, clean and sustainable business.

I wish you all a very interesting, refreshing and fruitful day.