

Ziyavudin Magomedov
ABAC Chair 2012

24 May 2012

Ms. Monica Contreras

APEC CTI Chair &
Deputy Director for Multilateral & Regional Negotiations
Ministry of Economy
Mexico

Dear Monica:

ABAC members keenly welcomed the tabling of a short paper on an APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative at the San Francisco SOM3 last year. The APEC business community has long regarded the APEC Travel Card as one of the most significant and material business facilitation initiatives in the APEC region, and strongly endorses the attempt now to develop a more broadly-based strategy to ease and simplify the challenges and stresses that so often accompany the process of regional air travel. Sensing the potential importance of this initiative, the document was tabled at ABAC's final meeting in Honolulu in November and was again discussed at ABAC1 in Hong Kong in February.

Our ABAC members are keen to see this ambitious project progress, albeit recognizing the ambitious, multi-year nature. We recognize that the initiative is likely to involve significant input from at least five APEC fora, and are anxious to learn how you intend to drive this complex initiative forward. We note that several of the APEC fora concerned (Business Mobility Group, Anti Corruption Task Force, and the Sub-Committee Customs Procedures, for example) are not, in terms of their fundamental mission, "facilitative". Rather, they have a reasonable and legitimate security focus. This raises for ABAC members an obvious question:

How can we best ensure that the body responsible for championing this initiative is truly facilitative? Several possible solutions appear to present themselves:

- Task and empower the Tourism Working Group to lead the initiative.
- Ask CTI itself to lead and coordinate the project.
- Create a new body that embraces membership from all concerned parties.

We seek your own advice on the best way forward here. While in general terms ABAC is reluctant to encourage the creation of still more APEC CTI sub-fora or working groups, it seems this may be an unusual instance where such a new body might be justified. This is not simply because of the challenge of driving and coordinating the initiative, but because of the need to facilitate regular substantive input from the private sector and from specialist bodies like IATA, ICAO and PATA which are already at work on some aspects of the APEC initiative.

It is our intention to discuss best ways of driving forward the Travel Facilitation Initiative at ABAC3 in Viet Nam in July including how ABAC and the business sector can most usefully contribute. We would welcome your feedback to guide our discussion either in advance of that meeting or in person if you are able to join us in Viet Nam.

Sincerely yours,



Ziyavudin Magomedov
ABAC Chair 2012



Tony Nowell
Chair, ABAC Regional Economic Integration Working Group