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(Shanghai Exclusive)—FlyingTypers is in Shanghai for this year's annual conference, marking the 25th such conference for this group formerly known as the IULDUG (Interline ULD User Group).



The formal sessions, starting Tuesday morning local time, were preceded by a special meeting focused on the Chinese airlines and takes advantage of the opportunity to introduce and involve these carriers in the workings of the IULDUG group, renamed ULD CARE.

So straight out of the gate, a concerned industry group has ditched a tongue twisting moniker, preferring to brand an already complex mission with a comprehensible name:

ULD CARE.

Angel Cheung, General Manager of DAS Nordisk Limited, which is Hong Kong based, welcomed and addressed the Chinese audience of 30-plus that represented a cross-section of the Chinese aviation

industry (Kuehne & Nagel, Shanghai; Yangtze River Express Airlines, Shanghai; CATA, Beijing among others) with excerpts from the full presentation scheduled for the conference. She highlighted the networking aspect and learning platform ULD CARE provides.

She went over the vital role ULDs play in ensuring luggage and cargo are loaded and transported safely throughout the air cargo chain of participants and how to manage and minimize risk, whether economical, commercial, or regulatory, and from a flight safety perspective. Improving ULD management is a shared objective and the new acronym CARE—which stands for “compliance, airworthiness, regulations, and education”—fittingly represents the objectives of the new group members.

In turn, ULD CARE chairman Dick O'Marra (UPS) extended his welcome to the participants and invited them to stay on for the full conference.

Angel provided a brief overview of how the group has evolved since its inception in 1971 by IATA, and set up for tracking interlined ULDs.

The management tool of ULD CARE is a global, neutral, multilateral ULD control system that is a proprietary—a web-based solution for tracking the movements of ULDs that includes the creation of the relevant ULD movement messages; for example, LUC from UCR data, converting LUC to MUC, sending MUC to ULD CARE (online or automatically), and centralizing the data.

ULD CARE is unique in that it brings together airlines and non-airlines alike, including airports, cargo terminal operators, civil aviation authorities, ground handlers, and so forth. Additionally, the members benefit from shared best practices and learn about industry trends, training in and awareness of ULD management matters, and the ability to invoice for demurrage and provide visibility for late or unreturned units.

Following the presentation, a lively Q&A session ensued involving the Chinese guests, which was translated.

For attendees, the action demonstrated that there is much interest in the workings and benefits of ULD CARE, a sign the board took as encouraging future membership.



A sampling of commonly expressed concerns was: “How much does it cost to participate in ULD CARE?”; “What are the message transaction costs [currently 1.50 USD]” mostly formulated by Li Ruilin (left) of CATA (China Air Transport Association), a long time industry veteran and former CAAC representative; “What is the formula for calculating demurrage?” [The type of ULD/purchase cost divided by 180 (first 5 days, no charge)]; “How are invoices issued?” [Using the system in Montreal].

Urs Wiesendanger, (right) ULD CARE vice chair, explained the option for each airline to bill another airline or not—an exception to billing one another would be a bilateral courtesy move, as the

ULD CARE system does not issue invoices and settlement is not automatic through the IATA Clearing House (ICH). IATA in its largesse wanted \$15,000 USD for providing access to the ICH, and ULD CARE members elected to invoice each other directly.

“What is the difference between leasing ULDs and going through ULD CARE?” Urs clarified that the group as such does not own any assets, but rather acts as the middleman to facilitate ULD management.



Furthermore, membership assumes compliance with IATA regulations, especially when it comes to the handling of ULDs, something ULD CARE promotes and encourages everyone to abide, in support of IATA.

A new web-based app has potential in assisting members to look up what constitutes airworthiness and to determine the serviceability of a ULD.

“How about the repatriation of ULDs?” – a perennial concern, which prompted Urs to respond that group members actively support each other whenever possible, without bumping revenue cargo, to carry empty units.

The AGM agenda is loaded with both, group internal structural details as well as industry updates from the various bodies that affect the ULD business—IATA, SAE, FAA, CAA (UK) and CAAC, just to name a few. Of interest to all (as mentioned) will be the topic of demurrage, which affects all the carriers, and can make or break well-planned budgets when the interchange of ULDs is not managed and monitored properly.

Day Two features a panel moderated by Bob Rogers of Nordisk, a well-known and respected business veteran, focusing on the impact of the new IATA ULD operational guidelines and regulations and how IULDUG could contribute to fostering industry wide compliance and maintain high operational standards for ULDs while reducing associated risks. The panel has a broad representation of global experts from airlines, airports, ground handlers, freight forwarders, and regulators. Additionally, ULD leasing companies, equipment manufacturers, maintenance and repair firms, and pooling and management companies are expected to jump in the fray to round off the discussion and share their perspectives.

Two afternoon panels consisting of a similarly broad cross-industry representation aim to address the need for change, opportunities and challenges, and how to ensure progress.

Day Three starts on a technical note, looking at innovative applications to asset management for ULDs, while the afternoon is devoted to the education and sustainability angles, and resources and objective means to measure progress.

It is a workmanlike conference with a good portion of the participants already scheduled to exhibit at the upcoming Air Cargo Forum in Atlanta in early October to drive the point home to the industry at large that ULDs matter.

Ted Braun