

**EMBARGO: NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01TUESDAY MAY 30**

## **HEATHROW AT SIXTY – TIME TO RETIRE?**

Heathrow airport turns 60 this week and faces a declining old age unless it is allowed to expand, according to a new study published today.

Figures released by Future Heathrow show that the airport's lack of runway capacity has left the UK close to the bottom of the world league of national air hubs.

Heathrow celebrates its birthday tomorrow (Weds) with the same number of operational runways as when it opened for its first commercial flight on May 31, 1946.

Many of today's leading global airports did not exist in 1946. But now their development has leapfrogged Heathrow's, and many overseas hubs are implementing plans for further expansion.

The Future Heathrow analysis shows that of the 20 largest national economies in the world, the UK ranks almost last in terms of hub airport runways.

Heathrow's confinement to two runways puts the UK in the same bracket as Brazil, Indonesia and Iran. Only Mexico has fewer runways at its main global gateway.

Lord Soley, campaign director of Future Heathrow, said: "These figures demonstrate how far the UK has slipped behind not just Europe, but the rest of the world.

"A high-capacity hub airport with a comprehensive long and short haul network is absolutely essential for success in the modern global economy."

He added: "Heathrow cannot fulfil this role for the UK and the travelling public with the same number of runways it used 60 years ago to cater for the tiniest fraction of the volume of flights that operate today.

"Heathrow's total route network is already 12 per cent smaller than it was in 1990. It must be permitted to expand – or else prepare for inactive retirement at the expense of tens of thousands of jobs across the UK."

## Top 20 national economies ranked by runways at largest hub

1. USA (hub with 6 runways)
2. Canada (5)
3. China (4)
  - France (4)
  - Spain (4)
6. Australia (3)
  - Germany (3)
  - Italy (3)
  - Japan (3)
  - Taiwan (3)
  - Turkey (3)
12. Brazil (2)
  - India (2)
  - Indonesia (2)
  - Iran (2)
  - Russia (2)
  - South Korea (2)
  - Thailand (2)
  - UK (2)
20. Mexico (1)

(GDP data: US Government statistics, 2005)

### Notes to Editors:

1. For further information, please contact Lord Soley (formerly West London MP Clive Soley) on 07785 250456.
2. Future Heathrow is an alliance of trade unions, business groups, airlines and professional associations supporting the sustainable development and modernisation of Heathrow.

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