Singapore Airlines votes for Rolls-Royce Trent engines

Singapore Airlines' (SIA) order for Rolls-Royce Trent engines for its B777 aircraft was cemented recently at a signing ceremony in London. SIA Managing Director and Chief Executive, Cheong Choong Kong and Rolls-Royce Chairman, Sir Ralph Robins signed an agreement which was witnessed by the British Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine.

Among the VIPs at the ceremony, which took place at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, was Britain's High Commissioner to Singapore, Mr. Gordon Duggan.

This is the first time that SIA has selected Rolls-Royce engines to power its aircraft since the airline was formed in 1972, following the split of Malaysia-Singapore Airlines into two carriers.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr Cheong said that SIA had chosen the Trent engine following a rigorous evaluation exercise. "As well as being a multimillion-pound vote of confidence in Rolls-Royce, this order will have major implications for one of our major subsidiaries, the SIA Engineering Company," he said. "Engines such as the Trent 800 are the way of the future for commercial aviation, and there will be in- creasing demand from airlines for skilled maintenance and servicing facilities."

The B777-200Bs, the basic unit of the B777 family, will have around 300 seats and come fully equipped with SIA's state-of-the- art interactive inflight entertainment system, Kris World. No configuration details for the aircraft are available yet. SIA has the right to substitute any of the B777- 200Bs with other members of the family.

As with previous orders, SIA expects to finance the purchase largely from its cash flow, but if necessary the Airline will resort to borrowing or leasing. Deliveries are scheduled for the period 1997 to 2004. This will allow SIA to maintain capacity growth of 8-10% a year over the next 10 years. At the same time, they will preserve the youth and modernity of the SIA fleet by replacing some of the Airbus A310s and

older-generation B7478.

At present, Singapore Airlines operates 73 aircraft. Assuming all options relating to the Boeing 777 order and earlier orders are exercised, Singapore Airlines will have a fleet of around 150 aircraft by the end of 2004, comprising B7778, B747-400s, Airbus A340s and possibly one other smaller- capacity aircraft type, for regional operations.