Snecma unveils plans for new pulse lines dedicated to final assembly of LEAP engines

Le Bourget (Paris), France – June 16, 2015

With more than 8,900 orders and commitments at May 31, 2015, a year before entry into service, CFM International’s new LEAP® is already the best-selling engine while still under development in the history of aviation. CFM is a 50/50 joint company between Snecma (Safran) and GE.

Snecma is preparing its supply chain and industrial capabilities for an
unprecedented production ramp-up. The LEAP’s predecessor, the CFM56®, saw its production gradually rise over a dozen years to an annual rate of nearly 1,600 engines. The LEAP faces a much more daunting challenge, since it is aiming at an annual production rate of more than 1,800 engines as early as 2020, in just four years!

In line with the assigned workshares in the joint company, Snecma is responsible for the final assembly of half of all engines made by CFM, with this assembly being handled by Snecma’s Villaroche plant near Paris.

To meet this huge challenge, Snecma will build two new assembly lines dedicated to the LEAP, alongside the two existing CFM56 production lines. These pulse lines will stretch 60 meters long and 20 meters wide (about 200 x 65 ft), and each line will offer a capacity up to 500 engines per year. They will be able to assemble all three versions of the LEAP: the LEAP-1A for the Airbus A320neo, the LEAP-1B for the Boeing 737 MAX and the LEAP-1C for the Comac C919. These two lines will be up and running in January 2017 and early 2018, allowing Snecma to assemble up to 1,000 engines/year at Villaroche – equal to over four engines per day!
The two current CFM56 pulse lines, commissioned in 2009, had already enabled Snecma to reduce engine assembly time by 30%. The two new LEAP assembly lines will extend this initiative, while adding a number of innovations. Engine movements will be managed by touch screens, and overhead handling by a sort of "swing cradle" that enables rotating the engine around its horizontal axis (a proprietary Snecma process), so staff won’t have to work at heights. Positioning of components and subassemblies on the engine will use laser projection and virtual reality assistance systems, while operators will employ on connected tools and other advanced devices. The design of these pulse lines calls on operator feedback and recommendations, and will significantly enhance user comfort and efficiency at workstations.

A third LEAP assembly line could later be added to the first two, if deemed necessary to increase production capacity.

(1) CFM International is a joint-venture 50/50 between Snecma (Safran) and GE.
provider of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for civil and military aircraft engines, under the new EngineLife® brand, offering comprehensive support for customers around the world.

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