



Air transport associations in Guatemala urge new government to prioritize the resolution of operational and infrastructure deficiencies at La Aurora International Airport

10 January 2024 –The Guatemalan Airline Association (AGLA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) - urge the incoming government of Guatemala to prioritize the resolution of operational problems and infrastructure deficiencies at La Aurora International Airport (AILA), the country's main air terminal. Likewise, both associations reiterate the need to approve a medium-term solution on the investments needed to modernize this airport.

"The operational challenges and safety concerns at Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport must be addressed through a continuous investment plan. Unlike other airports in the region that have invested millions of dollars, the lack of an adequate ongoing investment plan has degraded AILA's infrastructure to the point that this strategic asset of the country has been practically abandoned," said Peter Cerdá, IATA's Regional Vice President for the Americas.

To harness the socioeconomic benefits which aviation can provide, the Guatemalan government urgently needs to invest in the modernization of the airport. "The lack of preventive maintenance, the poor condition of the taxiways, malfunctioning air conditioners, periodic failures of the electrical system and baggage belts, inoperative boarding bridges, among other operational problems, are issues that need to be addressed immediately," commented Rafael Sardá, President of AGLA.

In addition to infrastructure problems, airlines have also faced operational safety challenges that include the presence of animals on the runway at the time of landing or takeoff of aircraft, entry of unauthorized personnel, attempts to board aircraft as stowaways, deficiencies in the coordination between commercial aviation operations with those of general aviation, among other problems. This has led to disruptions in the operation, which not only causes an operational safety risk but also spoils the passenger experience.

Investing in the country's main air terminal will promote tourism in Guatemala. According to figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism will represent around 5.1% of Guatemala's

gross domestic product in 2023, equivalent to US\$4.9 billion, and will provide 420,700 direct and indirect jobs.

The air transport industry reiterated its willingness to work with the new authorities in devising remedies to the current challenges and deficiencies, while devising a cost efficient infrastructure investment plan, aimed at improving the operating conditions for passenger and cargo airlines.

– IATA / AGLA –

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