

Virtual round table promoted by ICAO encourages the exchange of ideas and practices, as well as the joint analysis of the challenges facing commercial aviation against COVID-19



In order to know the vision and actions to face the challenges imposed by COVID-19, and especially the prospects for the recovery of commercial aviation, the ICAO South American Regional Office, through its Regional Director, Mr. Fabio Rabbani, started a series of podcasts with the main representatives of the Civil Aviation Authorities, International Organizations and the Aviation Services Providers in Latin America.

The first session had the participation of Mr. Juliano Alcântara Noman, President Director of the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC) of Brazil, Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, Director General of the Special Administrative Unit of Civil Aviation (UAEAC) of Colombia, and Mr. Jaime Binder, Secretary of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC).

During this session, the guests shared information on the measures that have taken as an initial reaction to the pandemic, and exchanged interesting perspectives and visions on how to cope with the situation, and more importantly, how to start the difficult road to recovery.

Some examples of the measures adopted by Brazil and Colombia to support the aeronautical sector in the face of the crisis were:

- the postponement of payments of some tariffs and fees
- flexibility for the restitution of flightless tickets
- not enforce slot compliance
- extension of certificates validity
- suspension of certain lease charges
- suspension of environmental restrictions for certain airports
- suspension of parking fees for aircraft left on the ground
- generation of credit for future tickets that will be used by the Federal Government of Brazil, based on the travel history of the federal agencies.

ANAC Brazil explained that, although it intends to authorize the transportation of cargo in the passenger cabin of airplanes, after consulting with the main aircraft manufacturers, a specific process is required for each type of aircraft that must be studied and specifically applied, but which nevertheless maintains the intention of authorizing this type of transport once these requirements are met. He also indicated that his technicians are available to share these experiences with other States.

Faced with the economic impact, the reduction of jobs, changes in the way of working, and travel restrictions due to health issues, there will be a natural reduction in demand. In this scenario, it is very important to build a comprehensive and effective **joint recovery process**, and for this the role of Regional Organizations such as the Regional Safety Oversight Cooperation System (SRVSOP) and the opportunities it offers, are essential to simplify activities and avoid duplication of efforts through harmonization and horizontal cooperation tasks where it has achieved so much over the years.

This experience of integration and cooperation can also extend beyond the Civil Aviation Authorities and reach the necessary health, financial and other specific authorities, on the road to an **efficient** and **unified** exit.

In general terms, it can be highlighted from the conversation that aviation is in a **moment of uncertainty**, the future is uncertain at the moment, there is no clarity about what will happen, or when it will happen. There is a very big challenge ahead for all the actors in the chain that make up the international aviation system, to ensure a recovery as quickly as possible, within the context that will be presented. Definitely, it will be necessary to think **outside the box** to find suitable recipes that help achieve the goal, and the only way to achieve it will be through **union** and **cooperation**.

The best way to let decision-making authorities understand the utmost importance of supporting aviation as an essential mechanism in our lives and in the social and economic development of the regional and the world, is with **one voice**, and not with several. This critical phase forces us to sit down to develop **collaborative**, **orderly** and **strategic** solutions that allow for the recovery and sustainability of air operations over time.

Videoconferencing, that universities and colleges are widely using, teleworking, and other operating modalities that companies and their collaborators have had to adapt to continue despite the restrictions, will undoubtedly have an impact on aviation. In addition to this, the impact on the economy will be very strong; the regions will surely facilitate internal exchange, which means a great opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean to build integration, collaboration and cooperation.

Participants congratulated ICAO's initiative and reaffirmed their belief that we are going to get ahead, but only if we do it together.

You can find more details and information about this conversation by accessing the full version through the following link: