



IATA rejects decision to reduce capacity of operations at AICM

August 31, 2023 (Mexico City) – The International Air Transport Association (IATA) rejects and challenges the Mexican Government's decision to reduce the capacity of Mexico City International Airport (AICM) to 43 operations per hour. IATA further calls on the authorities to seek alternative measures to this unilateral action, which if not withdrawn or modified, will have negative impacts on passengers, air operations, connectivity, tourism and competitiveness. It will also place Mexico in non-compliance with its international aviation commitments.

"This decision by the Government does not take into account the interests of consumers, nor does it respect the necessary consultative process with operators and users, especially at the country's main airport. Such measures must be taken with the utmost technical and operational rigor, based on studies and expert analysis. In this case, we question the methodology used by SENEAM, AFAC and AICM to determine airport capacity," said Peter Cerdá, IATA's Regional Vice President for the Americas.

This decision also deviates from international standards and best practices that hold that capacity changes should be made through a collaborative process with all stakeholders to ensure transparency, predictability, and certainty.

Observing these standards allows for compliance with international commitments and proper planning of air operations, with the passenger as a priority and respecting the demands of the local market, connectivity and operational efficiency.

This new cutback in AICM operations follows the 2022 capacity reduction from 62 to 52 operations per hour, which was justified by the government on the grounds of airspace limitations. However, this explanation contradicted the study conducted in 2018 by the same government, which confirmed the feasibility of safely operating a maximum of 72 operations per hour. Last year's reduction forced all-cargo airlines to stop operating at AICM in order to facilitate work to improve the terminal; to date, however, no such work has been carried out.

"The main problem at AICM is not the operating capacity but the aging and deteriorating infrastructure. Terminals 1 and 2 require immediate modernization," stated Cerdá.

AICM is served by more than 24 national and international airlines and acts as the primary hub connecting all Mexican states and most international destinations. Mexico's market potential is enormous, with an abundance of tourist destinations. The joint mission of all stakeholders should be to facilitate aviation connectivity and make air travel more accessible throughout the country. Aviation enables social connection, greatly enhances tourism and is an engine for economic development and job creation. In 2021, air transport generated 1.3 million jobs and contributed US \$46.8 billion to the country's GDP.

Finally, the priority on the part of the Mexican government should be to focus on recovering a Category 1 rating from the US Federal Aviation Administration's International Aviation Safety Assessment program. The negative impact of Category 2 has been significant for the country, with the loss of connectivity, increased ticket prices and the reduced competitiveness of Mexican airlines.

In conclusion, IATA rejects this damaging measure and reiterates the industry's willingness to work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure Mexico can continue to benefit from the aviation connectivity provided by AICM.

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More information:

Corporate Communications - Latin America

Tel: +1 – 438 – 258 3155 o + 1-514-240 4746

Email: ruedigerm@iata.org

Notes to editors:

IATA (International Air Transport Association) represents around 300 airlines that make up 83% of global air traffic.

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