



Organising multilateral cooperation

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► Introduction

The Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC) is a regional international organisation whose main objective is to provide the civil aviation authorities of Latin America with an adequate structure within which all the measures required for the cooperation and coordination of the activities of international civil aviation can be discussed and planned.

Its main bodies are an Assembly, made up of its 22 Member States⁽¹⁾, an Executive Committee chaired for the period 2022-2024 by Uruguay and made up of four vice-presidents (Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Chile, and Brazil), a Secretariat in charge of an official chosen through an international public competition and who carries out his work through a Head-

quarters Agreement that grants him legal personality, in the city of Lima, Peru.

LACAC, throughout its history, has served as a platform for discussion and deliberation on the most relevant issues for international civil aviation. At its last Assembly held in Uruguay, the Commission adopted a resolution on the preparation, coordination and follow-up of LACAC in assemblies, world conferences and other relevant ICAO meetings (RES. A24-5). Based on this regulation, the LACAC Member States prepare for the 41st ICAO Assembly.

Based on the rules established, LACAC States' preparation for the 41st ICAO Assembly consists of three phases: 1) a phase prior to the event, where an orientation guide is prepared, working and information papers are prepared, and working papers from other States

and international organisations are analysed; 2) a phase that takes place during the Assembly, based on daily coordination meetings where the main issues considered to be of regional and global interest are evaluated; and finally 3) a phase after the Assembly to evaluate the outcomes and help implement the agreements adopted.

In matters where regional consensus is not possible, respect for the principle of State sovereignty is especially relevant. Thus, within a framework of mutual understanding, LACAC respects the diverse positions of its States based on the primary objective of the Commission, that is: to generate an adequate structure for regional dialogue – a constant and transparent dialogue that seeks unity, cooperation and coordination within the legitimate differences that occur between States.



Carrasco International Airport, Montevideo, Uruguay

(1) Argentina, Aruba, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela.

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► LACAC's Strategic Plan after the strategic objectives of ICAO

In 2019, LACAC approved a Strategic Plan for the 2020-2030 period, which includes three major strategic objectives, namely:

- Strengthen coordination between civil aviation authorities and other actors in the aviation sector and promote the work of technical groups to make the sustainable development of the sector viable in Latin America.
- Guarantee regional representation at ICAO and other international forums.
- Develop a strategic management model for institutional strengthening that guarantees its permanence over time and in its incidence space.

Each one of the strategic objectives is developed through strategic lines, and these in lines of operation or tasks that our Commission groups into so-called “macrotasks”. Thus, we have those in charge of the operational security macrotasks, aviation security and facilitation, transportation and air policy, airport management, environment, and training.

The Strategic Plan is in the same orientation as the strategic objectives that ICAO has set, in such a way that the region tries to align itself with the same direction of international civil aviation development promoted by ICAO, avoiding the duplication of functions.

► Challenges in Latin America in view of the 41st Assembly

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There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic surprised the world, and civil aviation in particular, which lacked a structure and procedures to deal with it adequately. ICAO has developed recommendations and guidelines that are not yet universally standardised. It is unavoidable that the decisions of the ICAO Assembly agree on guidelines and suggest methods for future pragmatic recommendations that take into account the reality in States on this matter, so that we can prepare ourselves for future crises.

In the area of operational safety, a great challenge in our region is the implementation of the Operational State Safety Program (SSP). In Latin America, with the peculiarities of the capabilities of each State, to quickly and correctly implement the SSP and the main systems that make up this system, such as the Safety Data Collection and Processing System (SDCPS), is a task in progress. Consequently, one of the important topics for the 41st ICAO Assembly will be to raise awareness of the problems faced by the region in this area and the need to establish a structural sys-

tem for training, transfer of information, direct consultations, and good practices related to the implementation of SSPs and SDCPS systems for performance-based security management.

In relation to aviation security, we consider that information security or cybersecurity of civil aviation is a topic of special relevance. Considering that the threat of possible civil aviation cyber incidents is evolving rapidly, it is necessary for authorities, users and the industry to prepare themselves by specifying a cybersecurity strategy so that the civil aviation sector is resilient to cyber attacks and continues to be a reliable system for all.

On the other hand, an increase in incidents related to unruly and/or disruptive passengers is being observed in the region. This is an old issue requiring renewed solutions that we must find and analyse because – until now – we have not been able to stop the advance of this behaviour.

On air transport matters, an issue worth mentioning that is shared by a majority of LACAC States, although there is no consensus in the region, is the need to study mechanisms to facilitate the adoption of air services agreements that liberalise even the seventh freedom in cargo matters, especially in the multilateral arena. LACAC has had a positive evaluation of a memorandum of understanding which, in a pragmatic way, allowed for the liberalisation of cargo services within the region; but this has been an exceptional and provisional mechanism.

In Latin America, there is a broad consensus that aviation must be

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Landing track of the Carrasco International Airport, Montevideo, Uruguay

respectful of the environment. For example, LACAC has adopted a resolution to promote the use of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), and supports the ICAO Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (ACT-SAF) programme. However, this is a matter that has different approaches. From the perspective that aviation is an economic and social engine, its development is essential in the region; among several reasons, because we do not have a railway infrastructure of significant scope. Therefore, commercial aviation is the means of making our integration possible. The challenge then is to protect the environment and at the same time not stop the development of commercial aviation.

Achieving the above eventually requires the cooperation of developed countries in facilitating technology and skills transfer, in turn facilitating mechanisms to promote financing that facilitates the energy transition.

► Final comments

The ICAO Assembly is a space for deliberation where we all attend with the best spirit to obtain consensus. On many occasions, it has been necessary to leave pretensions on the table in order to obtain the attendance of all.

The issues we will address are complex and subject to various interpretations. But there is no doubt that with many delegations deliberating, there will be more opportunities to find paths which – before the start of the Assembly – we still do not envision.

The States that make up LACAC will attend the 41st Assembly with the best of spirits, understanding that there is not and should not be any imposition of issues; we will be oriented towards consensus, and we will maintain the necessary flexibility to find new and creative solutions. ■