

# LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE COMPROMISES THE FUTURE OF AVIATION IN LATIN AMERICA



Latin America foresees 4% to 6% increase in the number of air passengers for the next 20 years but “with the current infrastructure it will be impossible” to meet that demand, says IATA. Aviation in Latin America is held back by the lack of investments.

Infrastructure limitations in Latin America make it difficult to meet the projected increase in demand for air transport in the following years, industry sources explained in Panama. **“The demand is there, and the airlines are ready to grow and want to, but without the infrastructure to allow this, it will be very difficult,”** said Peter Cerdá, vice president for the International Air Transport Association (IATA), in a congress held in Panama.

“The estimated gap in 2016 to meet the projected demand for 2040 is \$53 billion USD in infrastructure,” said Luis Felipe de Oliveira, executive director of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA, in Spanish). According to IATA, Latin America represents 6% of global air transport and is the market that has been growing the most in recent years.

The region is set to increase by 4% to 6% in the number of air passengers during the next 20 years. However, “with the current infrastructure it will be impossible” to meet that demand, Cerdá insisted, following a serious problem of saturation in several Latin American airports. De Oliveira explained that to meet the demand, there must be investments in airport runways, space for travelers, airplanes, aerobridges, and areas to refuel, among others.

On the other hand, Cerdá drew attention to the cancellation of a new airport in Mexico City by the government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. “It is an airport that we should have built 20 years ago and now we are back where we started,” he said. **He also highlighted the halt of the expansion works on the Lima airport and the year of delay in the Santiago de Chile airport.**

Despite the difficulties, IATA is optimistic about the increase in flights due to the growth of the middle class, which exchanged the land transport for air after increasing its purchasing power. In addition, the opening of eight new low-cost airlines in Peru, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile “has stimulated” the demand for flights, say experts.

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