13th Annual ALTA Airline Leaders Forum Wraps Up in Mexico City

10 years ago ALTA airlines promised doubling of traffic, they delivered, and are ready to double again, but need governments to do their part this time

Mexico City, Mexico (November 17, 2016) – The Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association’s (ALTA) 13th Annual Airline Leaders Forum came to a close this week in Mexico City. This year’s Forum was hosted by Fondo Mixto de Promoción Turística de la Ciudad de Mexico (CDMX) with the support of strategic partner CANAERO, and airline partners Aeromar, Aeromexico and Volaris.

More than 500 high-level attendees, including airline CEOs and industry executives, civil aviation authorities, and airports were in Mexico City November 13 – 15, 2016. During the two-day conference, ALTA and its member airlines stressed the aviation industry’s vast value in driving direct and indirect social and economic benefits that it provides for the region and beyond, achievements and ongoing focus on safety and security, accomplishing a doubling of traffic over the past 10 years, and achieving even further cost efficiencies and increased productivity. In order to once again double traffic in the region over the next 10 years, ALTA is calling on governments to do their part in ensuring continued growth by developing efficient and necessary infrastructure, harmonized and intelligent consumer laws, competitive fees and charges, and harmonized and efficient regulations.

“Aviation is a vital engine spurring social and economic connectivity and prosperity throughout the Latin America and Caribbean region, and beyond,” said ALTA’s Executive Director Eduardo Iglesias. “We are stimulating economies, trade, travel and tourism, all while connecting the communities we serve. And we see great potential for the continued long-term growth of our industry in the region, which means even further social and economic connectivity for the countries of our region well beyond the direct impact of aviation.”
The official opening ceremony was presided over by Aeronáutica Civil de Mexico Director General Miguel Peláez Lira, President of ALTA’s Executive Committee and CEO LATAM Airlines Enrique Cueto, IATA Director General and CEO Alexandre de Juniac, CANAERO General Director Alejandro Cobian Bustamante, ALTA Executive Director Eduardo Iglesias, Fondo Mixto de Promoción Turística de la Ciudad de México Directora de Evaluación e Información Estratégica María Goretti Alfaro Ramírez.

Enrique Cueto, President of ALTA’s Executive Committee and CEO of LATAM Airlines delivered the Forum’s opening message saying “10 years ago, we (the region’s airlines) said that we would double traffic. And we delivered a doubling of traffic. In some cases, we even delivered a tripling of domestic traffic. Today, we stand ready to grow and double traffic again. But this time we need stakeholders and partners to understand the full and tremendous value that the air transport industry plays in driving and growing both direct and indirect social and economic benefits in the countries we serve. We need governments, airports, and stakeholders to do their part by making intelligent and efficiency-driven decision.”
IATA emphasized that the Latin America and Caribbean region can benefit hugely from aviation – with the right infrastructure in place. “We are in the business of freedom,” said IATA’s Director General and CEO Alexandre de Juniac. “Aviation makes our world a better place by bringing people together, facilitating trade, and generating prosperity.”

Interactive panel discussions throughout the conference focused on ALTA’s four key pillars of safety and security, efficiency and productivity, the environment, and the economic benefits of aviation, including:

- Regional Economic Outlook
- The Value of Aviation for Economies

- The New CEOs on the Block
• Technological Innovation

• Aviation and the Environment
• Smart Regulations

• Airline CEO Panel
During the ALTA awards ceremony, the association recognized Federico Bloch and Rolim Amaro award recipients for their outstanding contributions to the industry, including:

- **Federico Bloch Award recipient:** Bill Franke, Founder and Managing Partner of Indigo Partners in recognition of his outstanding leadership in driving the introduction and advancement of the ultra-low-fare airline business model in the Latin America and Caribbean region across multiple countries and markets, making air travel affordable to the masses while creating shareholder value.

- **For the first, ALTA presented two Rolim Amaro Awards,** including Aeronáutica de Civil de Colombia and Tijuana’s Cross Border Xpress.

Aeronáutica Civil de Colombia was recognized for testing reduced airport taxes at Cartagena Airport, which stimulated Colombia’s tourism and connectivity. ALTA commends the Colombian government for their efforts to stimulate tourism and connectivity in Cartagena by reducing airport taxes. As of January 1, 2015, airport fees for international flights in Cartagena were reduced significantly. Colombia’s reduction of Cartagena airport taxes has incentivized air transport and tourism substantially and ALTA hopes to continue seeing an increase in efforts like these throughout the region. Lower taxation stimulates supply and demand, as evidenced by the significant increase of Cartagena’s international passenger numbers with 40 percent more passengers in 2015 compared to 2014, and new and additional international routes and frequencies.

Juan Pablo Hernandez de Alba, Ministro Consejero of the Embassy of Colombia in Mexico accepted the award on behalf of the Aeronáutica Civil de Colombia.

Tijuana Airport’s Cross Border Xpress (CBX) was recognized for the out-of-the-box solution in opening the CBX bridge between Tijuana Airport and San Diego. CBX is an enclosed pedestrian bridge for Tijuana Airport (TIJ) passengers crossing the U.S./Mexico border. After more than seven years of planning, design and permitting with government agencies from both sides of the border, CBX opened for business in December 2015. Spanning 390 feet, the CBX skywalk is the first ever to connect a facility in the U.S. directly into a foreign airport terminal. CBX has served approximately 2.4 million passengers who have already crossed the border as part of their travels, helping them avoid unpredictable, often long delays at congested San Ysidro and Otay Mesa land ports of entry. Users of the bridge will be able to access the more than 30 destinations within Mexico that TIJ offers, many of which are not served by other Southern California airports.

Laura Diez Barrozo de la Viada accepted the award on behalf of Cross Border Xpress.
During ALTA’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association’s airline members, the new executive committee was elected that will serve in guiding the association over the next year, including:

- **President** – Enrique Cueto – LATAM Airlines CEO
- **Vice Presidents:**
  - Hernan Rincon – Avianca CEO
  - Pedro Heilbron – Copa Airlines CEO
  - Alberto Kluyver – InselAir CEO
  - Andres Conesa – Aeromexico CEO

During closing remarks, ALTA’s Executive Director Eduardo Iglesias announced that next year’s Airline Leaders Forum will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina.


**About ALTA**

**ALTA** (Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association) is a private, non-profit organization, whose member airlines represent over 90 percent of the region’s commercial air traffic. ALTA coordinates the collaborative efforts of its members in order to facilitate the development of safer, more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly air transport in the Latin America and Caribbean region for the mutual benefit of the association’s members, their customers and the industry.

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