

09PRL01

Tegucigalpa overrun yet another demonstration of the unacceptable threat to passengers and crews posed by inadequate RESAs

Chertsey 5 June: In the wake of last week's tragic overrun of an A320 operated by TACA at Toncontín International Airport in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) deplores the fact that it remains possible for an airport serving a major city to be non compliant with internationally agreed minimum standards for runway end safety areas (RESA).

While, ultimately, the causes of the accident should be revealed as the result of a full, independent technical investigation carried out in accordance with ICAO Annex 13, this accident demonstrates once again the unacceptable risks that passengers and crews are exposed to when an airport fails to comply with ICAO Annex 14.

In Annex 14, the minimum RESA required is 90m beyond the runway strip. In Tegucigalpa, the actual RESA at the departure end of runway 02 is about 15m. Beyond this, there is a steep drop, a road, as well as a number of buildings. Clearly, this presents a significant, and wholly unacceptable, risk.

IFALPA argues that even the minimum standard 90m RESA defined in ICAO Annex 14 is inadequate to provide an acceptable level of safety, and that this should be increased to 240m as recommended by ICAO.

IFALPA recognises that at a number of airports the surrounding geography and/or topography a full 240m RESA is not viable; in this case an arrester bed can provide an equivalent level of protection to passengers, crews and airport passers by.

Therefore, the Federation calls on airports to either construct a RESA that meets with the ICAO recommendation or where that is not a viable option install an arrester bed that will provide the same level of protection.

To find more about IFALPA's position concerning RESA see the following document available on the IFALPA website www.ifalpa.org/positionstatements/08POS01_Runway_End_Safety_Areas.pdf

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 100 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

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