

Telework in the Latin America and Caribbean region

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The Latin American and Caribbean region was also affected by COVID-19 from March 2020. Most governments gave the order to enter into quarantine, closing borders and airports, schools, universities and shops. Subsequently, the measures have been intensified by decreeing compulsory immobilization, curfews at night, depending on the state of health emergency they face. The use of masks has become mandatory in many countries

The pandemic and the coronavirus are posing a new reality, with a lot of uncertainty and constant changes that has never been experienced before, cutting across all countries in the region.

Even with the serious limitations of the health systems in our region, we trust the health professional teams and the states, who are facing this pandemic with the greatest effort and courage. Applying social support plans for the most vulnerable sectors according to the possibilities of each country.

Office and project staff in the Latin American and Caribbean region are free of COVID-19 and we are all teleworking. The effort is remarkable even though the conditions are not the best, especially for colleagues who have young children or dependents. We have to work, take care of the family's health, home school, buy supplies and all this in the same day, and if time permits, enjoy the much-needed leisure time.

We have turned our homes into workplaces to be able to carry out the working days and in many cases the ergonomics, the unsuitable computer equipment, the interruption of the electrical and internet services generate stress on colleagues for not being able to comply with the work deliveries in the established times. In addition to this, a purely productive approach during the first weeks of the quarantine resulted in excessive overload and lack of coordination. We have lived very long days of work, going from a virtual meeting or webinar, answering and filling out multiple surveys, forms.

Nevertheless, we welcome the professionalism and commitment of all the staff in the region, who have not ceased for a moment to give their best effort to ensure that the ILO's mandate is fulfilled in the best possible way. We would also like to thank the committees in each office for their work and coordination with the regional delegate. Unthinkable things have been achieved in such a short time and in very unfavourable circumstances. The greatest recognition is to see that our constituents appreciate our work and find it useful.

The Regional Director, the Head of Regional Administrative Services and our Regional HR Officer have met virtually with the Regional Delegate to exchange the status of staff and the various scenarios that are being presented.

Today's working conditions will undoubtedly leave their mark and we are confident that management and workers will draw conclusions and be better prepared for the future. We will soon be back in the office and new challenges will be presented, not only related to working conditions but also to the workload that awaits us. COVID-19 has added more work that requires quick action without neglecting what was already planned.

We maintain the firm hope that the socio-economic crisis generated by this pandemic will become an excellent opportunity for change at all levels, personal, social, economic, political and cultural.

From the Americas we express our solidarity with all those infected and affected and send our condolences to those who have lost loved ones. Let us all take care to come out of this crisis together and turn it into an opportunity for great change.