



**Intervention by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Dr. Fang Liu,
to the Habitat III Plenary or High-level Roundtable**

(Quito, Ecuador – 17 October 2016)

Mr. President,

1. It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here today, and to outline the role of international aviation in successful and sustainable urban development.
2. Habitat III conferences provides us with a unique opportunity to discuss planning innovations and other measures which hold the potential to improve the quality of life of many millions of global citizens.
3. As many of you may be aware, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations. For more than 70 years, ICAO works with its Member States, as well as aviation industry and many others in the international aviation community, to develop the global framework of Standards, Recommended Practices and policies for the international air transport sector. There are currently over 12,000 Standards and Recommended Practices and it is through these provisions –as well as ICAO’s auditing, technical assistance and capacity-building efforts – that the global aviation system today is able to operate over 100,000 daily commercial flights, safely, securely and efficiently.
4. Aviation uniquely connects the world and its peoples, bringing together families, friends, businesses and cultures. Our sector supports some 63.5 million direct and indirect jobs, a third of world trade by value, and contributes 2.7 trillion dollars annually to global GDP.
5. And very importantly for urban centres everywhere, aircraft also carry over half of the 1.4 billion tourists who travel across international borders each year.
6. From this standpoint we can all appreciate why Bill Gates once referred to the airplane as humanity’s “first World Wide Web.”

7. In addition to enhancing tourism, which is a critical revenue stream for many cities and regions today, aviation's prosperity benefits are also closely tied to its ability to open up global markets and trade flows for local producers.
8. Indeed many of the expectations now instilled in modern consumers, whether for access to global products or next-day delivery, are wholly dependent on international air transport to move those goods rapidly and reliably.
9. Aviation also plays other fundamental and irreplaceable roles which bring benefits to civil societies everywhere.
10. Here too our expectations for the delivery of emergency aid in post-disaster scenarios, air ambulance medical services, improved search and rescue capabilities, or the basic connectivity needed by remote communities, all must wholly rely on the local availability of safe and dependable air services.
11. Taken together, this level of local and global connectivity can have significant impacts on economic growth and urban development.
12. For instance a good many urban airfields are now evolving into an airport city unto themselves – or what some have termed an 'aerotropolis'.
13. These modern and integrated airports are characterized by the large scale infrastructure needed to handle aircraft, passenger and cargo traffic, and therefore to optimize aviation's socio-economic benefits.
14. They also feature complex land use structures to support related activities and services, and act as nodal points to streamline and manage land use activities – whether along development axes to city centres, or towards the rural interphases adjacent to cities.
15. It is important to recognize, however, that for aviation to be able to fulfil its role as a catalyst for global connectivity and sustainable socio-economic development, a number of prerequisites must first be met.
16. In the first place local facilities and operations must be regulated on the basis of ICAO's global Standards and Recommended Practices.

17. The effective implementation of these provisions is the most fundamental requirement for cities and regions to achieve their goals for global connectivity and its cascading benefits.
18. There must also be timely coordination with other sectors of the economy, and a seamless integration between aviation and other local modes of transport.
19. This integration speaks to critical importance of comprehensive and aligned urban and airport planning to maximize aviation's benefits and mitigate any related risks.
20. By 2050, the percentage of the world's population residing in metropolitan areas is expected to nearly double. This points to the critical need for our objectives under Agenda 2030 and its visionary Sustainable Development Goals to be adequately accounted for and buttressed by all of our urbanization targets.
21. ICAO has mapped out how global connectivity and safe and reliable air transport directly supports the attainment of 13 of the 17 SDGs, and this further clarifies why urban and aviation planning must be effectively integrated if we are to succeed in ending poverty, reducing inequalities, and promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the years ahead.
22. That also explains why we are working tirelessly today to help ensure that aviation development objectives are recognized and fully integrated into municipal and national development planning.
23. Over the last decade a mere 4.6% of Official Development Assistance has been earmarked for aviation infrastructure, and is very much misrepresentative of the significance of air transport's role.
24. With our flight and passenger volumes projected to double by 2030, the presence of modernized and efficient airport and air navigation infrastructure will be essential to the sustainable development and prosperity of every city, State and Region.
25. Ladies and Gentlemen, our world is very much aware of the pace at which it is transforming and evolving.
26. Leaders at all levels have undertaken milestone achievements and agreed on very ambitious global objectives, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

27. Being aware of these universal commitments, the aviation community has been actively participating in appropriate mechanisms so that our sector's key contributions are recognized and prioritized in relevant development frameworks.
28. The 2nd ICAO World Aviation Forum held just weeks ago fostered further partnerships to mobilize and coordinate all available resources for sustainable aviation development. The 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly, while reiterating the need for States to implement ICAO Standards, delivered an historic agreement on a new global market-based measure (GMBM) to offset CO2 emissions from international flights and a comprehensive roadmap for the sustainable future of international aviation.
29. We have also intensified our assistance and capacity building efforts on enhancing the level of effective implementation of international aviation Standards worldwide, under our No Country Left initiative.
30. ICAO is also focusing significant efforts on helping global decision makers, including urban and airport planners, to fully appreciate how the establishment of global connectivity – through safe, secure and ICAO compliant air transport services – is fundamental to the realization of truly sustainable and prosperous civil societies.
31. The adoption of the New Urban Agenda represents an important opportunity to further steer related policies and planning approaches to optimize aviation's benefits for urban populations.
32. It also permits you to consider air transport systems and aviation infrastructure when identifying and developing funding mechanisms to enable enhancements to the human settlements where you are based.
33. This will support the overall improvement of transport and mobility which are critical to achieve the objectives we have set.
34. I therefore invite you to fully embrace this New Urban Agenda, and to join ICAO in promoting the integration of ICAO compliant air transport systems when planning and developing sustainable urbanization.
35. I also call on all relevant authorities to become active partners in implementing the multiple commitments we are working to, and to support the mobilization of all resources necessary for the air transport enhancements needed for 21st century urbanization.

36. At the United Nations level, I can assure you that all agencies and bodies are intensifying their related coordination.
37. One example of this is the partnership recently initiated between ICAO and UN-Habitat to enhance the synergies between ICAO compliant airports and prosperous urban centres.
38. This project exemplified the benefits we can share when we optimize collaboration between civil aviation, land, planning and urban development authorities, international organizations, and air transport operators.
39. I am sure this initiative will generate more findings of great interest and usefulness going forward, and I very much look forward to the results of these first studies.
40. In closing now, let me please re-emphasize that quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient air transport systems can only be achieved through the integration of air transport into all long term planning and development frameworks.
41. Its timely integration will greatly contribute to the eradication of poverty and generalized civil prosperity at local and national levels, consistent with this New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.

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