



## ICAO Secretary General encourages Cuba's leadership on data analysis, facilitation

For immediate release

**Montréal and Havana, 2 August 2017** – Throughout an intensive series of addresses and bilateral meetings undertaken in Cuba last week, ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu encouraged Cuba's leadership to continue pursuing and leading on pragmatic and proactive approaches to sustainable aviation development for economic and social progress, particularly with regards to data analysis and aviation security and facilitation.

While opening the Caribbean and South American Aviation Data and Analysis Regional Seminar, which was organized by ICAO and hosted by Cuba, Dr. Liu stressed that as a United Nations specialized agency, ICAO is deeply committed to enabling all its member States to achieve progress on these issues through its *No Country Left Behind* initiative and its Regional Offices. "The stakes are considerable," Dr. Liu remarked, "In 2016 aviation directly generated some 10 million jobs and approximately \$725 billion in global GDP. Looking more closely at the Latin American and Caribbean regions, aviation generates approximately 169 billion dollars in GDP and supports the direct and indirect employment of six million people. Cuba's leadership on these issues, and in optimizing local synergies between aviation, tourism, e-commerce and trade, provides a crucial contribution to the sustainability of local operations." Dr. Liu also stressed the importance of data and analysis in terms of understanding emerging aviation trends and issues to ensure that these priorities and strategies are optimally crafted.

These messages were also highlighted throughout her bilateral meetings with Cuban officials, including Vice President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba and Minister of the Economy and Planning, Mr. Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz, Cuba's Deputy Ministers for Transport, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Investment, and Tourism, Messrs. Eduardo Rodríguez, Abelardo Moreno Fernandez, Antonio Carricarte Corona, and Luís Miguel Díaz Sánchez, respectively.

The Vice President and the Ministers recognized the crucial role air connectivity plays in Cuba's socio-economic development, given the importance of its tourism sector and its status as a Small Island Developing State. Noting its alignment with many of the Secretary General's specific recommendations, Mr. Ruiz and Mr. Rodríguez outlined Cuba's 2030 strategic plan for the development of its aviation sector and broader transport system, and pointed to the priority given to continued progress on issues related to compliance of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) within it. Dr. Liu expressed appreciation for Cuba's efforts toward human resource capacity to achieve its aviation goals, and for its remarkable level of Effective Implementation (EI) of ICAO's aviation security SARPs and continued improvement on its already outstanding level of aviation safety oversight.

Addressing an Extraordinary Session of Cuba's National Air Transport Facilitation Committee, Dr. Liu also stressed that compliance with ICAO's facilitation SARPs is an important aspect of addressing the challenges raised by the forecast growth, particularly in light of security concerns. She highlighted the significance of ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) which was well reflected in the UN Security Council Resolutions to limit international terrorist movements and trans-border crime.

“I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the leadership of Cuba in being responsive and proactive on these goals here in the Caribbean. The establishment of this committee, and your nomination of a National Focal Point for Facilitation matters, are key to the intensive coordination needed between all ICAO TRIP stakeholders at the national level,” she remarked at the Session.

The TRIP strategy relies significantly on the global transition to machine-readable passports (MRPs), which is nearly completed. The deadline for removal of non-MRPs from global circulation was 24 November 2015, and while some States are still pursuing this goal, Cuba and 142 other ICAO Member States are now fully MRP-compliant. Progress should nonetheless be achieved with regards to biometric passports and the associated ICAO Public Key Directory, which are also key elements of the TRIP strategy. These offer tremendous advantages in terms of the enhancement of security. Highlighting the opportunity to enhance Cuba’s aviation security measures and contribute to the holistic security of the aviation network at a global level, the Secretary General stressed throughout her bilateral meetings the crucial importance of the prompt implementation of the Public Key Directory (PKD) in tandem with the deployment of compliant passports. This resulted in Cuba expressing its commitment to the PKD and to the TRIP strategy broadly.

The Secretary General was accompanied on this mission by the Representative of Cuba on the Council of ICAO, Mrs. Mirta M. Crespo Frasier and ICAO Regional Director of the North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Office Mr. Melvin Cintron.



ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu (left), meets with Mr. Ricardo Cabrisas, the Vice President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba and Minister of the Economy and Planning. During her mission, Dr. Liu encouraged Minister Cabrisas and other Cuban senior officials to continue pursuing pragmatic approaches to sustainable aviation development for economic and social progress, particularly with regards to data analysis and aviation security and facilitation.

## Resources for Editors

### About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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