



New UN agreement to foster sustainable development synergies between air transport and urban development

Montréal and Quito, 20 October 2016 – A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) enhancing the synergies between urban development and aviation has been signed in Quito by Dr. Fang Liu, the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and Dr. Joan Clos, the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The signing took place on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III).

The agreement is significant as sustainable civil aviation is in a position to make critical contributions to States' achievement of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, provided certain conditions exist, such as the effective implementation of international standards, timely coordination with other sectors of the economy, and seamless integration between aviation and other modes of transportation. The MoU provides for UN-Habitat and ICAO to strengthen their cooperation with a view to advising States on technical and policy matters relating to aviation issues raised within the context of the sustainable integration of airports in urban areas and within national development programmes. It directly supports SDGs 9, 11, and 13, which respectively pertain to economic development, urban well-being, and climate change.

The relationship is reciprocal as urban conditions impact on aviation safety, navigation, efficiency, and security, and consequently the economic development of air connectivity and its environmental consequences.

“By 2050, the percentage of the world’s population residing in metropolitan areas is expected to nearly double. Air traffic volumes are expected to double over the next 15 years. Urbanization has a potential positive implication on this growth, but it also represents important challenges. The New Urban Agenda represents an important opportunity to further steer related policies and planning approaches to optimize aviation’s benefits for urban populations,” Dr. Liu said. “This MoU has been developed and adopted towards this goal. It calls for the strengthening of our coordination efforts on the effective integration of civil aviation and urbanization into sustainable development frameworks at all levels.”

“Aviation industry is of high added value and constitutes the force of employment and means of development. We have begun joint studies in Eastern Africa and I am very pleased to continue in this line in pursuing the synergetic development between airports and cities so that people’s demand will be met. I hope that UN-Habitat and ICAO could continue to work together to produce new knowledge about the spatial relationship between urban development and aviation.” Dr. Clos remarked.

The MoU builds on multiple strategic coordination agreements that the international community has already adopted in this regard. However, it is a particularly pertinent step forward in light of the New Urban Agenda. The Agenda is a policy document agreed at HABITAT III that will guide a wide range of actors as they address urbanization issues over the next two decades.

“I encourage stakeholders to seize the opportunity presented by the adoption of the New Urban Agenda to join ICAO in the promotion of the integration of air transport systems into the sustainable urbanization planning and development and make further progress on these issues,” Dr. Liu

concluded.



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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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