



## ICAO Secretary General calls for investments in air transport to enhance connectivity between Belt and Road countries

For immediate release

**Montréal, 30 April 2019** – ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing last week, providing remarks to the main Infrastructure Connectivity session which highlighted the critical role of air transport in forging new travel and trade routes between Belt and Road countries and other states leading to new venues for prosperity.

Stressing how liberalized air transport and increased air traffic routes are currently helping many developing States move closer to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted under the UN's Agenda 2030, Dr. Liu highlighted to the large number of Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure and heads of international organizations present that “a very direct relationship exists between States’ investments in aviation development and their eventual realization of increased economic growth.”

She went on to emphasize how air transport growth holds further economic potential, but that to benefit from it countries need both the capacity in place to accommodate higher numbers of flights, in addition to the skilled personnel needed to manage them.

“A key call to action I would therefore propose today is that countries firmly commit to investments in modernized aviation infrastructure and skilled human resources development, and in a manner which aligns these critical air transport objectives with their overall national development strategies,” Dr. Liu underscored.

The Secretary General informed her audience that ICAO was one of the many UN agencies that developed agreements with China to leverage the synergies between UN SDGs and the Belt and Road Initiative, pursuant to the first Belt and Road Forum in 2017. She highlighted the training and assistance programmes which the UN aviation agency has already begun undertaking with support from China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund to build these needed capacities in developing Belt and Road States and countries in other regions.

She concluded by stressing the important role that new technologies and other innovations will play in accelerating these development trends, noting that similar dynamics were already well underway in the aviation domain.

“Today there are entirely new types of aircraft and operations being innovated to serve your States and economies, from low-flying drones to hypersonic transports,” Dr. Liu commented. “Aviation has a significant role to play in how you connect to the world, and I firmly believe it will play a key role in making the Belt and Road initiative a truly global success story.”

During the Forum, Dr. Liu held productive side discussions with senior government and air transport officials from China, including its Transport Minister Mr. Li Xiaopeng and the Administrator of its Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Feng Zhenglin. She also had interactions with several Belt and Road State Transport Ministers and the heads of various UN bodies, accompanied throughout by ICAO's Regional Director for the Asia and Pacific, Mr. Arun Mishra.



ICAO Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu and the other high-level participants to China's 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing last week. She provided remarks to the main Infrastructure Connectivity session at the prestigious event, highlighting the critical role of air transport in forging new travel and trade routes between Belt and Road and other countries leading to new venues for prosperity.

## 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 193 Member States.

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