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

**For immediate release**

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A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) supporting the sustainable development of urban areas and aviation was signed in Quito by Dr. Joan Clos, the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and Ms. Fang Liu, the Secretary General of ICAO, the United Nation’s agency for international civil aviation. The signing took place at 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 Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), provided certain conditions exist, such as the effective implementation of international requirements, 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 wellbeing, 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.

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

“By 2050, the percentage of the world’s population residing in metropolitan areas is expected to nearly double,” said Ms Liu. “Therefore, urbanization should aim to end poverty, reduce inequalities, promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, achieve gender equality, foster resilience and protect the environment. This MoU has been developed and adopted towards this goal.”

Ms. Liu continued: “For aviation, 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. It calls for the strengthening of our coordination efforts on the effective integration of these issues into development frameworks at all levels.”

The MoU builds on multiple strategic coordination agreements that the international community has already adopted. However, it is a particularly pertinent step forward in light of the development 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.

**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. ICAO and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

**About UN-Habitat**

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme is the UN agency responsible for promoting sustainable urban development and the achievement of adequate housing for all. Under the New Urban Agenda, signed at the Habitat III conference in Quito, October 2016, UN-Habitat particularly promotes three pillars for achieving socially, economically and environmentally sustainable cities: urban planning, urban finance and urban regulations.

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