



**DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION - ICAO EUROPEAN AND NORTH ATLANTIC  
REGIONS**

**2024 MEETING (EUR/NAT-DGCA/2024)**

*(Toulouse, France, 23 April 2024)*

**Agenda Item 8:** Gender Equality

**GENDER EQUALITY**

*(Presented by the Secretariat)*

**SUMMARY**

*The aim of this paper is to:*

- a) provide updates on ICAO's activities in the ICAO European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Office's accreditation area (hereinafter referred to as the "EUR/NAT area") in follow up to EUR/NAT-DGCA Conclusion 2023/5 [EUR/NAT support of advancing gender equality in aviation];*
- b) outline ongoing ICAO initiatives to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in aviation, in line with Assembly Resolution A41-26, ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and*
- c) call for further engagement, coordination and cooperation across the EUR/NAT area for gender equality and the empowerment of women in aviation.*

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A39-30, *ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector*. Further revisions to Resolution 39-30 were presented to the 41st Session of the Assembly in 2022 resulting in Resolution A41-26 that aims at encouraging stronger commitment from Member States to advance gender equality and women empowerment objectives through a number of additional actions for the Secretariat. This includes, *inter alia*, the production of multi-annual and detailed statistics on gender equality outlining progress made at various levels, the inclusion of gender equality as a core element of its human resource strategy and policies, and the strengthening of partnerships for gender equality between ICAO and relevant stakeholders for programmes and projects aimed at increasing the pool of women in the aviation sector and encouraging women to further develop their aviation careers.

1.2 Cognizant that gender equality is a prerequisite to realizing sustainable development for all, ICAO has been fully committed to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which underpins all other SDGs, and aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Nevertheless, the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women within the aviation sector continues to face significant challenges, with progress being persistently marginal. Despite efforts from States and the industry, progress remains too limited and too slow. As an example, participation of women holding positions as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians has only increased on a global basis from 4.5% in 2016 to 4.9% in 2021. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, it would take another 131 years to close the global gender gap. Intensifying our engagement and achieving faster progress are therefore a necessity. This calls for stronger commitment, as well as concrete and targeted actions.

1.3 There are a number of elements and challenges that contribute to the persistent gender gap in the aviation industry. These range from cultural stereotypes and biases as part of early childhood development, education of adolescents in and out of schools and as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, to the lack of enabling policies and work environment, to insufficient investment to advance gender equality in aviation and last but not least, lack of comprehensive data to enable informed decision-making and policy development.

1.3 During the 2023 Meeting of the ICAO EUR/NAT Directors General of Civil Aviation (EUR/NAT-DGCA/2023) held in Paris, France, on 20 June 2023, the discussions under the “Gender Equality” agenda item led to an agreement to foster the exchange of information, experience and best practices with the nomination of ‘Gender Equality State Focal Points’ and the promotion of new or ongoing initiatives by States and Organizations across the EUR/NAT area – in particular with respect to fellowship/sponsorship programmes for aviation training specifically directed to young women. The Director Generals of Civil Aviation were invited to strongly promote gender equality in aviation and clearly articulate and implement a vision and actions for gender equality in their aviation institutions and their States’ industry organizations at the national level. They were also invited to consider providing in-kind and voluntary contributions to the ICAO Gender Equality Programme as well as undertaking initiatives and activities in support of improving gender equality in aviation, such as scholarships and financial assistance to enable young women and girls to pursue careers in aviation.

## **2. Discussion**

### *ICAO’s efforts in advancing gender equality imperatives*

2.1 The ICAO Gender Equality Programme was established in 2017 with the primary aim of facilitating and coordinating targeted programmes and projects to enable progress toward the aspirational goal of gender equality by 2030, especially in professional and higher levels of employment, within ICAO. The Programme also seeks to influence the attainment of greater gender representation within States and the global aviation sector.

2.2 The ICAO Gender Equality Programme has been implemented through an Implementation Plan that covers a broad spectrum of activities. The current Implementation Plan strives to enable the Secretariat to better mainstream and implement gender equality objectives at ICAO while ensuring a more efficient delivery of its accountabilities as part of the United Nations system. The Plan aims to enhance ICAO’s support to States in their efforts toward achieving gender equality through various promotional activities.

2.3 The ICAO Secretariat has started work around this new Implementation Plan. Some of the ongoing activities spanning across 2023-2025 are addressed below.

### *Institutional transformation*

2.4 As part of the Implementation Plan, the ICAO Secretariat has established a Gender Core Group with representation from all Bureaus and Regional Offices to jointly support the Gender Equality Programme.

The Group will continue to carry out the activities of the Implementation Plan including, on areas such as organization-wide assessment of gender equality, strengthening of accountability measures to support compliance, review of opportunities for improving the working environment driven by ICAO's People Strategy, the introduction of financial gender markers in ICAO, as well as enhanced outreach and advocacy.

#### *Global Aviation Gender Summit*

2.5 Building on the outcomes of the inaugural Global Aviation Gender Summit in 2018 in South Africa, and in line with ICAO Assembly Resolution A41-26 on gender equality, ICAO held the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023, in Madrid, Spain. The Summit was organized in partnership with the European Commission (EC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Women, and the International Transport Forum (ITF) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, private stakeholders, academia, and advocates for change from around the world met to catalyze progress, promote bold actions for achieving gender equality and women empowerment in aviation and trigger mobilisation of all stakeholders. The Summit's focus was on enablers for change, lessons learned, guidance and tools as well as knowledge sharing in general on gender equality to reduce the existing gender gap in aviation. It is worth noting that, as part of the preparations for this summit, ICAO issued State Letter 17.4 – 23/24 through which best practices on advancing gender equality collected from States had been made available in a document entitled "Compilation of Best Practices and Experiences in Enhancing Gender Equality in Aviation".

2.6 The key outcome of the Summit was a *Call to Action* (**Appendix A** refers), which is a strong message of determination and urgency, outlining an array of strategic action points which can be taken by Governments, airlines, airports, manufactures, air navigation service providers, and other aviation industry stakeholders and partners to accelerate progress for gender equality and empowerment of women in aviation. In this connection, the ICAO Council Small Group on Gender (SGG) has carefully reviewed and identified the follow up actions for ICAO in light of implementation of the Call to Action of the Global Aviation Gender Summit.

#### *Outreach Campaigns*

2.7 To enhance advocacy and awareness, ICAO launched the global "Women in Aviation Multimedia Engagement Contest". This contest received over 280 submissions from around the world. An Award Ceremony was held in this regard during the Global Aviation Gender Summit.

2.8 With the objective of strengthening ICAO's advocacy and awareness creation, ICAO intends to establish a "Global Ambassadors Programme" for the promotion of gender equality, diversity and inclusion. This important development has been facilitated through the voluntary contribution of the United Kingdom in support of the Global Aviation Gender Summit's *Call to Action*, with further details of the Programme to be available in the next few months.

#### *Actions at the regional level in the EUR/NAT area*

2.9 In July 2023, the ICAO EUR/NAT Office issued a State Letter EUR/NAT 23-0233.TEC (RAN/SUL) "Advancing gender equality in aviation - exchange of information on policies, programmes and other initiatives" to start paving the way for the sharing of information and experience across the EUR/NAT area. Through this letter, the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Director invited States to nominate a "Gender Equality Focal Point". ICAO is grateful for the focal point nominations received from 20 States from the EUR/NAT area and looks forward to receiving the remaining States' nominations.

2.10 Following up on the conclusion from the 2023 EUR/NAT-DGCA Meeting, the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Office, in line with its collaborative approach, has initiated a series of webinars in close cooperation with partners. These events aim at sharing information on national or organizational policies, programmes and other initiatives towards advancing gender equality and women empowerment in aviation so as to avoid duplication of efforts. An additional objective is to give enhanced visibility to, and promote across

the EUR/NAT area, new or ongoing existing initiatives by States and organizations, in particular with respect to fellowship/sponsorship programmes for aviation training specifically directed to young women.

2.11 The first of these webinars was held on 6 December 2023 and focused on mentoring for women in aviation. Representatives from 25 States as well as International and Regional Organizations attended the meeting. The discussions focused on coaching and mentoring as important tools for fostering women's careers. Representatives from EASA, EUROCONTROL, IFATCA and the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority (UKCAA) unpacked the concept of mentoring including individual and group mentoring, discussed the benefits of mentoring on mentees, and how mentoring can lead eventually to cultural change in institutions, as well as the upcoming launch of a new course on how to organize efficient and effective mentoring. The presentations are available on the ICAO EUR/NAT website. This webinar, which provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about the concept of mentoring, its role in career development of women and best practices of such programmes, was a first step on a journey which we hope will benefit as many women as possible.

2.12 In the coming months, the ICAO EUR/NAT Office will continue to progress the series of regional webinars, in cooperation with partner States and Organizations, focusing on Gender equality and women's empowerment in aviation, including mentoring as a key topic. The Regional Office, working with its partners, will continue to promote and give visibility to existing initiatives and to create new ones, when needed, across the EUR/NAT area. In particular, it will strive to support the creation of new mentoring programmes based on common agreed principles.

2.13 Over the last year, the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Director, as part of his official visits to States, has continued to address the situation, challenges, opportunities and enablers with respect to Gender Equality in aviation with State authorities, aviation industry leaders as well as management and students of various aviation or transport universities across the EUR/NAT area.

2.14 On 8 March 2024, ICAO celebrated the 2024 International Women's Day (IWD 2024) at Headquarters and various regional offices, including the EUR/NAT Office. The theme for this year was "Inclusive Heights: Women Inspiring Aviation". The celebrations included a high-level panel at ICAO Headquarters with discussions recognizing the contributions and leadership of women in aviation as well as the challenges and opportunities for advancing gender equality in the sector.

2.15 The ICAO EUR/NAT Office has amended its public webpages related to gender equality to include relevant documents, highlight ICAO's work on gender equality and women empowerment as well as to showcase upcoming activities around gender equality at regional level, including our partners' activities and publications on "Women in Aviation" promoted through online platforms.

2.16 Based on the foregoing, the following is proposed:

#### **Draft EUR/NAT-DGCA Conclusion 2024/1 – Advancing gender equality in aviation**

That the ICAO Regional Director, Europe and North Atlantic, invite:

- a) States to nominate a "Gender Equality Focal Point" and inform the ICAO EUR/NAT Office accordingly, if they have not yet done so;
- b) States and Organizations to participate and actively engage in ICAO global and regional activities on gender equality and empowerment of women in aviation;
- c) States and Organizations to express their interest in supporting mentoring activities for women in aviation; and
- d) States and Organizations to consider providing in-kind and voluntary contributions to the ICAO Gender Equality Programme as well as initiatives and activities in support of improving gender equality in aviation, such as scholarships and financial assistance to enable young women and girls to pursue careers in aviation.

**3. Action by the Meeting**

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
- a) note the information provided;
  - b) amend as necessary and endorse the proposed Conclusion; and
  - c) provide direction as deemed necessary.

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*The following Appendix is provided as a separate document to this working paper:*

**APPENDIX A:** ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023 - Call to Action

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