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INFORMATION PAPER

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**Twelfth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting
(NACC/DCA/12)**

Placencia, Stann Creek District, Belize, 9-11 July 2024*

Agenda Item 6: Gender Equality in Aviation Panel

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

(Presented by EASA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Information Paper presents the EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Gender Balance Initiatives as part of a wider European approach to help solve the industry’s future workforce challenges that are conducted in alignment with the European Commission’s policies and best practices.

Strategic Objectives:

- Safety
- Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency
- Security & Facilitation
- Economic Development of Air Transport
- Environmental Protection

1. Introduction

1.1 Aviation connects people and economies, but it is already suffering from staff shortages in many job roles and this is only expected to worsen if strategic actions at industry level are not taken to improve things. Within the European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS), EASA is working on 3 key activities to address future workforce challenges. These are:

- a) To address **organisational culture challenges** to help create organisations that people want to work for so they are more likely to embark on long-term careers in the aviation industry.
- b) To **promote careers in aviation to young people** to show that there are a broad range of sustainable, long-term careers paths in aviation that are interesting and fulfilling.
- c) **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** to broaden the talent pool and by default, the broader aviation workforce, through more effective implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives so that everyone feels valued in an organization and are able to realize their full potential.

- 1.2 This staff shortage threatens the sustainability and safety of the global air transportation system. In response, various organizations have initiated efforts to engage, attract, train, and retain the next generation of aviation professionals.
- 1.3 This paper describes the main activities for the industry in the area of DEI started at the European Union (EU) to help both address the future workforce challenges and support organisations in developing and maintaining positive culture that is vital for safe and effective operations.
- 1.4 On top the EU LAC APPII project is planning Gender equality activities in LAC for 2024.

2. Discussion

The European and Global Framework for DEI and Gender Equality

- 2.1 In 2017 EU established Women in transport - EU Platform for change to address the low number of women participating in the EU transport sector (including aviation). The European Commission also launched the Ambassadors for Diversity in Transport Network. Women in transport network in the EU: has a dedicated website, regular webinars and testimonies from nominated ambassadors and even a mentoring program and more.
- 2.2 This think paper and its call for action were presented at the platform and will become a part of its activities. The effort of the aviation community is connected with the overall effort of EU to attract and retain more people to address its labor shortage.
- 2.3 In 2020 the EU introduced its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 sets out key actions for the next 5 years and commits to ensure that the Commission will include an equality perspective in all EU policy areas. The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions, and intersectionality is a horizontal principle for its implementation. Special focus is kept on gender diversity given that 12% less women labor participation compared to men in transport industries. Closing this gender gap will enhance economic growth and help alleviate inequalities based on gender.
- 2.4 EASA includes DEI as essential pillars in its organization. In 2018, EASA launched its DEI initiative. The Agency appointed a gender balance group to identify best practices and propose actions to promote DEI and particularly gender equality with the intention to ensure true inclusion of all staff from all background and in particular attract more women. This role has since evolved to a wider promotion of “Diversity and Inclusion”, considering not only gender diversity, but also sexual identity, ethnicity, nationality, age neurodiversity and academic / cultural background. By sharing different perspectives and staff talents, the EASA DEI Gender Equality Initiative aims to make EASA a place where everyone feels welcome and valued and fosters a culture where everyone feels respected and empowered.
- 2.5 On a global level ICAO has established The “[Air Transport Gender Equality Initiative](#)” . This Initiative includes the establishment of air transport gender indicators through the

collection of workforce statistics as provided on a voluntary basis from States. Collaboration and ongoing discussion between ICAO with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will allow cross-organizational learning on best practices in collecting gender related data with the aim of incorporating the information in the “Global and Regional 20-Year Forecasts: Pilots. Maintenance Personnel. Air Traffic” and the creation of an online platform for sharing data on workforce statistics. Likewise, one of ICAO’s most significant efforts is the Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) program. Its aim is to develop best practices, tools, standards, and guidelines that aid the global aviation community in attracting, training, educating, and retaining aviation professionals. The vision is that of a global aviation community that is well-equipped with relevant skills and sufficient resources to ensure ongoing safety and sustainability. During its recent [Global Aviation Gender Summer in Madrid](#), ICAO advocated for real change and to empower particularly women in aviation making the gap narrower.

- 2.6 [IATA25by2025](#) is a voluntary campaign for IATA member airlines to improve female representation in the senior positions in the industry by 25%, or up to a minimum of 25% by 2025. Many organisations, including non-IATA members have joined this initiative.
- 2.7 [HeForShe in Aviation](#): The HeForShe campaign, initiated by UN Women, encourages men and boys to advocate for gender equality. Within the aviation industry, various organisations have launched HeForShe initiatives to engage men as allies in promoting diversity and supporting women's advancement.
- 2.8 [Airports Council International \(ACI\) Women in Aviation Program](#): ACI's Women in Aviation Program focuses on advancing gender diversity and equality within airport management and leadership roles. The program includes mentorship opportunities, networking events, and resources to support women in their career development.
- 2.9 [WiAT \(Women in Aviation Training\)](#): Launched at EATS 2023, Wait is an initiative focused on providing practical ways to support all women in the aviation training industry. The aim of WiAT is to bring together a community of motivated individuals to support and encourage growth and ambition and to empower change. A WiAT online community forum is in place where experiences are shared and stories from fellow professionals, insights, facts and information from within the industry, and provide the space to network.
- 2.10 [Women in Aviation International \(WAI\)](#): WAI is a nonprofit international organisation, from the US but with branches in Europe too, dedicated to providing networking, mentoring, and scholarship opportunities for women in the aviation industry. They organise conferences, events, and outreach programs to support women at various stages of their aviation careers.
- 2.11 EASA also offers DEI actions in its international cooperation projects. An example in the Asia Pacific was the International Cooperation: EU-ASEAN Youth-Talk Show "Women in Aviation". This highlighted female leaders to inspire women in the ASEAN aviation industry. And further, EASA signed in April 2024 with the South African Civil Aviation

Authority a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to collaborate on measures to keep aviation attractive for the youth. Activities will include aviation and aerospace outreach, advocacy for DEI, development and retention of skilled professionals, reconversion and development of staff and management, strategic workforce development, value work proposition, future trends, workplace development and sharing and influencing networks. Precise actions are taken up as part of the EU projects managed by EASA for the African region starting in 2025.

The development of an aviation DEI toolkit to help address gender balance and other associated topics

- 2.12 To assist the aviation industry with the effective implementation of DEI and gender balance initiatives, EASA, in partnership with National Aviation Authorities and the industry are developing a toolkit and supporting implementation plan.
- 2.13 The toolkit will set out the case for the importance of DEI and gender balance initiatives in aviation to both broaden the available talent pool to ensure sufficient qualified staff and also to ensure greater diversity of thought across the industry to help maintain the level of safety in a rapidly changing world.
- 2.14 Additionally, the toolkit would support the industry in the following tasks;
- a) Raising awareness of the need for DEI and gender balance initiatives.
 - b) Development of HR best practices to enhance DEI both in recruitment and the day-to-day activities of an organisation.
 - c) Partnering at global, regional and national level to maximise cooperation and collaboration.
 - d) Effective communication on DEI and gender balance.

Conclusions

- 2.15 Maintaining aviation’s current and future workforce is key for economic development. Air travels remain the fastest, and sometimes only means of transportation. It connects people from around the world, enables them to see other countries and learn about different cultures. It also ensures humanitarian actions, search and rescue, medical patient transportation, etc.
- 2.16 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion including improving gender balance will help the industry to better meet its future workforce challenges by broadening the available talent pool and also to have great diversity of thought that will be needed to maintain the industry’s high safety levels in a world that is rapidly changing.
- 2.17 Governments, international organisations and regulatory bodies can play a significant role in promoting gender equality in the aviation sector. The main effect is influencing the path to take and capitalising on good practices and initiatives already adopted in some organisations and companies for some specific professions or sectors, creating a sense of cohesion and even some sort of collective “movement” feeling.

2.18 The industry will need support through clear, coordinated actions to help tackle these challenges effectively, this is the purpose of EASA's work on Future Workforce Challenges. EASA is ready to collaborate in this vital work.

3. Action by the Meeting

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information provided.