



# ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization  
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACC/DCA/12 — WP/11  
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## Twelfth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting (NACC/DCA/12)

Placencia, Belize, 9-11 July 2024

### Agenda Item 6 Gender Equality in Aviation Panel

#### GENDER EQUALITY IN AVIATION

(Presented by the Secretariat)

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper outlines challenges and opportunities to advance gender equality in aviation and highlights ongoing initiatives to improve gender equality, the promotion of gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, in line with Assembly Resolution A41-26, *ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector*, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goal 5, and the Call to Action of the Second Global Aviation Gender Summit. In addition, it provides some updates on ICAO's activities in the North American, Central American and Caribbean Regions and calls for further engagement, coordination and cooperation across the region on gender equality in aviation.

<b>Action:</b>	Described in Section 3
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety</li><li>• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</li><li>• Security &amp; Facilitation</li><li>• Economic Development of Air Transport</li><li>• Environmental Protection</li></ul>
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of 7 October 2022), Assembly Resolution A41-26, <i>ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector</i></li><li>• A/RES/70/1, <i>Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i>, with specific attention to SDG5 – <i>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i></li><li>• Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023 – Call to Action</li></ul>

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Gender equality is a fundamental human right.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations indicates that advancing gender equality is critical to all areas of a healthy society, from reducing poverty, to promoting the health, education, protection and the well-being of boys and girls. Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, half of its potential. The empowerment of women and girls is essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.<sup>2</sup> However, today, gender equality is still far from being achieved globally. The World Economic Forum, in its 2023 analysis, highlights that the progress towards gender equality globally is stagnating. If the current pace is maintained; it will take another 131 years to fully close the gap in the world. The same Report, however, highlights that Latin America and the Caribbean registered a 1.7 percentage point increase in overall gender parity since the last report – the fastest of any region – meaning it has closed 74.3% of its gender gap. At this rate, it would reach parity in 2076, which is a more promising forecast comparing to the rest of the world, but much work still needs to be done to close the gender gap especially in aviation.

1.2 In the past few years, ICAO worked with the Aviation Data and Analysis Panel (ADAP) on a survey to collect data from States on aviation licensed personnel (pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers) segmented by gender and age. The results of this global survey on the status of licensed aviation personnel by gender reveals that the participation of women holding positions as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians were released in 2023 and highlight a slight increase on an overall basis from 4.5% globally in 2016, to 4.9% in 2021, with the highest increases in the three above-mentioned professions being recorded in the Latin America/Caribbean and Asia Pacific regions.<sup>3</sup> Global progress towards gender equality in aviation as it pertains to licensed personnel is dramatically slow.

1.3 With the rising demand for air travel post pandemic, so is the demand for qualified men and women required to successfully manage the air transport system. It is therefore imperative to promote aviation as a career of choice with young people, well before they start college, and attract as well as retain enough skilled male and female professionals across all levels to contribute to the operation and management of the expanding global air transport system. Why is that women continue to be under-represented in highly specialized disciplines such as aviation?

## 2. Discussion

2.1 The **Appendix** to this Working Paper lists the persisting challenges that contribute to the gender gap in the aviation sector and ICAO efforts to advance gender equality in aviation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/women#:~:text=Gender%20equality%20is%20at%20the,by%20world%20leaders%20in%201945>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/icaodataanalytics/viz/RegionalPersonnelByGenderAnalysis/PersonnelbyGender>

*Gender equality in aviation in the NAM/CAR Regions: a snapshot*

2.2 During the NACC/DCA/11 meeting held from 28 to 30 June 2023, ICAO presented an update on the ongoing project to develop guidance to support the empowerment of women in aviation, as reflected in the Conclusions of the Twentieth Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS/20). It is the intent to present the afore-mentioned guidance at the GREPECAS/21 Meeting to be held in November 2024.

2.3 During 2023, the NACC Regional Office supported the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, which promotes the participation of women in the global aviation sector and invited States to use the guidance and information developed for aviation gender equality and to develop and implement gender policies which include women in the aeronautical environment which allows for a more creative and innovative environment so as to benefit aviation.

2.4 Also during 2023, the NACC Regional Office initiated a campaign to socialize the Programme and to promote a joint work agenda. In this sense, the NACC Regional Office had a great year with great participation in regional events such as:

- The Mexican Aviation Fair – (Feria Mexicana de la Aviación – FAMEX);
- An event of the Mexican Airspace Navigation Services (SENEAM);
- An event of the Global Business Travel Association – (GBTA);
- Participated and promoted information for future aviation professionals in universities with the aim to create aviation awareness to students who are in their preparation for their future careers;
- the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) also included 3 female professionals to participate in the USOAP CMA Audits of States in the region.

2.5 In addition to the abovementioned, NACC States, through the ICAO Capacity Development and Implementation (CD) Project RLA/09/801 – Multi-Regional Civil Aviation Assistance Programme (MCAAP), allocated the amount of USD20,000 to support the development of the activities of the initiatives of the NAM/CAR Regions to support gender equity activities.

2.6 In a joint-efforts initiative, the NACC Regional Office promotes working groups with different aviation partners with the objective to:

- Meet the goal's of all stakeholders;
- Work in a coordinated manner and with common tasks;
- Carry out coordinated projects between ICAO and other stakeholders such as:
  - o United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA);
  - o The International Airline Transport Association (IATA);
  - o The airlines
    - ✓ Aerolíneas Latinoamericanas (LATAM)
    - ✓ Air France.;
  - o The National Chamber of Air Transport of Mexico (CANAERO);
  - o The information portal of Aeronautical and Aerospace Industry A21, among other with regards to gender equality promotion

2.7 Furthermore, in a ceremony in 2023, the NACC Regional Office named its Conference Room after **Emma Catalina Encinas Aguayo**, the first Mexican woman to obtain a pilot's license and icon in the fight for women's rights breaking barriers that encouraged other women to venture into aviation.

**3. Suggested Actions:**

3.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) encourage each State and Territory to nominate a "Gender Equality Focal Point" in response to ICAO State Letter ref. 24.20, if they have not yet done so;
- b) encourage States and International Organizations to take leadership national initiatives to advance gender equality in the aviation sector and actively participate in ICAO global and regional activities on gender equality;
- c) support ICAO in the establishment and implementation of the Global Ambassadors' programme for gender equality, diversity and inclusion (ICAO future development under UN framework) and inform the NACC Regional Office of their interest in active participation in this important Programme; and
- d) consider providing in-kind and voluntary contributions to the ICAO Gender Equality Programme as well as initiatives and activities in support of surveys and research to improve gender equality in aviation, Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP), as well as scholarships and financial assistance to enable young women and girls to pursue careers in aviation.

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## APPENDIX GENDER EQUALITY IN AVIATION

### *Persisting challenges that contribute to the gender gap in the aviation sector.*

There are several 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 finally, lack of comprehensive data to enable informed decision-making and policy development. The journey to tackle these requires evidently a multi-pronged approach.

### *ICAO efforts to advance gender equality in aviation.*

*Assembly Resolution A41-26: ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector.*

ICAO is committed to advancing gender equality in the aviation sector. The 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A39-30, which was superseded by Resolution A41-26 that aims to encourage stronger commitment from Member States to advance gender equality and women empowerment objectives through a number of additional actions for the Secretariat which include, among others, production of multi-annual and detailed statistics on gender equality outlining progress made at various levels, inclusion of gender equality as a core element of its human resource strategy and policies, and strengthening partnerships for gender equality between ICAO and relevant stakeholders that includes programmes and projects aimed at increasing the pool of women in the aviation sector and encouraging women to further develop their aviation careers.

### *ICAO transformative efforts: mainstreaming of gender equality ) in ICAO's programmes*

#### a) ICAO Gender Programme implementation: setting up systems and structures.

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.

2.1. The 2023-2025 Implementation Plan of the Gender Equality Programme enables the Secretariat to better mainstream and implement gender equality objectives at ICAO while ensuring a more efficient delivery of the Organization's accountabilities as part of the United Nations system. As such, the Implementation Plan is transformative in nature and an integral part of ICAO's Transformational Objective. In development of the Plan, the Secretariat took into consideration ICAO's performance vis-à-vis the 17 indicators of United Nations Accountability Framework for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in United Nations Entities (UN-SWAP), as well as the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

#### b) People's Strategy – People First: ICAO's renewed prioritising of its People.

Mainstreaming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in ICAO will be achieved through the implementation of a DEI framework which outlines ICAO's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its workforce. Some of the key DEI initiatives include evolving a realistic and ambitious Gender action plan for ICAO that would deliver the targets for Gender Representation in line with the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, empowering our leaders as diversity champions, establishing leadership accountability, and encouraging the creation of Employee Resource Groups. Two notable activities have started: the establishment of a diversity procedure for recruitment and the commencement of an empowerment training for female personnel, in collaboration with McGill University in Montreal.

c) Championing gender equality in the workplace starts at the top.

Transforming an organization's culture to advance gender equality is a journey that requires champions for gender equality who make concrete and measurable commitments to women in the workplace. During its 221<sup>st</sup> session, the Council agreed to establish a Small Group on Gender (SGG) to consider opportunities to enhance gender equality in the composition of the governing and technical bodies of ICAO. This resulted in Council adopting a draft Declaration on Improving Gender Representation in ICAO's Governing and Technical Bodies, which was a concrete step in demonstrating the leadership of the ICAO Council in promoting the role of women in aviation especially in decision-making and leadership positions. The SGG now continues to have a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of A41-26.

Top leaders and senior management in ICAO strategically promote and advocate gender equality and the importance of women's empowerment in aviation. Full endorsement was given for ICAO Training to empower and advocate for women in aviation by offering all women registrants a 10% reduction on the regular price of self-paced and instructor-led courses by ICAO. This offer being valid until 31 December 2024 makes into one of the longest promotional campaigns ICAO ever launched. At the regional level, gender equality is now regularly included as an agenda item in meetings of Director Generals of Civil Aviation, leading to outcomes to report on.

ICAO revised its Next Generation Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme and developed a comprehensive global strategy on NGAP. This strategy aims to promote a systematic approach to promote not only STEM education, but also a broader range of aviation disciplines necessary to meet industry demands, engage with and train current and future aviation professionals to facilitate their entry and retention into the workforce and provide a roadmap for the development of specific joint actions. The NGAP strategy is driven by the Organization's objectives related to capacity building, innovation, gender equality, diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion and is aligned with the objectives of the ICAO Gender Equality Programme.

***ICAO transformative efforts: Advocacy to achieve full and equal participation of women in aviation.***

In addition to the yearly ICAO celebrations of International Women's Day, ICAO organized the 2nd ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit in partnership with the European Commission, the International Labor Organization, UN Women and the International Transport Forum, hosted by the Government of Spain in Madrid from 5 to 7 July 2023. The Summit brought together Governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, private stakeholders, academia and influencers of change from around the world to discuss solutions, catalyze progress, advocate for change and promote bold actions for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in aviation.

The Summit also saw the compilation of States' best practices and called for nomination of focal points at the State level. In addition, a Women in Aviation Multimedia Engagement Contest was organized, which received over 289 entries from 64 countries and an award ceremony took place during the Global Aviation Gender Summit in Madrid. The Summit resulted in a comprehensive and action-oriented Call to Action for

change. As a result, the United Kingdom provided funding to establish a Global Ambassadors' Programme for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. This Global Programme will also call for States to volunteer in identifying national ambassadors to help decision-makers in deliver national programmes in support of gender equality in aviation as well as a skilled, diverse, and sustainable aviation workforce fit to seize the opportunities of the future.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Aviation Gender Summit *Call to Action* will require efforts on multiple fronts to be undertaken individually or jointly by various partners. It will require financing as most of the actions are unfunded. To tackle one aspect of the *Call to Action*, more specifically on data collection and analysis, ICAO will hold a consultative meeting with industry and stakeholders on gender data to identify if the available data is sufficient to drive comprehensive policy setting and decision-making, gather lessons learned and best practices to overcome challenges. ICAO is also working together with UN Women on a research project to develop guidance related to conducting data analysis in aviation.