

Global Youth Engagement and Support

By ICAO Secretariat and Sustainable Aviation Youth Foundation (SAYF)

Introduction

It is critical for global youth to unite and have their say in aviation policy and development related to environmental protection, by actively engaging with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). At the same time, ICAO has an opportunity to bring new ideas for aviation de-carbonization with the objective of the long-term aspiration goal to be reached at the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly in October 2022.

Background: ICAO's Youth Initiative

ICAO Stocktaking 2021



During the 2021 ICAO Stocktaking Event, held from 31 August to 3 September 2021, the informal engagement of universities, young entrepreneurs, students, and environmental activists on sustainable aviation, was launched through a series of presentations on the first day of the event. Following these presentations, a call was made for global youth participants interested in aviation and the environment, to come together under an independent umbrella organization. The goal would be to engage with ICAO, the aviation community at large, and to provide expressed viewpoints and idea on the sustainable future of aviation.

ICAO Global Youth Engagement – Facilitation Session



The ICAO Global Youth Engagement – Facilitation Session was held on 28 October 2021 and connected global youth focusing on aviation and its environmental impact. This facilitation event served as a call for youth all over the world to come together to engage with ICAO, inspire ideas, and drive the transition to a sustainable future for aviation. The event brought together academic institutions, aviation stakeholders, and most importantly, youth passionate about the transition to sustainable energy. The establishment of a global youth umbrella group for sustainable aviation would be open to all and aimed at global representation.

Sustainable Aviation Youth Foundation (SAYF)

Following the ICAO facilitation session, youth that participated in this session took the initiative to gather like-minded and enthusiastic students and young professionals to establish the Sustainable Aviation Youth Foundation (SAYF).

Brandon van Schaik, 22, from the Netherlands took the initiative in establishing SAYF stating:

“The fact that young people from around the world come together to form a cohesive foundation to work towards sustainable aviation shows the urge in which the climate crisis needs to be addressed. The youth of today is the first generation to know that the climate crisis will be catastrophic for them if not addressed properly in addition to being the last generation to be able to make a sufficient impact to mitigate this crisis. The Sustainable Aviation Youth Foundation exists to facilitate youth engagement within the aviation industry, inspire ideas, and drive the transition to a sustainable future for aviation.

The involvement of youth in the industry is paramount to the energy transition and the enthusiasm and abilities that I see in our young members strengthen my confidence that we can push the environmental priorities forward in the industry.”

In January 2022, SAYF originated as an independent international umbrella organization for youth representation in sustainable aviation. Since the establishment of SAYF, a group of twenty passionate aviation enthusiasts are working towards a common vision and mission, highlighting the most critical issues in today’s transition to green aviation.

“A voice for the youth, a vision for the future, a force for change in international aviation. With this organization, we aim to create a platform for young minds to start a dialogue on all aspects of sustainable development in aviation and bring about the necessary changes with their academic participation, industry-oriented skills, and innovative ideas.” —**Dirsha Bohra, 26, India**

“Working with other motivated young people, towards a future with a sustainable aviation sector, gives me a lot of experience which helps me later in my career. The creation of SAYF is crucial in this period, the younger generation must deal with the transition of a sustainable planet later in their lives, therefore we must motivate the youth to participate in the transition as soon as possible. I am certain that the youth generation can provide a significant impact as most of the younger people think creatively, and therefore, innovate when it comes to solving problems.” —**Thomas Driessen, 22, The Netherlands**

SAYF exists to facilitate youth engagement within the aviation industry, inspire ideas, and drive the transition to a sustainable future for aviation. “SAYF fosters future aviation by bringing stakeholders from the industry, academia, and future generations to influence aviation as an affordable, sustainable, and ecologically responsible sector.” —**Vamsi Krishna Undavalli, 27, USA**





SAYF will enable youth to build and strengthen the skills required to participate in the transition to sustainable aviation. It will accomplish this goal by promoting excellence in all aspects of sustainable aviation, continual on the job learning, and continued professional development.

Pierre Vigor, 23, from France explains, “We want to become a strong, global, and diverse network of young professionals and students all interested in working in the aviation industry. By using our network, sharing expertise and opportunities to reflect on the transition of the sector, both internally and with different industry players, SAYF’s vision is to become a known and trusted actor in the sustainable aviation ecosystem. SAYF will enable youth to raise their voices and bring their vision to the aviation industry to make sure youth always have their place around the decision-making table.”

“As a youth organization, sustainability is not the only thing we are passionate about - diversity and global representation are key values for us.” As **Myrthe van Dalen, 25, from The Netherlands** highlights, “The aviation industry is a hierarchical and largely male-dominated

industry, which often lacks diversity. I believe it is paramount to create a diverse and inclusive sector to change aviation. Therefore, I believe as youth we need to unite and demand diversity in background, geographical locations, and age to demand a more sustainable future for aviation.”

“It is high time for youth all over the world to get involved in sustainable aviation. We, as young passionate people, should not be afraid to have our say on how aviation is evolving about environmental protection and social inclusion. I was happy to join SAYF because it gives me the possibility to connect, unite and engage. In the next three years, I hope we will have youth representatives of every country in the world, and that SAYF will develop strong partnerships to facilitate youth to training relating to sustainable aviation and contributing to projects that bring innovative, sustainable solutions to aviation” — **Joel Kameni Toussom, 30, Cameroon**

As the participant testimonials have highlighted, youth involved in SAYF are determined to show their presence and bring the aviation industry and youth closer together.