

**61st CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7 - 11 September 2026*

**AGENDA ITEM 8: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**STRENGTHENING GENDER EQUALITY IN AIR NAVIGATION
SERVICES: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE NEXT GENERATION OF
AVIATION PROFESSIONALS**

(Presented by The Republic of Indonesia)

SUMMARY

This paper raises Indonesia's concern, informed by the experience of Perum LPPNPI (AirNav Indonesia), the national air navigation service provider, that women remain significantly underrepresented in the operational, technical and leadership roles at the core of air navigation services (ANS), even where overall workforce participation is comparatively high.

It links this concern to ICAO Assembly Resolutions A39-29, A39-30 and A41-26, "ICAO Gender Equality Programme: promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector", the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Strategy (2024), and Action Item 60/53 of the 60th DGCA Conference. The paper shares AirNav Indonesia's measures, including the Srikandi women's empowerment forum, recognition in the 2024 Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards, a Board-endorsed Talent Diversity target, and cross-border cooperation with Airservices Australia, sets out the challenges that persist, and invites States/Administrations and air navigation service providers, as appropriate, to exchange experience, utilise the ICAO APAC Gender Equality Indicators, participate actively in the ICAO Global Network of Gender Focal Points, and strengthen regional cooperation on building an inclusive and competent ANS workforce.

STRENGTHENING GENDER EQUALITY IN AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Air navigation services (ANS) depend on a highly trained, licensed and safety-critical workforce, such as air traffic controllers (ATCOs), aeronautical communication officers (ACOs), air traffic safety electronics personnel (ATSEP), and aeronautical information service officers (AIS). The ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Strategy, approved by the ICAO Secretary General in June 2024, projects that the industry will need approximately 106,800 additional air traffic controllers, alongside hundreds of thousands of pilots and technicians, to support forecast traffic growth to 2037.

1.2 Women remain markedly underrepresented in these roles worldwide. The NGAP Strategy records that women account for only 5.1 per cent of pilots, air traffic controllers and technicians globally. For an ANSP this is a consequential gap, because these are the roles that directly deliver the safe separation of aircraft.

1.3 Gender equality is a longstanding ICAO priority. Assembly Resolution A39-29 (2016) urges States to formulate strategies to attract, educate and retain aviation professionals with a specific focus on promoting gender equality. The companion Resolution A39-30 established the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector with an aspirational goal of gender parity (50/50) by 2030 at all professional and senior levels. This mandate was updated by Assembly Resolution [A41-26](#), “ICAO Gender Equality Programme: promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector”, which calls for stronger commitment at all levels, supports targeted activities towards gender equality by 2030, and promotes the collection and voluntary provision of gender-disaggregated aviation statistics. The NGAP Strategy carries this forward through Objective 3.3.4 on diversity, equality and inclusion, and under Key Focus Area 1 commits to advocacy aligned with ICAO’s Global Gender Equality Implementation Plan 2.0. Gender equality is also United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5.

1.4 The 60th DGCA Conference reinforced this direction. Under Agenda Item 8, Action Item 60/53 encouraged States, Administrations and Organizations to develop future generations of aviation professionals aligning with ICAO NGAP objectives to support the projected growth of air transport in the region. This paper contributes to that Action Item from the perspective of an air navigation service provider.

1.5 Indonesia presents this paper through Perum LPPNPI (AirNav Indonesia), the national ANSP, to raise a specific concern, share its experience and the challenges it faces, and invite the region into a discussion on practical, ANS-focused solutions.

2. DISCUSSION

The concern: a strong operational base, a narrow leadership summit

2.1 As at 30 June 2026, women make up 32.2 per cent of AirNav Indonesia’s workforce (1,530 of 4,751). They are well represented in the licensed roles at the heart of the service: 631 women serve as air traffic controllers, 238 as technicians, 164 as aeronautical communication officers, and 58 in aeronautical information services. They are also well qualified, with about 95 per cent holding a diploma or university qualification, and predominantly early to mid-career, with roughly two thirds aged between 31 and 40.

2.2 This operational participation is well above the global benchmark. Against the NGAP Strategy figure of 5.1 per cent women among pilots, air traffic controllers and technicians worldwide, AirNav Indonesia's record on entry and frontline participation is comparatively strong. The problem that is often assumed, namely too few women entering the profession, is largely not the constraint here.

2.3 The gap emerges at the top. Women hold only 12.6 per cent of managerial positions (76 of 601), even though they are almost one third of the workforce and a substantial part of the operational cadre. Representation in management has improved steadily, from 9.6 per cent in 2022 to 12.6 per cent in 2026, but the leadership summit remains narrow.

2.4 The concern, therefore, is not participation or entry, which are relatively healthy, but progression. Representation thins sharply between a strong operational base and a narrow leadership summit. Aggregate ratios can hide this pattern; only data broken down by function and level makes it visible, which is why AirNav Indonesia raises it for regional attention. The distribution of AirNav Indonesia's women employees across job functions is set out below.

Women employees by job function (30 June 2026)	Number
Air traffic controller	631
Technician (CNS/ATSEP)	238
Aeronautical communication officer	164
Aeronautical information service	58
Staff (corporate and support)	328
Managerial	76
Functional	35
Total women	1,530

Source: AirNav Indonesia workforce demographics, 30 June 2026

Challenges that AirNav Indonesia believes are shared across the region

2.5 Three connected barriers sit beneath the leadership gap, consistent with those ICAO itself identifies: gender stereotypes about a profession still perceived as male, the difficulty of balancing shift based operational work and senior responsibilities with family life, and a shortage of visible role models at the top that would encourage women to aspire and to stay. For an air navigation service provider these translate into four practical challenges.

2.6 Advancement, not entry. Women form a strong share of the operational and technical cadre yet only 12.6 per cent of managers. Progression stalls where mobility, rotational assignments and readiness for command roles intersect with family responsibilities that still fall disproportionately on women. Building a strong female operational base has largely succeeded at AirNav Indonesia; converting that base into leadership has not yet.

2.7 A 24/7 operational environment. Continuous shift work, irregular rosters, and standalone or remote units across an archipelagic geography make balancing work and family harder and can accelerate attrition among women when they start families. The NGAP Strategy notes that gender friendly policies such as parental leave and childcare support can be decisive for women weighing an aviation career.

2.8 Competency must never be compromised. ANS roles carry strict licensing and competency requirements. Diversity efforts must widen the qualified pool, never relax the standard. Any regional approach must reconcile inclusion with the non-negotiable safety and competency requirements of air traffic management.

2.9 Measurement and comparability. The [ICAO APAC Gender Equality Indicators](#) provide a practical framework for States/Administrations to measure implementation through areas including policy, gender-disaggregated data, quantitative targets, leadership representation, access to technical skills, and a safe and secure working environment. AirNav Indonesia tracks its workforce by function and level, as reflected in its 30 June 2026 demographics. Wider and consistent use of the Indicators by States/Administrations and air navigation service providers, as appropriate, would improve regional benchmarking and evidence-based target setting by function and level.

AirNav Indonesia's position: what it is doing

2.10 Srikandi AirNav Indonesia. Established in 2022 as part of the wider Srikandi movement across Indonesian state-owned enterprises, this women's empowerment forum has 437 active members and is sponsored at Board level by the President Director and the Director of Human Resources and General Affairs. Its programme includes mentoring and leadership development, gender-awareness and inclusivity education, a Respectful Workplace Policy, and assessment against the UN Women's Empowerment Principles.

2.11 External recognition and concrete policies. AirNav Indonesia was named 1st runner up in the 2024 Indonesia Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards. Its practices include a written internal and external gender equality strategy with KPIs, targets and monitoring; 90 days of paid maternity leave and 5 days of paid paternity leave; flexible working; a confidential grievance mechanism against harassment and violence, with annual training for all staff; and women specific health facilities such as lactation rooms, all anchored in national law and international instruments including the relevant ILO conventions. In 2024 all 148 employees who took parental leave, 119 of them in operational roles, returned to their positions with full rights.

2.12 Board-endorsed targets. Diversity is embedded in corporate performance. The 2026 Work Plan and Budget (RKAP), as approved by the Ministry of State-owned Enterprise, includes a Talent Diversity KPI with a target of 17 per cent. The Long-Term Plan (RJPP 2025 to 2029) sets a rising trajectory for women in the nominated-talent pool: 13 per cent in 2025, 17 per cent in 2026, 23 per cent in 2027, 29 per cent in 2028 and 33 per cent in 2029, consistent with the national aspiration of 30 per cent women in state-owned enterprise leadership.

Why a regional dialogue among ANSPs is needed

2.13 The NGAP Strategy explicitly calls for national and regional stakeholder groups, knowledge-sharing and partnerships, and ICAO has itself linked gender and NGAP, including through the 2023 High-Level Panel "Promoting the ICAO Gender Equality Programme in conjunction with the NGAP initiative" and the Global Aviation Gender Summits. The ICAO APAC Gender Equality Indicators now provide a practical regional measurement framework, while the [ICAO Global Network of Gender Focal Points](#) offers

an existing mechanism for knowledge-sharing, coordination and collaboration. Air navigation service providers have an equal stake and would benefit from bringing ANS-specific experience into these mechanisms, tailored to the operational realities of air traffic management.

2.14 Cross-border ANSP cooperation already demonstrates the value. AirNav Indonesia's "Women in Aviation" programme, including a Women@Airservices and Srikandi mentoring partnership with Airservices Australia under the Indonesia Transport Safety Assistance Package (ITSAP), supported by the Australia-Indonesia PROSPERA programme, exchanges best practice and professional development directly between two air navigation service providers. AirNav Indonesia's experience is not as a finished model but as a basis for discussion, and equally seeks to learn from States and Administrations that have successfully advanced women's participation in operational ANS roles.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) note that women can be brought into operational air navigation roles in significant numbers, as shown by AirNav Indonesia where women hold 32.2 per cent of posts and a substantial share of frontline roles, yet remain underrepresented in leadership at 12.6 per cent of managerial positions;
- b) recognise the relevance of ICAO Assembly Resolutions A39-29 and A39-30, the updated Assembly Resolution A41-26 on the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, the ICAO NGAP Strategy, and Action Item 60/53 to air navigation service providers, and the value of addressing the advancement of women into ANS leadership specifically;
- c) exchange experiences, challenges and good practices on retaining and advancing women into senior operational and managerial ANS roles, including family support and flexible working measures compatible with 24/7 operations;
- d) encourage States/Administrations and air navigation service providers, as appropriate, to utilise the ICAO APAC Gender Equality Indicators as a practical framework for measuring and monitoring implementation, including gender representation by function and level, to support benchmarking and evidence-based target setting without compromising competency and licensing standards; and
- e) encourage States/Administrations and air navigation service providers, as appropriate, to participate actively in the ICAO Global Network of Gender Focal Points and make use of existing ICAO and NGAP mechanisms to strengthen collaboration, share knowledge and good practices, and support implementation of gender equality initiatives.

— END —