

**Opening remarks by the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Director. Mr. Nicolas Rallo, to the ICAO 2023 Regional Webinar on Mentoring (6 December 2023)**

Dear Colleagues,

Good afternoon, and a very warm welcome to this ICAO EUR/NAT Webinar on Mentoring!

Many thanks to all of you for joining, and special thanks to our HQ colleagues, Thilly De Bodt and her team, and all our speakers for their enthusiastic support and their willingness to share their experience and insights.

Empowering women and achieving gender equality is integrated across the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, has stated, gender equality remains “the unfinished business of our time”.

In July this year, together with some of our partners, ICAO convened the Global Aviation Gender Summit in Madrid, Spain. The objective was to advocate for change, catalyze progress, and promote actions for achieving gender equality and women empowerment in aviation.

This event, which I had the honor to attend and humbly contribute to, was attended by close to 550 participants. In addition, over 1,500 global viewers followed the discussions on ICAO TV live stream.

The Summit stressed the urgent need for sector-wide mobilization, commitment and dedicated resources to accelerate progress and achieve gender equality in aviation. It called on all actors and stakeholders across aviation and other relevant domains to commit to bold and impactful actions.

This call to action highlighted the need to create an enabling work environment within all aviation stakeholders and to make better use of measures such as internships, fellowships and mentoring programmes to develop women’s skills in aviation.

During the 2023 EUR/NAT DGCA Meeting, Member States clearly affirmed their commitment to advance gender equality in aviation. While continuous efforts will be needed at the global level, concrete actions from States and industry will be essential at all levels: national, sub-regional and pan-regional.

We will need to promote and give maximum visibility to existing initiatives and we will need to create new ones when needed. Across the EUR/NAT area, spreading from Iceland and North Africa up to Central Asia. We wish to start with mentoring programmes as they can more directly benefit women across our vast accreditation area. Joining forces will lead to new partnerships, avoiding duplication of efforts and exploring synergies whenever possible. We need to mobilize everyone, women and men, in this dynamic.

Our intent with this webinar is to provide insights on organizational programmes and other initiatives towards advancing gender equality in aviation, and more specifically on mentoring. This webinar is a first step on a journey which we hope will benefit as many women as possible. And doing so, benefitting our aviation sector and our societies as a whole.

To all of you, I wish an engaging, inspiring and fruitful webinar.

Thank you very much for your attention.