

## Opening Remarks: ICAO EUR/NAT Webinar on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

Dear colleagues,

It is my privilege to welcome you to the ICAO EUR/NAT regional webinar on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Aviation. Thank you all very much for joining.

First of all, I am pleased to introduce my two team members that will support our regional office's work on Gender in close cooperation with our partners. Ms Nino Gelovani, regional officer, MET and Mr. Brian de Couto, regional officer, airworthiness.

We are happy to have with us today a number of our partners, including EUROCONTROL, CANSO, IFATCA, and ITF, who will share their insights and initiatives. Partnerships like these are essential to advancing gender equality. Only through strong collaboration can we implement meaningful activities to advance gender equality in the EUR/NAT area and globally.

We also have with us today Ms. Thilly De Bodt, who is the head of the ICAO gender equality programme, and will be our moderator today. I would like to give a big thank you to Thilly and to our gender equality partners for supporting our webinar.

Despite some progress, the journey towards gender equality in aviation remains slow. The global proportion of women in licensed aviation roles, such as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians, has risen only marginally from 4.5% in 2016 to just 5.1% in 2023. This highlights an urgent need for stronger leadership, decisive action, and targeted strategies to drive real change.

At the last ICAO Assembly, Resolution A41-26 was agreed upon that aims at encouraging stronger commitment from Member States to advance gender equality and women empowerment. This commitment must start from the top management of all concerned organizations.

This is why in the EUR/NAT area I actively encourage Director Generals and other senior leaders to take actions in their organizations. During the 2024 Directors General meeting held in Toulouse in April this year, we presented a working paper on Gender Equality which reaffirmed the dedication of EUR/NAT States to gender equality, adopting a conclusion that included:

- Nominating Gender Equality Focal Points.
- Actively participating in gender equality initiatives.
- Supporting mentoring programs for women in aviation. And
- Providing voluntary contributions to ICAO's Gender Equality Programme.

A key focus of today's discussions will be on mentoring, a powerful mechanism for empowering women and advancing their careers. Our distinguished partners will share their experiences and ongoing mentoring initiatives, offering valuable perspectives on how mentoring programs can be effectively designed and implemented.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce an upcoming regional workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 4–5 March 2025, kindly hosted by the Kazakhstan CAA. This workshop, will be a fantastic opportunity to mark the International Women's Day, and will further support our work on developing mentoring programmes while bringing our States and partners together for further collaboration.

We encourage you to provide us with your ideas today to help shape the programme of our workshop and commemorate International Women's Day. We are very excited about this workshop and hope to see many of you there. And allow me to thank our colleagues from Kazakhstan for their support and engagement.

Today's webinar is a great opportunity to deepen our discussions, refine our strategies, and take concrete steps toward a future where aviation fully embraces the talents of all its people.

Let us together ensure that gender equality becomes not just a goal, but a reality in aviation.

Once again thank you for your participation, and I look forward to listening to the insights and discussions today.

Nicolas Rallo

ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Director