



FOURTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

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Agenda Item 1: Update on the ICAO 2023-2025 Business Plan and Long-term Strategic Planning 1.1: Reprioritization of the ICAO 2023-2025 Business Plan

PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL AVIATION SECTOR: GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICES IN CHINA'S CIVIL AVIATION

(Presented by China)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Female employees are important participants in various areas of civil aviation, and helping them better leverage their own strengths in the industry is an important topic for global civil aviation. China attaches great importance to gender equality and continuously promotes female employees' development along with the industry. This paper provides an overview of the various measures that Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese Mainland have been constantly undertaking to strengthen gender equality and enhance women's empowerment in civil aviation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Women are the pathfinders of human civilization, who provide the driving force for social progress. Empowering women and eliminating all forms of discrimination play a crucial role in sustainable development. Goal 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

1.2 The 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A39-30, urging States, regions, international aviation organizations, and international aviation sector to prioritize the protection of women's rights and take necessary measures to strength gender equality. The 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly further advanced these efforts through Resolution A41-26, promoting various measures to strengthen gender equality, mainstream gender issues and enhance women's empowerment. In 2021, the ICAO Council made a commitment in the "Declaration on Improving Gender Representation in ICAO's Governing and Technical Bodies" to increase the number of women with opportunities to assume responsibilities in the Council.

1.3 Equality between men and women is one of the basic national policies of China. Mainland China has established a legal system for the protection of women's rights, which includes more than 100 laws and regulations. In 2021, in accordance with domestic laws and national situations, Mainland China

adopted the “Programme for Women’s Development in China (2021-2030)”. It focuses on areas such as women’s health, economic rights, participation in decision-making and management, and sets forward 75 main goals and 93 strategic measures. In Hong Kong SAR, China, the commitment to gender equality is also enshrined in the legislation. The establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Women’s Commission within the territory further exemplified the importance attached to promoting gender equality and advancing women’s interest. With the aim to promote gender equality and women’s development, Macao SAR, China has formulated “Macao Women’s Development Target Plan (2019-2025)” focusing on eight priority areas to take care of the development of all aspects of women, an inter-departmental working group, including a number of public departments, was formed to jointly focus on and promote the implementation of various measures.

1.4 China attaches great importance to the training and promotion of female employees, ensuring that they are well respected in the workplace. This paper aims to introduce the achievements that Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese Mainland have made in gender equality and outline the measures taken in the aviation sector.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Continuous growth of number of female employees in the aviation sector

2.1.1 Female representation in Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (HKCAD), and Civil Aviation Authority of Macao, China (AACM): Currently, the percentage of female employees serving in CAAC has exceeded 30 per cent. In HKCAD, female employees accounted for a high 46 per cent of the overall complement, with over a quarter of the Directorate grade staff being female. In AACM, the percentage of female employees is 49 per cent of the total employees.

2.1.2 Female Pilots: In the 1960s, the first female pilot emerged in the Mainland of China’s civil aviation industry. Since then, an increasing number of women have joined this sector. By 2022, the total number of female pilot licenses issued by CAAC has reached 937, representing a 19.5 per cent growth compared to 2018. In Hong Kong SAR, China, the current percentage of female pilots stands at 4.8 per cent. It is also worth noting that amongst all the professional pilots, 11 per cent of the holders of a Commercial Pilot’s Licence in Hong Kong SAR, China are female. In Macao SAR, China, female pilots accounted for around 2 per cent of the holders of pilot license.

2.1.3 Female Security Screeners: Airport security check involves a relatively significant amount of physical contact. For female passengers, it is generally more acceptable to have a female security officer conduct the procedure. Currently, female security screeners in the civil aviation sectors of Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese Mainland make up around 47 per cent, 41 per cent, and 41 per cent of the total number respectively, all approaching the target of gender balance.

2.1.4 Female Air Traffic Controllers: The general public perception of air traffic management is that it has high technological content and significant task pressure, which may harm the work-life balance for female employees. However, in reality, women hold important positions in this field and possess certain advantages during communication and coordination with pilots. Currently, female air traffic controllers in the Mainland of China account for 16 per cent of the total workforce in this field. It is foreseeable that this proportion will continue to increase in the future. In Hong Kong SAR, China and Macao SAR, China, around 40 per cent and 37 per cent of air traffic controllers are female respectively.

2.2 Promoting and achieving gender equality

2.2.1 China has been constantly undertaking various initiatives to strengthen gender equality and enhance women's empowerment in civil aviation. Below are the measures taken by Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese Mainland:

Initiatives taken by the Chinese Mainland

2.2.1.1 CAAC actively implements the "Human Rights Action Plan of China (2021-2025)", ensuring women's equal rights to employment.

2.2.1.2 CAAC has thoroughly implemented the fundamental national policy of gender equality, striven to encourage employers to establish sound systems and mechanisms for gender equality, promoted the application of the "Manual of Guidance on Promoting Workplace Gender Equality" and developed a working plan of the Labour Union of CAAC to promote the use of this manual. These efforts aim to foster gender equality in the workplace.

2.2.1.3 The Labour Union of CAAC guides its subdivisions at all levels to include the "Special Rules on the Labour Protection of Female Employees" in the special collective contracts for protecting the rights and interests of female employees. This aims to reduce and address the specific difficulties faced by female employees in their jobs due to physiological factors. Currently, 359 organizations in the sector have signed the special collective contracts, covering 256 068 female employees, with a coverage rate of approximately 90 per cent.

2.2.1.4 The Mainland of China's civil aviation industry shows great care for the physical and mental health of female employees and advocates for the establishment of regular medical examination scheme for female employees in various organizations. Seven rounds of "Serious Illness Mutual Aid Fund for Civil Aviation Female Employees" have been implemented, providing care and support from the labour union and the female workforce to female employees afflicted with serious illnesses.

2.2.1.5 In the Mainland of China, a total of 890 baby-care rooms have been set up across the civil aviation industry, providing comfortable, safe and cozy rest environment for female employees during pregnancy and lactation. Between 2015 and 2020, a total of 215 608 person-time female employees have used these facilities.

Initiatives taken by Hong Kong SAR, China

2.2.1.6 In line with the principles enshrined in the legislation and upheld by the EOC and Women's Commission of Hong Kong SAR, China, all key players of the aviation sector actively implement measures and initiatives which promote gender equality and advance women's interest.

2.2.1.7 Following the government-wide principle of ensuring an open and fair recruitment process, HKCAD ensured that candidates for its job vacancies are selected based on merits regardless of gender. Upon joining the HKCAD, the subsequent training pathway and career advancement opportunities are also considered based on merits only. In addition, the HKCAD encourages a family-friendly work environment by installing lactation rooms cum baby-care facilities at the HKCAD Headquarters and air traffic control towers. The highly sought-after Airport Preschool facilities at Hong Kong International Airport is also conducive to attracting female aviation professionals.

2.2.1.8 Several major home carriers of Hong Kong SAR, China covering 90 per cent of the fleet size have signed up to join the "25by2025" campaign initiated by IATA to advance their gender balance by

2025. Amongst them, one of the home carriers became the first commercial airline to be listed on the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index in 2023 and aimed to increase women representation in senior positions to at least 30 per cent by 2025. To bring forth greater gender diversity in the airline, a wide array of relevant initiatives was introduced, including the implementation of family friendly policies, the incorporation of diversity objectives in the hiring process and the setting up of a “Gender Equity Network” for the female workforce to raise and address challenges.

2.2.1.9 To promote aviation training and support the development of the next generation of aviation professionals, the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy (“HKIAA”) was established in 2016 as the first civil aviation academy in Hong Kong SAR, China. For the training programmes offered by the HKIAA, interested applicants of both genders are considered with equal weight on their own merits. Recent admission statistics indicate that about one-third of students enrolled in its Advanced Master Programme in Air Transport Management are female, whereas training courses targeting post-secondary school students record a consistent 1:1 participation from both genders.

Initiatives taken by Macao SAR, China

2.2.1.10 In support the spirit of promoting gender equality and women’s development, AACM has communicated and encouraged the aviation stakeholders in Macao SAR, China to enhance gender equality through capacity building to cultivate female aviation professionals, the home carrier of Macao, SAR China has earnestly taken the gender equality initiative by ensuring fair recruitment process to enhance gender balance in the workforce as well as to provide opportunities for female personnel to engage in more technical positions in its operations department. Currently, there are up to one-third of flight operations officers are female. With this regards, the gender equality initiative was also implemented in its cadet pilot program and successfully foster local female pilots to participate in the aviation sector since 2018.

2.3 In summary, gender equality is a common value practised by all key players of civil aviation in China. With the support of relevant policies and legislation, we strive to continue our efforts in achieving gender equality in the aviation sector.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this paper.

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