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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Agenda Item 38: Human Resources Management and Gender Equality

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper outlines the current status of *The ICAO People First Strategy* and ongoing initiatives to improve human resources management and to promote ethics, efficiency, and transparency throughout the Organization.

This paper presents a progress report on the ongoing reform initiatives and modernization of the Organization's human resources management policies, practices, and systems, as well as future actions for further improvement.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- note the reforms undertaken and underway and achievements made by the Organization to enhance the management of its human resources including the People and Culture transformation under the Transformational Objective; and
- endorse the priority initiatives and future actions identified for human resources management for the next triennium, including those to be implemented under the Continuous Organizational Improvement high priority enabler, as presented in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.9 of this working paper, and in accordance with the operating plan for human resources management and its associated deliverables.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Goals, High Priority Enablers and Supporting Enablers.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The future activities referred to in this paper are expected to be undertaken within the resources available in the 2026-2028 Regular Budget and/or from extra-budgetary contributions as guided by the ICAO Business Plan 2026-2028.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 7350, <i>The ICAO Service Code</i> A41-WP/49 – Status of the ICAO Workforce A41-WP/48 – Measures towards Improving the Participation of Women at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector <i>The ICAO People First Strategy</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2023-2025 triennium has seen progress in ICAO's people management through *The ICAO People First Strategy* reforms. This paper presents key achievements under *The ICAO People First Strategy* and broader human resources (HR) efforts, highlighting the gains of Transformational Objective pillar 1, People and Culture, scheduled to end this year. It also highlights the HR structure required to support operations going forward and identifies interventions required in the next triennium to sustain momentum.

2. THE ICAO PEOPLE FIRST STRATEGY

Launched in July 2023, *The ICAO People First Strategy* aligns HR efforts with ICAO's goals. The Organization named its People Strategy "*People First*" to highlight its core focus. "People First" targets five objectives: Culture Transformation, HR Transformation, People Growth, Organizational Effectiveness, and Employee Experience; and is implemented via ten projects. As of March 2024, only 32 per cent of the required budget had been secured, which prompted a prioritization exercise leading to a realignment of projects in April 2024.

3. FULLY PRIORITIZED PROJECTS

3.1 The **Culture Transformation project** aims to align ICAO's culture with its strategic goals, structured across five phases. Key milestones already achieved include the Culture Blueprint¹ and the identification of seventeen Culture Change Accelerators (CCAs)² (see Figure 1 in the Appendix). To drive adoption, the Organization has identified and unveiled three Culture Sponsors from the Senior Management Group, onboarded thirty-five Culture ambassadors who have volunteered to champion culture change across the regions and offices, and commenced Culture Immersion sessions aimed at deepening the awareness and understanding of the required Culture shifts. The Culture Pulse survey, launched in June 2025, assesses our culture progress and provides insight into focus efforts in the forthcoming year.

3.2 The **Fit for Purpose Organization (FFPO) project** is designed to enhance ICAO's organizational architecture and resource planning by integrating Organizational Development (OD) and Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP). The Organizational Design Assessment is complete, while ongoing activities include development of the workforce planning framework, and the exploration of specific Bureau, Branch and Office restructuring.

3.3 The **Human Capital Management (HCM) System project** encompasses the implementation of various HR system modules (as part of ICAO's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project). During the triennium, ICAO has deployed a new ERP system, Quantum. To date, three HRM modules have been deployed, while the performance management module is due in 2026. Integration with UNALL³ is also expected by the end of 2025.

¹ A culture blueprint is a strategic framework that outlines the desired organizational culture and the steps needed to achieve it

² CCAs refer to a tool, initiative, policy change, program, experience or set of practices aimed at facilitating desired shifts in organizational culture by enabling behavior change.

³ UNall is a service management platform designed to streamline various service requests and incident management processes. It is currently used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partner agencies.

4. OTHER PEOPLE STRATEGY PROJECTS

4.1 The **Leadership Development** project aims to enhance leadership capabilities at all levels, empowering ICAO personnel to effectively lead themselves and others across various contexts. A core element of this project is the Blue Line⁴ online training platform, which provides leadership and management courses to all ICAO personnel. Additionally, the Grade-Based Leadership Training programme, designed to address the needs of different staff levels, aims to reach 35 per cent of the workforce by the end of the triennium. In parallel, the ICAO People Managers Course (IPMC) has been launched to cater to bespoke People Management needs of People managers. .

4.2 The **Talent Mobility** project aims to foster a flexible environment that enhances staff skills and career growth, shifting the focus from rigid career paths to flexible application of skills, competencies & experience. The project includes four workstreams: *Mobility Policy Refresh*, *Career Development Support*, *Succession Planning*, and *Talent Marketplace*. For this triennium, priority is given to the Mobility Policy Refresh and Career Development Support initiatives. In 2025, two new mobility pathways are being piloted. The first pilot, which was run from January to April 2025, provided participants with career experience and collaborative sessions. Building on insights from the first cohort, a second pilot commenced in June 2025. After both pilots, the mobility rules in the Organization will be refined and formally integrated into business operations for the next triennium. As part of the Career Development Support workstream, ICAO introduced several initiatives including the ICAO Mentoring Programme, the Career INSPIRE Series, and the Career Development Portal.

4.3 The **Competency Framework** Project is structured around two key workstreams: (i) the activation of ICAO's existing core competency framework, which is a priority for the current triennium, and (ii) the development and implementation of a technical competency framework, scheduled for the next triennium. Activating the current framework is a critical foundational step that transitions the framework from a static reference document to a practical and strategic tool that drives professional excellence, supports career development, and enhances organizational performance.

4.4 ICAO has continued to advance **Gender Balance** as part of its broader employee engagement efforts, and in line with the aspirational goal of gender equality by 2030, especially in the Professional and higher levels as stated in ICAO Assembly Resolution A41-26. Notable women-focused actions during this triennium include the launch of a Leadership Development Programme for Women, designed in collaboration with McGill University. This bespoke programme is designed to equip women with the competencies needed to navigate institutional dynamics and lead effectively. Additional measures—such as integrating comprehensive engagement practices into recruitment processes, committee representation, and policies like the Flexible Work Arrangements—have further reinforced ICAO's commitment to gender balance. These efforts have contributed to a steady increase in the representation of women in senior roles, currently at 37%, the highest level recorded in the past decade. See Figure 2 in the Appendix for the percentage of women in Professional and Higher categories from 2004 to 2024.

4.5 The **HR Operations Excellence** project, which also incorporated the People First Kaizen project, is aimed at optimizing key HR processes to enhance operational efficiency and elevate the employee experience. Priority has been given to the recruitment and consultant engagement processes, both of which are being streamlined using the Kaizen⁵ methodology. Since partial implementation in November

⁴ Blue Line is the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) global online learning hub open to all UN colleagues for personalized and self-directed learning.

⁵ Kaizen refers to a continuous improvement methodology focused on making **small, incremental improvements** consistently over time

2024, preliminary results show considerable reduction in the average recruitment timeline. Building on the success of this initial phase, additional HR processes will be progressively reviewed and optimized using the same methodology.

4.6 During this triennium, the focus of **Employee Engagement** is on sustained and targeted engagement efforts. The 2022 Global Engagement Survey (GES) results reflected measurable progress (vs 2020) across all ten engagement dimensions, with the overall engagement index increasing from 62 per cent in 2020 to 67 per cent in 2022. The next GES is scheduled for Q4 2025.

5. ADDITIONAL HR MODERNISATION INITIATIVES

5.1 **Digitalization in HR operations:** The project aims to digitalize key HR processes related to the administration of ICAO personnel, moving from manual systems to a digital environment. The achievements of this project have optimized storage, improved information retrieval, and reduced reliance on physical documentation and manual tasks.

5.2 **Employee Wellbeing:** ICAO has made significant progress in advancing employee wellbeing, aligning with international best practices to foster a healthier, more supportive, and high-performing work environment. During this triennium, the Organization enhanced its Group Medical Insurance coverage by introducing a 24/7 International Employee Assistance Programme and Global Telehealth Services for remote medical consultations. In addition, ICAO Medical Services has expanded to provide convenient, on-site primary healthcare access for staff, their families, and members of Resident Delegations.

5.3 **Learning & Development:** As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Learning & Development (L&D), ICAO conducted a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) in 2023. This guided the launch of several corporate training programmes. To maintain strategic learning implementation, a follow-up LNA is underway to identify upcoming learning needs aligned with ICAO's Strategic Objectives. The findings will shape ICAO's learning priorities for the next triennium. Additional initiatives like HR Talk Shops, and the bi-monthly Learning@ICAO newsletter, are part of ongoing L&D transformation efforts.

5.4 **Performance Management:** ICAO has taken proactive steps to strengthen its performance management framework, including targeted training for both staff and managers to build competency in setting objectives, providing feedback, and managing performance effectively. Additionally, there is the regular dissemination of performance dashboards to support management oversight and ensure the completion of performance processes.

5.5 **Recruitment:** Over the triennium, ICAO has strengthened its talent outreach efforts by leveraging LinkedIn and other social media platforms to connect with a broader pool of aviation professionals globally. These efforts have led to a steady increase in the overall number of applications to ICAO vacancy announcements, indicating greater global visibility and engagement. However, despite this growth in applications, the percentage of female applicants has remained relatively low, at an average of 35 per cent over the three-year period. This figure correlates with the low representation of women in the global aviation workforce, highlighting the ongoing challenge within the sector.

5.6 **Policy Framework:** During this triennium, substantial advancements were achieved in modernizing and streamlining the organization's human resources policy framework. A registry of pending policy work was established to systematically address long-standing backlogs, with the support of dedicated consultancy services. To further enhance policy accessibility and promote service excellence, a centralized

policy portal was developed and implemented, alongside the creation of user-friendly policy factsheets to simplify legal language for broader staff understanding. Further, the Organization actively contributed to an inter-agency initiative focused on the development of an HR ChatBot for the UN common system. This innovative tool enables the comparison of policies across organizations, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation and service delivery.

6. FUTURE ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM

6.1 Following the successful implementation of *People First*, (which is still ongoing), the next triennium presents a pivotal opportunity to build on our momentum, and further align our people initiatives with ICAO's long-term Strategic Plan and evolving priorities.

6.2 **Culture:** Over the next triennium, ICAO will focus on embedding and sustaining the foundational work initiated through the Culture Transformation Project. The priority will be to operationalize the CCAs across all levels of the Organization. This will involve translating the CCAs into tangible actions, supported by clear implementation plans, defined accountability structures, and ongoing training. The Culture Pulse Survey results provide critical data to inform targeted interventions and refine existing efforts. A focus will also be placed on integrating culture transformation into core organizational systems—such as performance management, onboarding, and learning—ensuring that desired behaviours are modeled, recognized, and sustained.

6.3 **HR Transformation:** In the next triennium, HR will build on current gains by expanding key interventions to firmly position the function as a strategic driver of organizational performance. A central focus will be optimizing the Quantum system and advancing the broader digitalization agenda to improve efficiency and service quality. HR will also strengthen its use of workforce analytics and performance data to guide strategic decision-making. A key enabler of these goals is the refinement of the HR operating model. The next phase will seek to better resource core functions, while new Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) roles will be introduced, institutionalizing a client-focused model that fosters closer collaboration with Bureaus, Regional Offices, and staff, and enables the delivery of tailored, strategic people solutions.

6.4 **People Growth:** In the next triennium, ICAO will deepen its investment in people development by building on the leadership, mobility, and career growth initiatives launched in recent years. To ensure leadership continuity and future capability, ICAO will launch a structured Succession Planning framework tailored to the organization's maturity. This phased approach will identify mission-critical roles, assess future talent needs, and build talent internal pipelines⁶ through targeted learning and exposure. ICAO will also launch an internal Talent Marketplace to match skills and opportunities in real-time. This platform will enable staff to explore roles aligned with their development goals while supporting managers in sourcing internal talent. Further, the development and rollout of the Technical Competency Framework will begin, reinforcing a culture of performance and ongoing learning.

6.5 **Organizational Effectiveness:** In the upcoming triennium, ICAO will focus on advancing the implementation of key recommendations emerging from the Fit for Purpose Organization (FFPO) project. Building on the foundational work completed through the Organizational Design Assessment and

⁶ An internal talent pipeline is a structured system or process within an organization to identify, develop, and prepare current employees for future roles.

subsequent work packages, the next phase will prioritize the systematic and phased roll-out of structural adjustments, functional realignments, and process optimizations across the Organization. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening organizational coherence, reducing functional redundancies, and ensuring that roles, structures, and capabilities are aligned with the Strategic Plan and ICAO Business Plan. In parallel, ICAO will operationalize the Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) framework, also developed under the FFPO project.

6.6 **Employee Experience:** In the next triennium, ICAO will strengthen its focus on employee experience by adopting a more intentional, data-driven approach to staff care and engagement. A key initiative will be auditing the employee life cycle to identify friction points and implement targeted improvements in policies, processes, and support systems—creating a more responsive and supportive work environment. The engagement strategy will evolve into a holistic model that prioritizes total wellbeing—mental, physical, social, and professional. This includes rolling out a comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and promoting preventive health through education and dialogue.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The implementation of *the ICAO People First Strategy* has marked a shift in how People Management is done in ICAO. Through deliberate, focused interventions, ICAO has begun to redefine its people management approach, positioning itself as a more agile, inclusive, and future-ready organization.

7.2 While project fulfilment to date has provided a good indication of ongoing success, the primary Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the implementation of People First during this triennium are reflected in employee sentiment, as measured through the Global Engagement Surveys (GES). In alignment with the Transformational Objective, ICAO anticipates a meaningful improvement—of up to 5 per cent—in key dimensions of the Q4 GES results. These targeted dimensions include the Employee Engagement Index, Ethical Behaviour, Culture & Values, and Confidence in Senior Management.

7.3 As ICAO looks to the next triennium, the focus will be on consolidating gains and scaling up key initiatives. Resource constraints and external pressures will require disciplined prioritization and strong alignment between HR capacity and strategic imperatives. ICAO will continue advancing its people agenda with purpose, leveraging data, collaboration, and innovation to sustain progress and support its global mission. The foundation is in place—what remains is to build on it decisively and strategically.

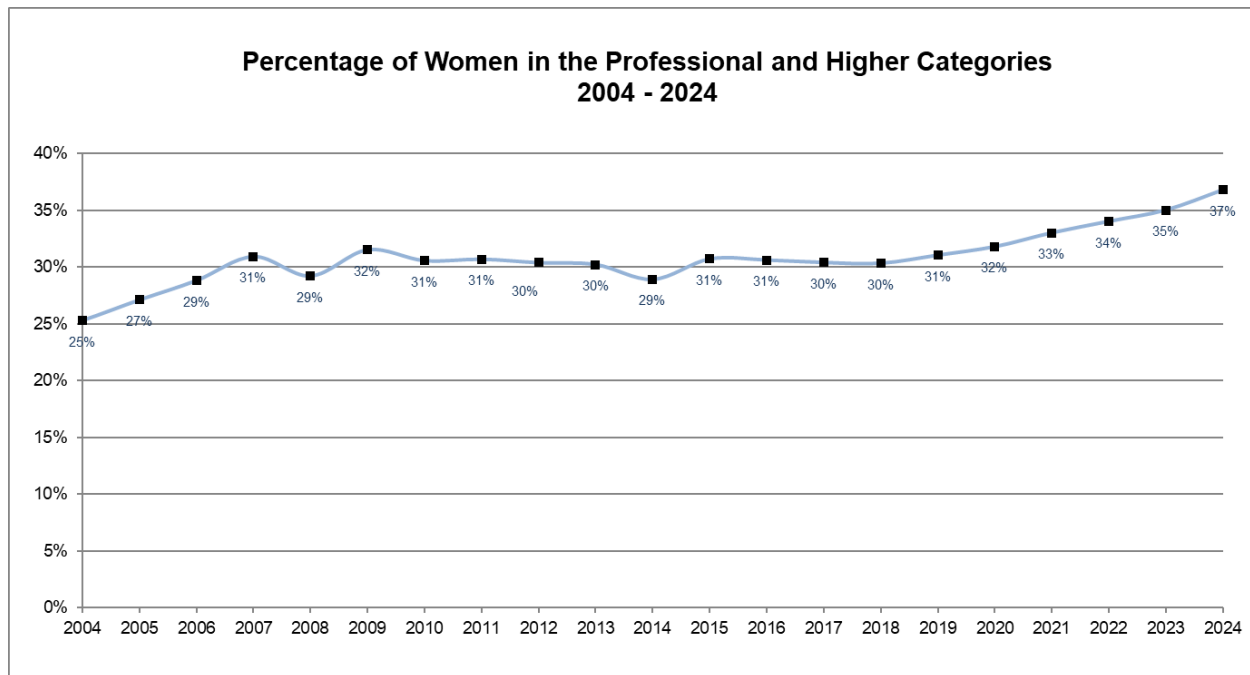
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APPENDIX

FIGURE 1 – CULTURE CHANGE ACCELERATORS

Accountability	Collaboration	People Focus
1 Curate Training (Skills) that enhance Accountability Collaboration & People-Focus	1 Each line of business under a Bureau to have at least one teambuilding activity per year (and one meeting per quarter.)	1 Train managers on behavioral science
2 Define what is priority (critical, important, desirable)	2 Create a forum where Regional Directors can get together (including sessions for DDs, Chiefs)	2 Design and implement an onboarding (including buddy) system that helps new staff members integrate into ICAO
3 Empower PACE by introducing "rebasin" and establishing links to other processes	3 Each Bureau to have an All Chiefs/DDs monthly or quarterly forum (Including cross bureau collaboration forum)	3 Train leaders and teams on different communications styles, how to understand your colleagues styles, and how to merge their styles with your own
4 Define A Clear Framework For Consequences Related To Poor Performance And Behaviour	4 Enhance internal talent mobility by defining a framework for cross-functional / Bureau immersion	
5 Simplify/consolidate the number of committees across the organization to make it easier to get things done (including review of Delegations of Authority)	5 Identify and streamline the tools available for collaboration and train staff (rules of engagement, when, what?)	4 Invest in a platform for proper skills and competency profiling & assessment
6 Link Business Plan with Resource Management (Workforce planning)	6 Implement an annual leadership strategy retreat to streamline work and align on priorities before the beginning of the year	
7 Implement Culture focused 360 for all staff		

FIGURE 2– PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL & HIGHER CATEGORIES



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