



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Agenda Item 38: Human Resources Management and Gender Equality

INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT: A COMPETENCE-DRIVEN STRATEGY

(Presented by Brazil)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper proposes actions to strengthen gender inclusion within ICAO technical bodies and national air navigation service providers. It demonstrates, through the Brazilian experience, how opening institutional pathways for women in technical aviation roles has effectively expanded the professional talent pool, benefiting both female professionals and operational performance. Based on over two decades of equal training policy, Brazil provides data that illustrates this trend and presents a set of strategic recommendations to further promote gender balance within ICAO forums. Additionally, the paper highlights an ongoing national investigation exploring a potential correlation between increased female participation and improved workforce retention, underscoring the broader institutional benefits of diversity.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- Take note of the proposal presented in this Working Paper;
- Encourage Member States to publish an annual gender representation report, and develop mentorship and technical training programmes for women;
- Encourage Member States to create professional networks and increased female participation in international events; and
- Request the ICAO Secretariat to develop indicators and mentorship programmes aimed at fostering the inclusion of women in the Organization's technical forums.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	According to ICAO Strategic Plan (2026-2050), this working paper relates to all Strategic Goals and the High Priority Enabler of Gender Equality and Attracting New Talent.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The ICAO activities referred to in this paper shall be subject to availability of resources in the 2026-2028 Budget or voluntary contributions, as appropriate.
<i>References:</i>	ICAO 41st Assembly Resolution A41-26 Doc 10184, Assembly Resolutions in Force

1. INTRODUCTION

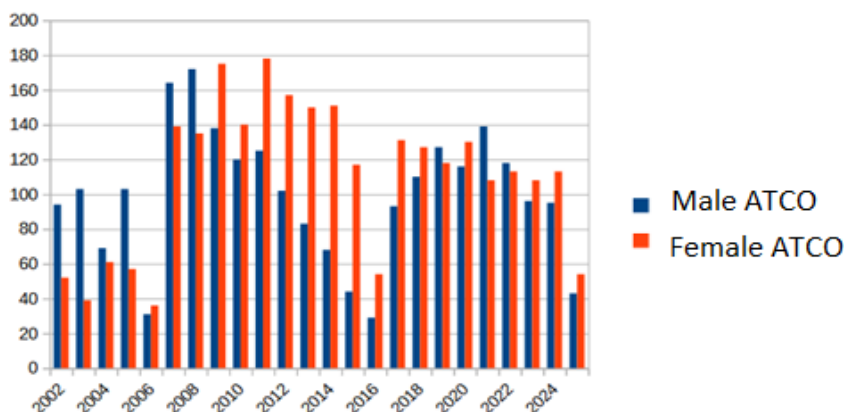
1.1 ICAO, through Resolution A41 26 “ICAO Gender Equality Programme: Promoting the Participation of Women in the Global Aviation Sector,” has recognized the importance of diversity and representation within its technical and governing bodies. In support of this guideline, the ICAO Council adopted in 2021 the **Declaration on Improving Gender Representation**, encouraging Member States to implement internal measures to increase female participation in technical roles and decision-making bodies.

1.2 Brazil, through its technical training and management structures, in both the civil and military sectors, has taken concrete actions in support of this agenda. The country believes that advancing this initiative contributes directly to the legitimacy, innovation, and effectiveness of decision-making within ICAO. Among the most prominent examples is the training of female air traffic controllers within the Aeronautics Specialist School (EEAR), under the Brazilian Air Force (FAB).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In Brazil, both civil and military air traffic control are regulated by the Department of Airspace Control (DECEA), and the training of most air traffic controllers is conducted by the Aeronautics Specialist School (EEAR). Established on 25 March 1941, EEAR has been training FAB specialists, including air traffic controllers, since 1950.

2.2 In 2002, the Aeronautics Specialist School graduated its first female air traffic controllers, who began operational duties within the Brazilian Airspace Control System (SISCEAB). Since then, the number of female air traffic controllers in Brazil has grown significantly in both civil and military aviation. Over the past 24 years, EEAR has trained 3,940 air traffic controllers, of whom 2,115 were women, representing more than 53 percent of the total, as shown in the School’s annual graduation chart.

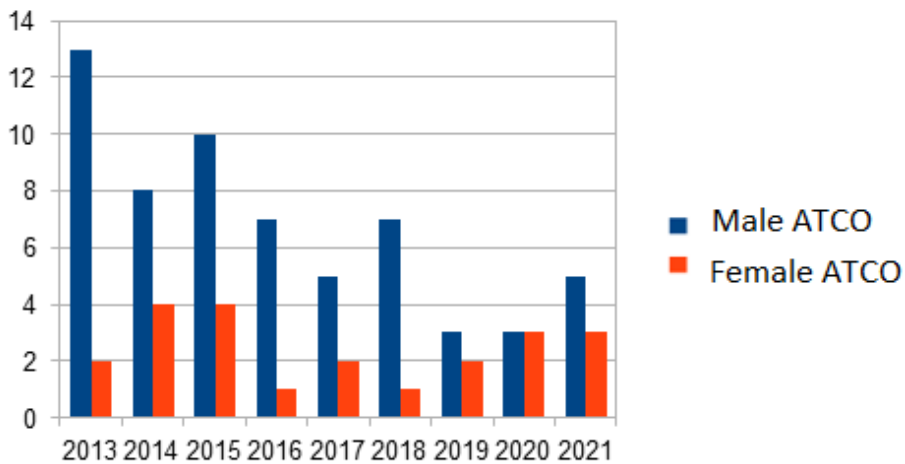


2.3 It is important to emphasize that, in Brazil, there are no gender-specific entrance examinations or positions reserved exclusively for women in the Air Traffic Management (ATM) sector. This reinforces the notion that women's professional advancement is achieved through merit and competence. When individuals are assessed based on their qualifications and performance, there is a measurable improvement in task efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, progression into leadership and managerial roles occurs naturally over the medium to long term, driven by demonstrated capability rather than preferential treatment.

2.4 This process reflects that the equal treatment promoted by the Brazilian State in technical training has measurably expanded the base of professionals eligible for service within SISCEAB. This broader recruitment pool has helped meet growing operational demands and improved institutional adaptability.

2.5 The chart illustrates that, since 2009, the number of female air traffic controllers graduated from EEAR has consistently surpassed that of their male counterparts, indicating the effectiveness of the measures adopted to promote female participation in roles traditionally held by men.

2.6 With regard to mid and senior-level positions, the Brazilian State has, since 2012, enabled access to the Air Traffic Control Specialist Officer Training Course (CFOE). As illustrated in the chart below, although male participation still predominates, there has been a significant fluctuation in the number of women entering the course over the years. This is a prerequisite for mid- and senior-level leadership roles, some of which have already been achieved by women in Brazil. In the coming years, it is expected that, through demonstrated competence and commitment, women will continue to increase their representation in leadership positions within Air Traffic Management.



2.7 Despite the significant progress and Brazil's positive experience in promoting female participation within its national air traffic control structures, as demonstrated, undeniable gaps persist regarding female representation in ICAO technical forums, such as panels, working groups, and deliberative committees. Bridging this representational gap requires targeted institutional measures, which are outlined below:

- a) Publication by the ICAO Secretariat of annual reports on gender representation within technical groups and committees;
- b) Establishment of structures or groups that facilitate networking among professionals, especially women, within the aviation sector, promoting the exchange of experiences and mutual support for professional development;
- c) Conducting in-depth studies to identify specific barriers to female participation at different levels and areas within aviation, thereby supporting the development of targeted policies and actions to overcome them.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Brazil has implemented concrete actions to promote female participation in Air Navigation Services through its technical training and management structures in both civil and military sectors. A notable example is the training of female air traffic controllers at the Aeronautics Specialist School (EEAR), under the Brazilian Air Force. Since the graduation of the first female controllers in 2002, their numbers have grown significantly, now representing over 53% of all graduates. This progress has been achieved without the use of gender-specific quotas or entrance examinations, reinforcing merit and competence as the basis for professional advancement. Equal access to technical training has expanded the pool of qualified professionals within the Brazilian Airspace Control System (SISCEAB), contributing to operational efficiency and institutional innovation.

3.2 Despite this national progress, Brazil acknowledges the underrepresentation of women in ICAO's technical forums, such as panels, working groups, and decision-making committees. To address this gap and fully implement Resolution A41-26, targeted strategies must be adopted. By approving the proposed actions in the Paper, the Assembly will strengthen the participation of women in aviation, as well as in ICAO's governing and technical bodies.

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