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WORKING PAPER

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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 21: Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative

PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CIVIL AVIATION: THE 'WINGS FOR ALL' PROGRAM

(Presented by Brazil and supported by 20 LACAC Member States)¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Designed to broaden the participation of all segments of the population in the civil aviation sector, the Wings for All program, led by ANAC Brazil, promotes the sustainable development of the national civil aviation workforce, while supporting SDGs 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10. Despite notable progress in the aviation industry, the participation of underrepresented groups, particularly women and individuals from low-income backgrounds, remains limited, with high training costs posing a major barrier. The program addresses these challenges through scholarships, mentorship, diversity training, accessibility awards, and youth engagement initiatives.

A sustainable workforce is essential not only for aviation safety and industry growth but also for fostering innovation and ensuring resilience in the face of global challenges.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- Acknowledge the potential impact of workforce shortages in limiting the sector's growth potential;
- Recognize the critical role of investments in high-quality education and training in driving economic growth;
- Expand outreach initiatives to eliminate barriers faced by underrepresented groups, leveraging the potential of untapped talent;
- Disseminate information about the 'Wings for All' program via ICAO channels to inspire global action; and
- Encourage Member States to adopt similar initiatives tailored to their local contexts.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to all ICAO Strategic Goals and High Priority Enablers.
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<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
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¹ Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<i>References:</i>	A39-29 Next Generation of Aviation Professionals A41-24: Aviation's contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A41-26: ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The global civil aviation industry is facing a significant workforce challenge. It is estimated that over the next decade, approximately 1.3 million professionals will be required to meet the growing demands of the sector. This includes pilots, aircraft maintenance technicians, and cabin crew, across both commercial and business aviation.

1.2 Several factors are driving the increasing demand for aviation professionals, including the anticipated global growth of the aviation industry. Experts predict that, in the coming years, the demand for pilots will surpass the available supply.

1.3 To address current and future workforce challenges, States and industry must leverage the untapped potential of underrepresented demographic groups. This approach not only addresses pilot gaps but also helps prevent shortages in other critical roles, such as cabin crew, air traffic controllers, licensed mechanics, and engineers.

1.4 In response to these challenges, the National Civil Aviation Agency of Brazil (ANAC) has introduced the "Wings for All" program. This initiative aims to promote sustainable workforce development by advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the civil aviation sector. Aligned with ANAC's Social Sustainability agenda, the program contributes directly to the United Nations 2030 Agenda, supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

1.5 "Wings for All" represents a forward-looking commitment to fostering inclusive education, equal opportunity, and socio-economic mobility in aviation, ensuring the industry's long-term resilience and growth. The program's actions are closely aligned with ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) strategy, which seeks to ensure that enough qualified and competent professionals are available to meet the future needs of the global aviation sector.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Challenges in Civil Aviation sustainable growth

2.1.1 Despite significant advancements in the aviation industry, we still observe a limited participation of underrepresented groups in the workforce, particularly women and low-income individuals. In Brazil, women are only 3% of the licensed pilots, as well as 3% of maintenance mechanics.

2.1.2 Key challenges include:

- a) **Income Inequality:** Approximately 80% of Brazilians households have a monthly per capita income of R\$ 2,014 (approximately USD 400) or less.
- b) **High Training Costs:** In Brazil, becoming a commercial pilot can cost up to R\$ 165,000 (approximately USD 33,000), creating significant financial barriers for most aspiring professionals.
- c) **Untapped demographic potential:** While women represent 51% of the population, they account for only 3.2% of pilots and 3.3% of aircraft maintenance mechanics in Brazil, reflecting systemic gender disparities that result in a waste of talent, limiting workforce innovation, and long-term growth in the aviation sector.

2.1.3 A sustainable workforce is essential not only for aviation safety and industry growth but also for fostering innovation and ensuring resilience in the face of global challenges. Civil aviation authorities must consider the current challenges in attracting and developing new talent to ensure a steady supply of qualified professionals.

2.2 Objectives and Governance of 'Wings for All'

2.2.1 The *Wings for All* program is designed to foster a respectful culture within the aviation sector by eliminating discriminatory practices. A key focus of the initiative is to increase the participation of women and individuals from low-income backgrounds in the aviation workforce, thereby addressing longstanding inequalities. To achieve this, the program supports the development of initiatives that expand the pool of qualified aviation professionals and strengthen the national aeronautical training network. Additionally, it aims to enhance the overall level of service provided to passengers and to promote aviation education as a means of inspiring future generations to pursue careers in civil aviation.

2.2.2 The program consists of a portfolio of several projects, divided under three interconnecting branches (subprograms): (i) women in aviation; (ii) inclusion and diversity; (iii) training and development.

2.2.3 Each project has a project manager, a designated team, a schedule of completion, and targeted goals. The portfolio of projects is overseen by the respective Branch Manager, who is a senior Head of Department at the Agency. Finally, an executive committee composed of all Branch Managers and led by the Head of the Governance and Environment Department ensures cohesion and coordination across the program's initiatives.

2.3 Key Initiatives

2.3.1 Some of the key initiatives that were launched in 2024 include:

- a) **Bursaries for Pilots and Maintenance Professionals:** Scholarships for low-income individuals to become pilots and aircraft maintenance mechanics. 50% of the spots were reserved for women, signalling to female candidates the existence of equitable access.
- b) **Mentorship Program:** Initiative targeting Anac's staff to prepare women for leadership roles.

- c) Events showcasing female role models: Screenings of the Canadian documentary 'Only Up' and debates with industry professionals to inspire young women to join aviation careers.
- d) Training Programs: Free online training on inclusive service, digital accessibility, and diversity for aviation professionals and ANAC staff.
- e) Accessibility Awards: Annual recognition of airlines and airports implementing exemplary innovation in accessibility practices.
- f) Cooperation: Agreements between governmental bodies and the Agency, and between the Agency and the private sector to work jointly with the promotion of these initiatives and others aligned with the objectives of the Program.
- g) Partnership with University of Brasilia in researching the issue of gender inclusion in civil aviation: Research Project “Women in Aviation”.

2.4 **Program outcomes**

2.4.1 Although still in its early stages, the Wings for All program has already made significant progress in encouraging actions and discussions that support inclusion and accessibility, such as:

- a) Accessibility Award: On April 3rd, 2024, the Award for airlines was granted based on two equally weighted criteria. The first assessed compliance with Resolution N° 280 (July 11, 2013), which defines accessibility procedures for passengers needing special assistance. The second evaluated the adoption of good practices that ensure dignity and quality service for these passengers.
- b) Cooperation: An agreement between the Agency and the private sector was signed by fifteen entities, including airlines and industry associations, reaffirming their commitment to supporting the Wings for All program. This agreement underscores a shared responsibility to foster a more inclusive, diverse, and respectful environment in Brazilian aviation, particularly in the service of passengers, and creates a framework in which private organizations cooperate with the Agency in implementing such Projects.
- c) Training: ANAC is supporting free technical training courses in aircraft maintenance for low-income students, who also receive financial aid. As of now, 60% of beneficiaries were women.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The 'Wings for All' program exemplifies how targeted initiatives can address systemic barriers in civil aviation. Promoting a more inclusive and equitable industry is crucial to preventing talent waste and ensuring the sustainable growth of aviation. By fostering cooperation and sharing best practices, the ICAO can lead the way in making aviation a truly diverse and inclusive industry, setting a precedent for global adoption.

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