



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Agenda Item 38: Human Resources Management and Gender Equality

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION, ESPECIALLY IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

(Presented by Uruguay and supported by the LACAC Member States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper addresses equal opportunity in the workplace and measures adopted to avoid discrimination of all kinds. Equal training for men and women in aviation and initiatives to improve gender equality in employment and in access to middle and senior leadership positions, not only in administrative and service areas but also in professional and technical positions in aviation, foster the empowerment of women and thus improve career advancement prospects for international civil aviation personnel. Women's persistent underrepresentation in technical and leadership positions justifies the use of temporary affirmative action measures, such as quotas, to correct structural inequalities and promote more inclusive and diverse working environments. Throughout history, women have been channelled into socially feminized tasks - such as caregiving, teaching or clerical jobs- due to cultural constructs that must be actively challenged in order to broaden their participation in all sectors, including highly technical ones such as aviation.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) invite all Member States and aviation stakeholders to design the policies needed to increase women's participation in the sector, given the persistence of gender disparity in certain occupations, and especially in leadership and decision-making positions, where women are underrepresented;
- b) urge all stakeholders, public or private, to promote greater participation by women in aviation by actively supporting the ICAO Gender Equality Programme, along with the empowerment of women in ICAO and throughout the international aviation sector;
- c) urge ICAO and Member States to support and undertake analytical studies, either regional or more focused, to measure the baseline of women's participation in civil aviation in order to develop a strategy for improvements that take account of local or subregional realities, for the sustainable advancement of women in Aviation.
- d) encourage ICAO and Member States to ensure that girls and women have access to education, training and full and equal participation in all occupations and specializations, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, noting that ICAO has committed to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 5, which states: "Achieve gender parity and empower all women and girls", which is a fundamental human right and has been one of ICAO's top priorities and in sharp focus in recent years; and
- e) take note of the proposed changes to achieve gender equity contained in **Appendix** to this paper.

¹ Spanish version provided by Uruguay.

² Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Goals and States' commitment to support the content of the paper.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Implementation of the actions contained in this Paper by the ICAO Secretariat would be subject to availability of funds such as voluntary contributions.
<i>References:</i>	A42-WP/20, <i>Progress Report on the Implementation of the ICAO Gender Equality Programme</i> Resolution A41-24, on <i>Aviation's contribution to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> Resolution A41-26, <i>ICAO Gender Equality Programme</i> promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Characteristics such as sociocultural profile, financial status, ethnic-racial descent, place of residence, age and access to educational institutions, among others, are factors that can influence gender inequity in some sectors of industry regardless of field, and aviation is no exception. In many cases, a failure to draw attention to aviation-related occupations in educational institutions, whether at secondary or tertiary level, is another factor that impact gender balance in the choice of a technical or professional career in aviation. Although the cause of low numbers of women in some areas is not gender discrimination, one cause is certainly the lack of encouragement to choose this profession, while ignorance of future prospects could also be a reason why women are still not enthusiastic about this line of work. The choice could arise naturally from exposure to the aviation environment, or through encouragement from family or friends to choose this option. - States should not discriminate on the basis of gender and there should be freedom of choice in entry to the various universities and higher education institutions of any kind; most students tend to opt for traditional courses (medicine, law, engineering, architecture, social sciences, economics, education, sports, among others, or specialization in trades of various kinds). Legal equality may not yet be a reality in many countries, and women should have the opportunity to train in a civil aviation training centre.

1.2 In many States, including ours, pay is the same in positions occupied by men and women who perform the same tasks and have the same working conditions, but inequality persists in many areas of work, as in the case at hand. Women are underrepresented at senior levels in aviation in general, a field that has been male-dominated since its beginnings. This gives rise to a wage gap or imbalance since women have no access to senior-level positions and are not compensated for greater personal investment or assuming more responsibility. The gap will widen even further if the various factors of discrimination are not addressed, and from the perspective of labour law it is essential to recognize women's rights. There is a basic need to create labour standards on support for the family, given that responsibility for care traditionally falls mainly on women and as a result may affect their career advancement.

1.3 Equality in law must be matched with genuine equality of opportunity, dealing with structural inequalities by means of temporary incentives or affirmative action, such as gender-balanced hiring, promotion and appointment. Accordingly, all middle and senior leadership positions, managerial positions and posts in General or National Directorates should be filled on the basis of merit, and rules for inclusion should be put in place that allow access to a position irrespective of whether training has been done in centres of higher education, military academies or civilian training centres, taking into account each candidate's specialization, the profile sought for the vacancy to be filled and any additional training, and their qualifications and track record. As to adaptation of the standards regulating organizational structures, these should be modified to ensure equal opportunities for both men and women, strictly prohibiting

harassment and discrimination of any kind, since a work environment without inequalities or discrimination is a healthy and productive environment.

2. **OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The objective of this working paper is to promote women's participation in the regional and global civil aviation sectors, an objective that can become a reality only if we join forces in planning and committing to policies that remove inequality of opportunity in employment.

2.2 Gender mainstreaming is a conceptual tool that seeks to highlight and compensate for the imbalances resulting from social constructs and power relations; it is a tool to address the gender stereotypes and biases that constitute obstacles to equal opportunities for women, thereby promoting a favourable work environment free of discrimination.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 Increasing the participation and empowerment of women in the aviation is a human right and an undisputable necessity for the growth of the aviation sector and by adopting the proposed actions, the Assembly will encourage all stakeholders, public or private, to promote greater representation of women in civil aviation.

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APPENDIX

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUITY

In analyzing the inequality of opportunities experienced by women, the factors that produce it must be identified in order to seek strategic changes that will guarantee the full enjoyment of rights and opportunities for all women and men. This requires a supply of disaggregated data and quantitative and qualitative analyses, including surveys on perceived discrimination and on equal opportunities.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to:

- Identify the barriers and biases that hamper women's careers in the aviation industry and the factors that impede career advancement.
- Promote legal equality of access to paid work for women, through quality formal employment or the development of enterprises or businesses offering equal pay and conditions.
- Ensure equal opportunities for professional training.
- Disseminate and promote the objectives of the ICAO Gender Equality Programme and analyze statistics on aviation personnel, especially in management positions, in addition to licence holders (pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers) and other categories, disaggregated by gender and age.
- Strengthen cooperation within ICAO and among Member States in gender-related activities, surveys and events.
- Create opportunities to optimize the use of internships, scholarships, sponsorships and other similar programmes to encourage women to obtain training, and increase skill development opportunities for women in aviation on a national and international level, through collaboration between ICAO, States, international organizations and aviation industry partners.
- Promote civil aviation in the same way as other career options and specializations, creating civil aviation technical training centres.
- Take aviation to schools and invite groups of students (children and teenagers) to take part in aviation-related events. Set up inclusive and representative industry stands to promote aviation training as a future academic path.

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