



**Opening remarks by  
the Council President of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Toshiyuki Onuma  
to the International Women's Day 2026 Event**

*(Montreal, Canada, 6 March 2026)*

*Good morning,*

Welcome to ICAO's celebration of International Women's Day!

It is a pleasure to mark this important occasion with you, whether you are here with us in person, or joining from around the world.

This day celebrates the remarkable achievements of women everywhere, and more importantly, it reminds us of the work that remains to achieve full and meaningful empowerment of women across all sectors, including aviation.

At ICAO, the commitment to this important work is anchored in concrete action.

Let us briefly look back.

In 2021, the Council took a decisive step forward by adopting the Declaration on Improving Gender Representation in ICAO's Governing and Technical Bodies, setting clear commitments to accelerate change.

This momentum continued in 2022, when the 41st session of the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to women's empowerment through the updated Resolution A41-26, calling on Member States and the industry to strengthen the participation and representation of women.

This includes advancing policies, programmes and projects that support careers within ICAO's governing and technical bodies, the ICAO Secretariat, and the global ecosystem.

The Assembly also endorsed important efforts to strengthen the availability of gender-specific data, work that will help us better understand where gaps persist, and where action is most urgently needed.

And just recently, ICAO welcomed its first group of Ambassadors and Champions under the ICAO Global Ambassadors Programme. I'm very encouraged that the majority of these aviation leaders are women. These experts will help to raise awareness of the sector and inspire the next generation to become part of aviation.

Such efforts all contribute to ICAO's goal to advance women's empowerment in aviation at the national, regional, and global levels.

None of this progress would be possible without the commitment of our Member States. Through ICAO's Global Network of Gender Focal Points, now comprising over 105 States and international organizations, we are improving dialogue, sharing best practices, and fostering meaningful collaboration across borders.

**Women's empowerment in aviation is a matter of strengthening the resilience and vitality of our sector, ensuring that we are building a more capable, diverse, and future-ready workforce equipped to meet the demands of tomorrow.**

As I look around the room, I am encouraged to see so many young faces. I hope that today's discussions will spark inspiration, particularly for young women, to imagine yourselves in aviation, to recognize your place in this sector, and to believe that here, your ambitions can take flight.

Our industry is evolving rapidly, and aviation needs your curiosity and fresh perspectives to drive innovation, fuel growth, and meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Happy International Women's Day to you all!

Thank you.