



**Welcome Address by
the Council President of the
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,
to the International Women's Day High-level Dialogue**

(ICAO HQ, 8 March 2023)

*Dear participants to the International Women's Day High Level Dialogue,
Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening,*

I regret not being able to be among you today, but it gives me great pleasure to share a few words with you in celebration of International Women's Day.

This year's theme for International Women's Day shines a light on the role of innovation and technology in fuelling a more inclusive and equitable industry, while harnessing the enormous potential women hold to bring transformation to our sector through their new perspectives, and innovative approaches and solutions.

Our world has been confronting a number of crises. The most devastating to our sector has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which is fair to say disproportionately impacted women.

Aviation is a key driver of sustainable development globally as it brings people together, connects businesses, and facilitates livelihood. In the wake of crises, we need transformative solutions to build a sustainable, resilient and strong aviation sector. This is more important than ever, as this year marks the mid-point to the global target to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Digitalization, innovation and technology offer impactful opportunities for advancing inclusion. They can enhance access to and uptake of data, information, education, and learning opportunities. And, I think we can all agree that our young people and future generations are calling on us not to lose sight of innovation and technology in all aspects of our work.

Moreover, innovation continues to be omnipresent and constantly progressing in the face of ever-changing processes and actors. This translates to untapped areas that could potentially draw on women's intellect, skills and perspectives.

During the 41st Session of the Assembly, we witnessed how advancing gender equality in aviation garnered unanimous support from our Member States, leading to the adoption of an updated resolution that not only will drive ICAO's work around gender equality over the next three years, but also invites States, industry and all stakeholders to act with vision and purpose in advancing the agenda for gender equality in aviation. And, let me remind you that for the first time in ICAO's history, the Assembly elected its first woman President to preside over its proceedings.

The responsibility of bridging the gender divide is a responsibility for us all, with senior managers leading by example. There is a need for a multi-pronged and long-term approach to challenge the

status quo and support a more equal representation in our sector at all levels, especially in technical and decision-making roles. Acknowledging its key role, the ICAO Council adopted two years ago a declaration on improving gender representation in ICAO's governing and technical bodies.

I am pleased to see that today there are 9 outstanding female colleagues among the ICAO Council representatives. Today they will be joined on stage by a number of senior female staff leading key areas of work in the Secretariat. It is a great pleasure to listen to their insight today, which I am confident will inspire all of us.

There is still a very long way to go to achieve gender equality, especially in a sector as ours. But I truly believe that the transformative initiatives, policies and programmes we pioneer today in our respective capacities can catalyze change that will reshape our sector tomorrow.

Allow me to make an important point in relation to the crucial role of strong engagement and support from men to advance the cause of gender equality in aviation; and my sincere thanks to Ambassador Pic for his stewardship of the Council Small Group on Gender.

On this day and every day, and in everything we do, let us ensure that the gender equality imperatives have been given due consideration.

Thank you and I look forward to today's inspiring discussions.