



ICAO

**Address by  
the Council President of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano,  
to the Opening of the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023**

*(Madrid, Spain, 5-7 July 2023)*

*Querida Ministra de Transportes, Movilidad y Agenda Urbana,  
Raquel Sánchez,  
Directors General of Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs),  
Querido Director General de la aviación civil de España,  
Representatives on the ICAO Council,  
Representatives of International and Regional Organizations,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023.

I would like to first of all recognize and congratulate the Government of Spain, and more specifically the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, for hosting this important Summit in the beautiful city of Madrid. All of the support and excellent facilities you have provided for us are truly appreciated.

As the host of this Summit, Spain has positioned itself as a true champion on gender. I am also deeply appreciative that the Directorate General and ICAO have enjoyed such excellent collaboration in organizing this important and timely event.

I would like to take the opportunity to also commend the significant contribution of the European Commission, UN Women, the International Labour Organization, and the International Transport Forum in the organization of the Summit, which is testament to how, through joining forces, we can increase the scale and scope of our efforts in advancing gender equality in aviation. My sincere thanks to all of you.

Aviation connects the world's peoples, cultures, communities, and businesses, (88 Mln jobs – contribution to global GDP equivalent to France or Germany). Bridging peoples, continents, and cultures it has enormous relevance and transformational power to improve people's lives. Additionally, air transport is an innovative and forward-looking industry – one which stimulates technology development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Gender equality is integral to the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ICAO has been fully committed to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including its Sustainable Development Goal 5, which calls for the achievement of gender equality.

This goal also guided ICAO Assembly Resolution A41-26 on the ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector, and the goal has more broadly given momentum to efforts within the aviation sector towards gender equality.

Nevertheless, the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women within the aviation sector continues to face significant challenges, with progress being too little, too slow.

This Summit comes at a crucial time. As you might be aware, ICAO's latest global survey on the status of licensed aviation personnel by gender reveals dire figures. Participation of women holding positions as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians has increased on an overall basis from 4.5% globally in 2016, to 4.9% in 2021.

With this rate, the reality is that gender equality in aviation will not happen in the lifetimes of anyone convened here today, and we can all agree that this is unacceptable.

We are facing a huge challenge. It is our responsibility to the next generation, and indeed to generations past and present too, to urgently turn this situation around. Today, as we open this Global Summit, we should see this forum as a most timely opportunity to secure and accelerate much-needed progress, build consensus, and share the best practices that will change the landscape of this sector in which currently the vast majority of the technical and executive positions are still predominantly held by men.

To be frank, there is a place in aviation for everyone who has the skill and the drive.

The focus of this Summit is on identifying the enablers and solutions for achieving this, and I am confident that the variety of views and perspectives from all the participants here today will help inform and enrich the understanding and resolution of the issues we explore together, leading ultimately to concrete takeaways, recommendations, and lessons for catalyzing change.

During the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly, we witnessed how advancing gender equality in aviation garnered unanimous support from our Member States, resulting in the adoption of the new resolution that invites ICAO, its Member States, industry, and all stakeholders to act with common purpose, shared urgency, and focused steps in advancing the agenda for gender equality in aviation.

I salute all the efforts undertaken by States and across the industry to spearhead advances in gender equality in aviation and encourage all of us to do more and make sure we have stronger policies, strategies, action plans and investments, all working in tandem with one another.

Reversing trends and sustaining progress, especially as it relates to enhanced women representation in technical and decision-making roles, takes strong leadership. I am personally proud that the ICAO Council adopted two years ago a declaration on improving gender representation in ICAO's governing and technical bodies. The Council Small Group on Gender has also been instrumental in driving this important issue forward.

Before concluding I wish to stress that we are at a turning point. This Global Summit is our chance to finally give the important gender equality agenda in aviation the full attention, commitment and resources it deserves so we can finally move from ambition to action and bring about the change our sector needs.

And we need nothing less from this meeting than a bold and concrete Call to Action.

We have a global compass through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. So let us work together expeditiously to make the remaining time count.

We must pledge to live up to this shared vision of an equal, inclusive, and forward-looking industry.

As a staunch advocate of gender equality in aviation, both personally and in my capacity as the President of the ICAO Council, it is my sincere hope that over the next two and a half days, together we can identify solutions that will propel us in a much stronger way to an equal future for aviation.

On that note, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a very successful and engaging Summit.

Thank you.