



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 27: Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030**

**GLOBAL AVIATION GENDER EQUALITY**

(Presented by South Africa and the United Kingdom)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The lack of gender equity in leadership and professional ranks in aviation has persisted despite an expressed commitment by the industry to eliminate or reduce the gender gap. Data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) shows women in leadership positions in airlines ranged from 6 per cent in Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) positions to around 12-13 per cent for Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Information Officer (CIO) roles. Evidence from wider studies suggests the role of women is critical and contributes positively towards the growth and economic development of aviation.

The global aviation industry gathered for the first time in South Africa in 2018 to engage on potential solutions to address gender equality in aviation. The Global Aviation Gender Summit agreed on four key actions for States: the need to ensure enabling legislation and policies to support gender equality; the need to examine and continuously address barriers that perpetuate the status quo and promote enablers of gender equality; the need to establish partnerships and direct resources to support gender equality aims; and the need to collect and analyse data to inform decision making and the development of meaningful programmes to promote gender equality. This paper aims to complement ICAO's assembly working paper (A41-WP/48, *Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030*) and shares some positive strides made by States such as South Africa, the United Kingdom and associations such as IATA.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) Acknowledge that gender inequality remains a significant issue and is one of the factors that has the potential to hold the industry back, as per the ICAO Working Paper (A41-WP/48);
- b) Acknowledge the good examples of initiatives to promote gender equality in ICAO and in some States and encourage States to share the detail and progress of their respective programmes;
- c) Request ICAO to encourage States to develop action plans with concrete timelines and report at subsequent Assemblies the progress achieved (see examples in the paper), including work to integrate gender equality into policies, existing national and international skills programmes, such as the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Programme; and
- d) Encourage ICAO to work with the sponsoring and supporting States to consider establishing a mechanism for supporting this work, including to track progress on action plans, share ideas and best practise, and create a platform to engage on an ongoing basis including hosting of Global Aviation Gender Summits biennially, building on the 2018 summit.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all ICAO Strategic Objectives and Supporting Strategies.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The cost implications will be informed by the programmes adopted by each Member State in their respective action plan. Activities for ICAO referred to in this paper, will be subject to the resources available in the 2023-2025 Regular Budget and/or from extra-budgetary contributions as guided by the ICAO Business Plan 2023-2025.
<i>References:</i>	<i>A/RES/70/1, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> <i>ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-30, ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector</i> <i>ICAO Assembly Resolution A40-21, Aviation contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> <i>A41-WP/48, Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030</i> <i>Global Aviation Gender Summit, Cape Town, South Africa, Communiqué, 2018,</i> <a href="#">Communique Global Aviation Gender Summit FINAL.10 Aug.pdf (icao.int)</a> <i>IATA's Economics' Chart of the Week dated 4 March 2022</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly Resolution A39-30 on ICAO Gender Equality Programme, regarding the promotion of the participation of women in the global aviation sector, called for several actions to be taken by Member States and Regions.

1.2 In particular, the Assembly urged States, regional and international aviation organisations and the international aviation industry to demonstrate strong, determined leadership and commitment to advancing women's rights and to taking the necessary measures to strengthen gender equality by establishing supporting policies, as well as the establishment and improvement of programmes and projects to further women's careers within the aviation sector. Furthermore, and amongst others, the Assembly also reaffirmed its commitment to achieving an aspirational goal of 50/50 (women-men) participation by 2030 at all professional and higher levels of employment in the global aviation sector.

1.3 Gender inequality remains significant in aviation, particularly in more senior and highly skilled/paid roles such as executives, boards, pilots, engineers, Air Traffic Controls (ATCs), etc.

1.4 According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA)'s Economics' Chart of the Week dated 4 March 2022, globally only 6 per cent of women occupied CEO positions in airlines in 2021, whilst 13 per cent occupied CFO, 6 per cent - COO, 13 per cent – Chief Commercial Office (CCO), and 12 per cent - CIO positions. In the United Kingdom only 5 per cent of pilots were female in 2021.

1.5 Whilst there has been some improvement as stipulated in ICAO's A41-WP/48, *Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030*, this is still well behind what should be happening, and the ambitions set out previously.

1.6 Several barriers perpetuate this issue. These barriers vary across States but include several common issues linked to the wider access of women to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) occupations, perceptions about the aviation/aerospace sectors and its culture; and the way things are designed (infrastructure, training, workplaces, recruitment processes etc.) and the impact that can have on gender inclusion.

1.7 There is evidence that shows that gender diversity and equality of access to opportunities/access to roles/pay etc. is beneficial for businesses and the economy – and hence a strong case for action on fairness and economic development grounds. An Australian study, based on six years of Australian companies' gender reporting to the federal Workplace Gender Equality Agency, concluded that firms which appointed a female CEO increased their market value by 5 per cent. Lifting the number of women in other key leadership positions by 10 per cent or more, produced a boost to a company's market value of 6.6 per cent. (IATA Economics 2022)

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Outcomes of the Global Aviation Gender Summit

2.1.1 In response to Resolution A39-30, South Africa in collaboration with ICAO initiated and hosted the first Global Aviation Gender Summit in 2018. More than 54 States attended the Summit which took place in Cape Town, South Africa. It is therefore time for the industry to revisit the action items adopted during the Summit which includes the following, amongst others:

#### 2.1.1.1 **Developing Policy and Action Plans**

- a) The Summit recommended that States look at developing or amending legislation and policies to enable and empower organisations to implement programmes aimed at ensuring that women have access to opportunities and are supported;
- b) To signal commitment and support States must develop actions plans and demonstrate their commitment by, for example, making a pledge or joining existing global programmes; and
- c) Advocate and demonstrate commitment from the top.

#### 2.1.1.2 **Addressing Barriers and Considering Enablers to gender equality**

- a) Eliminate or mitigate biases and stereotypes in the home, school, and workplace to increase access for girls to STEM education, leading to an increase in the talent pool of women;
- b) Promote leadership training to middle-level managers to prepare them for the senior manager positions;
- c) Fostering a coaching and mentoring environment with a gender lens;
- d) Sharing gender related best practices; and
- e) Through developing research and evidence to understand barriers, develop policies to tackle them, share best practise across States and promoting leadership roles and support for career development.

#### 2.1.1.3 **Developing Partnerships and Structures/ Processes**

- a) Accelerate gender equality in aviation through partnerships with stakeholders sharing a common vision and goals on gender; and
- b) Share best practices within and across States and structures such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Women, etc.

#### 2.1.1.4 **Building Data and Evidence**

- a) Recall the significance of collection, analysis and sharing of gender disaggregated data for informed policy and decision making regarding gender equality in aviation, and support ICAO's efforts in collecting data especially on personnel in civil aviation; and
- b) The data would be used for accurate policy/decision-making, driving effective implementation of gender equality actions in the aviation sector.

### 2.2 **Positive Actions undertaken by States**

2.2.1 Several States, organisations and parts of industry have placed significant focus on gender equality and delivered a number of positive actions, both state-driven and in some cases in response to the Resolution A39-30. Some of those examples are set out below.

2.2.1.1 **South Africa has taken some steps in addressing gender equity, such as the following:**

- a) Hosting an annual National Aviation Gender Summit since 2019 to create a platform for engagement, networking, sharing ideas and programmes and recoding progress achieved across aviation entities and businesses;
- b) Developed and launched a Women Mentorship Programme that focuses on individual and group mentorship. The aim of the programme is to build a pipeline of strong and capable women to take advantage of leadership opportunities within the Civil Aviation Authority and industry;
- c) Achieving a 50/50 split in the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and a 51/49 Female/Male employee split within the SACAA;
- d) Women representation in the highest structures of the SACAA and other aviation entities such as Air Traffic and Navigation Services and the Airports Company South Africa;
- e) The SACAA invited and signed a pledge with the Captains of Industry within aviation in South Africa to commit to prioritising Women Empowerment in their companies. The signing of the pledge by the industry was led by the Minister of Transport who encouraged greater and meaningful participation of women in the mainstream aviation sector; and
- f) Developed programmes to ensure gender empowerment in the SACAA's Internship, learnership and internal and external bursary programmes.

2.2.1.2 **The United Kingdom has seen the following programmes established in recent years:**

- a) ***Reach for the Sky Programme***: This aims to raise the profile of aviation careers and encourage diversity, inclusivity and accessibility. There are four pillars and goals of the programme: *raising the profile of the aviation industry* (to inspire the next generation); *outreach programmes* (educating young people about the sector); *career pathways* (showcasing job opportunities across aviation); *skills and training* (supporting established workers and young people/diverse groups);
- b) ***Aviation Ambassadors***: To support *Reach for the Sky*, the UK Department for Transport appointed 12 [Aviation Ambassadors](#) to help deliver a skilled, diverse and sustainable aviation workforce; and
- c) ***UK Women in Aviation and Aerospace Charter***: The UK's aerospace and aviation sectors have come together to work towards gender equality in the industry through the Women in Aviation and Aerospace Charter (WIAAC). Members of the Charter include aerospace manufacturers, airlines, airports, trade bodies and others. The WIAAC reflects the aspiration of the industry to see gender balance across all levels.

2.2.1.3 **IATA 25 by 25**

- a) IATA introduced the 25 by 2025 programme, where companies commit to increase female representation in senior roles in their organization and in areas women are traditionally under-represented. There have been a number of signatories from airlines from different Member States.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Assembly is invited to note the good examples from South Africa, the United Kingdom and other stakeholders, including examples from ICAO outlined in A41-WP/48, and to encourage other States to share their respective best practices. States should be encouraged to develop action plans with concrete timelines and report progress at future Assemblies. A reporting mechanism should be established for States to submit periodic feedback on strides taken to address gender issues and help drive progress and sharing of best practice. For this to gain momentum, it is also important for ICAO to progress their planned actions (A41-WP/48, *Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030*) and develop a structure and mechanism to help share ideas, and drive and track progress on the action plans. This could include establishing a more structured approach to hosting a Global Aviation Gender Summit at agreed intervals and integration of gender issues in programmes like Next Generation of Aviation Professionals.

3.2 Let us conclude with the South African phrase, *Igama lamakhosikazi, malibongwe* (Let the name of women be praised).

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