

**58th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

**DEMAND FOR WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN AVIATION
INDUSTRIES: PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION IN MALAYSIA**

(Presented by Malaysia)

INFORMATION PAPER

SUMMARY

The aviation industry plays a crucial role in the global economy, with continuous growth and innovation. However, the underrepresentation of women in this sector, especially in technical and leadership roles, remains a significant challenge. This Information Paper explores the demand for women professionals in the aviation industry, with a specific focus on Malaysia. It delves into the barriers women face, the benefits of increased gender diversity, and strategies for fostering women's participation to achieve a more dynamic aviation workforce.

DEMAND FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATIONS IN AVIATION INDUSTRIES: PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MALAYSIA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aviation industry plays a pivotal role in connecting nations and fostering economic development. Despite its significance, women's participation in this sector remains disproportionately low. This paper aims to shed light on the demand for women professionals in the aviation industry in Malaysia, look into the factors that contribute to their underrepresentation and propose effective strategies to foster greater gender diversity. With a historically male-dominated landscape, the aviation industry necessitates gender equality to unleash the latent potential of its workforce.

1.2 Malaysia's National Women's Policy (NWP) emphasises the importance of gender equality in all sectors of the economy, including the aviation sector. The main pillars of NWP are equity and non-discrimination, empowerment, protection, participation, and sustainability. In 2022, Malaysia ranked 103/146 with a score of 0.681 in the Global Gender Gap Index, an increment of 0.005 compared to the previous year.

1.3 In Asia/Pacific, women account for only 5.87% of the total 165,526 personnel in aviation (source: ICAO Aviation Data Analytics). This indicates that for every 100 people working in aviation in Asia/Pacific, only 6 are women. This is a significant underrepresentation, considering that women represent half of the world's population.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Gender equality ensures that the industry leverages the full potential of its workforce, benefiting from a diverse range of skills, perspectives, and experiences. By attracting and retaining talented individuals from all genders, the aviation sector can address skill gaps and innovation challenges more effectively. The demand for women professionals in the aviation industry continues to rise. As women bring a diverse range of perspectives, abilities, and skills to the table, they are becoming an increasingly integral part of this workforce.

2.2 However, there are barriers that women face in participating in the aviation industry. It is important to address the barriers in order to create a more inclusive and equitable industry where women can thrive. Among the barriers to women's participation in aviation industry are:

- **Societal Norms Stereotypes** – The traditional gender roles and stereotypes often discourage women from pursuing aviation careers. Some of the common stereotypes about women in aviation include they are not strong enough to handle the physical demands of the job and not assertive enough to be leaders.
- **Lack of Role Models and Representation** – The aviation industry has traditionally been seen as a male-dominated field. This stereotype is often reinforced by the media, which often portrays pilots and other aviation professionals as being male. When girls and young women do not see women in aviation, they may not picture themselves in these roles and may not be inspired to pursue careers in this industry.
- **Work-Life Balance Challenges** – The aviation industry is a 24/7 operation, and many jobs require long hours and irregular schedules. This can make it difficult for women to balance their work commitments with their personal lives, such as childcare.
- **Discriminatory Practices** – Discriminatory practices towards women in aviation can manifest in a variety of ways, including harassment, unequal pay, lack of opportunities, unconscious bias and workplace culture. These practices can have a significant impact on women's careers in aviation, making it difficult for them to advance in their professions and create an unwelcoming and hostile work environment.

2.3 However, there are a number of initiatives that can be done to promote and encourage women's participation in the aviation industry, especially in Malaysia. These include:

- **Challenging societal norms and stereotypes** – To challenge the stereotypes that portray women as being less capable than men in technical and leadership fields. We need to show women that there are no limits to what they can achieve, regardless of their gender, and create a culture of respect and inclusion in the aviation industry, where women feel welcome and supported.
- **Providing role models and promoting women's leadership** – It is important to provide women with role models in the aviation industry. This can help to show them that it is possible to have a successful career in this field. To do that, we need to increase the visibility of women, especially in leadership roles.
- **Creating a supportive work environment** – The aviation industry needs to create more supportive work environments, where employers are understanding and flexible about work-life balance issues, which can help women to better balance their work and personal commitments. This includes providing flexible work arrangements and childcare options.
- **Encouraging women to report discrimination** – Women in aviation must be allowed to denounce prejudice and discrimination without fear of repercussions. This can be achieved by creating a culture of zero tolerance for discrimination and providing women with the support they need to report discrimination. Governments and businesses should enforce anti-discrimination laws to protect women from discrimination and create a more level playing field.
- **National policies in encouraging women participation** – State-level policies is crucial to show the State's commitment to increase the women representation in the aviation industry. State may introduce legislation that prohibits gender-discriminatory, providing job security during maternity leaves and anti-harassment laws. In certain cases, state may introduce a policy that requires a balance representation between men and women due to operational needs. For example, Malaysia national policies that prohibits cross-gendering aviation security screening led to an increased demand for women to participate as security screeners. Security screeners is a tightly-regulated profession which requires a candidate to undergone few training and courses in order to be certified. Due to the niche area of aviation security profession, women are often promoted to aviation security managerial function to cater with the increased demand from the industry.

2.4 As society recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusion, there's a growing emphasis on increasing women's participation in aviation. Beyond the imperative of gender equality, promoting and encouraging women's engagement in the aviation industry yields numerous benefits, ranging from economic advantages to fostering innovation and creating a more inclusive work environment.

2.5 One of the primary benefits of increased women's participation in aviation is the promotion of diversity of thought. Women often bring unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches to the table, contributing to more creative and innovative solutions. In aviation, where safety, efficiency, and sustainability are paramount, diverse perspectives can lead to breakthroughs in technology, processes, and safety protocols.

2.6 The Gender Equality Programme and the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) are two important initiatives that are working to promote gender equality in the aviation industry. The Gender Equality Programme provides training and support to aviation professionals on gender equality, while the NGAP initiative aims to attract, educate, and retain the next generation of

aviation professionals. By integrating the Gender Equality Programme and the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals, we can create a more diverse, inclusive, and skilled aviation workforce.

2.7 Promoting and encouraging women's participation in Malaysia's aviation industry is not only a matter of gender equality but also an economic imperative. By dismantling barriers, fostering an inclusive environment, and implementing targeted strategies, Malaysia can tap into a diverse pool of talent, driving innovation and sustainable growth in its aviation sector. The aviation industry can become a more inclusive and equitable field for all individuals, regardless of gender, and CAAM is committed to promoting gender equality in the aviation industry. We believe that a diverse workforce is essential for the safe and efficient operation of the aviation industry.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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