

**58<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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**AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC**

**ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY FOR THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS IN  
HONG KONG, CHINA**

(Presented by Hong Kong, China)

**INFORMATION PAPER**

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents the continuing efforts made by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department and industry stakeholders in achieving gender equality across different sectors of the civil aviation industry in Hong Kong, China. It also shares the vision and commitments made by Hong Kong, China in developing the next generation of aviation professionals of both genders, including but not limited to air traffic controllers, pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers and technicians.

## **ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS IN HONG KONG, CHINA**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Achieving gender equality constitutes a high-priority work item of ICAO and the international aviation community in recent years. In support of Goal 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “*Achieve Gender Parity and Empower all Women and Girls*”, ICAO has adopted at its 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Assembly ***Resolution A41-26 - “ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector”***, with the objective of promoting gender equality amongst all professional and higher levels of employment in the global aviation sector by 2030.

1.2 In line with the above spirit, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is committed to the promotion of gender equality across all social spheres, which is also enshrined in the legislation, including but not limited to the Basic Law which is the constitutional document, and the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Chapter 480 of the Laws of Hong Kong) of Hong Kong, China. The establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission (“EOC”) and the Women’s Commission within the territory further exemplifies the importance attached to promoting gender equality and advancing women’s interest.

1.3 This paper highlights the dedicated efforts and progress made by Hong Kong, China in striving for gender equality across different sectors of the civil aviation industry in collaboration with local stakeholders including airlines, aircraft maintenance organisations and training institutes. It also shares the vision and commitments made by Hong Kong, China in developing the next generation of aviation professionals of both genders in a gender-balanced setting.

### **2. DISCUSSION**

#### **Promoting and Achieving Gender Equality in Hong Kong, China**

2.1 As a regulator of the civil aviation industry and an air traffic service provider responsible for regulating and providing a wide range of aviation services in Hong Kong, China, the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (“HKCAD”) sets a solid example in achieving gender equality amongst its staff population. Currently, female staff accounts for a high 46% of the overall HKCAD staff complement, with over a quarter of the Directorate grade staff being female.

2.2 Taking air traffic control officers (“ATCOs”) as an example, the female representation of ATCOs currently employed by the HKCAD is at the forefront of the civil aviation industry. At present, around 40% of the ATCOs responsible for providing and supporting the full range of air traffic control services in Hong Kong, China are female, which is double of the 20.6% global average of female air traffic controllers as released by ICAO earlier this year. In the traditionally male-dominated field of Electronic Engineering, about 20% of the Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel employed by HKCAD are female, whose job duties are identical to their male counterparts such as conducting engineering works at remote Communications, Navigation and Surveillance outstations.

2.3 Following the government-wide principle of ensuring an open and fair recruitment process, the candidates are selected solely based on merits regardless of their genders. Upon joining the HKCAD, their subsequent training pathway and career advancement opportunities are also considered based upon merits only. In addition, the HKCAD encourages a family-friendly work environment by installing lactation rooms cum baby-care facilities at HKCAD Headquarters and Air Traffic Control Towers. The highly sought-after Airport Preschool facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport (“HKIA”) is also conducive to attracting female aviation professionals.

2.4 As for the airline industry, it is noted that the current percentage of female pilots in Hong Kong, China, i.e. those holding a valid flight crew licence issued by the HKCAD, stands at 4.8%,

slightly above the global average of 4.1%. It is also worth noting that amongst all the professional pilots, 11% of the holders of a Commercial Pilot's Licence are female. The percentage will likely increase as women made up over 20% of students in recent classes of the well-established cadet pilot programmes. This admission statistics is another positive indication that more competent young women are joining the aviation industry as the next generation of professional pilots.

2.5 For the aircraft maintenance and engineering sector, the percentage of female licensed aircraft maintenance engineers and technicians stands at 3.6% in Hong Kong, China which is also slightly above the global average of 3%. A steady progress towards gender equality is observed in the majority of aircraft maintenance and engineering companies with more female in the workforce, including those at managerial, executive and senior management positions. Recruitment and human resources policies are updated to blend in elements of gender equality and diversity across different levels of employees. Amongst all, a major maintenance company based at HKIA aims to achieve at least 30% of female representation of interviewers at various stages of the staff recruitment process, so as to ensure that there are representations from both genders in the interview boards and views from both genders are heard. Another major maintenance company actively launched the "Women's Network" and "Male Allies" initiatives in recent years to advance gender equality within the organisation. On-going gender-specific activities were organised, and the EOC is also invited to provide gender equality training to staff as well as online training to new joiners on a regular basis.

2.6 As the continued improvement of gender balance also relies on the steadfast support of industry stakeholders, the HKCAD is pleased to note that several major home carriers of Hong Kong, China covering 90% of the fleet size have signed up to join the "25by2025" campaign initiated by IATA to advance their gender balance by 2025. Amongst them, one of the home carriers became the first commercial airline to be listed on the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index in 2023 and aimed to increase women representation in senior positions to at least 30% by 2025. To bring forth greater gender diversity in the airline, a wide array of relevant initiatives was introduced, including the implementation of family-friendly policies, the incorporation of diversity objectives in the hiring process and the setting up of a "Gender Equity Network" for the female workforce to raise and address challenges.

### **Developing the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals in Hong Kong, China**

2.7 To promote aviation training and support the development of the next generation of aviation professionals, the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy ("HKIAA") was established in 2016 as the first civil aviation academy in Hong Kong, China. The HKIAA aims to offer a diverse aviation-related curriculum to aviation professionals, industry newcomers and young people who would like to pursue their careers in the aviation industry.

2.8 In recent years, the HKIAA has taken a step forward, partnered with and signed a number of cooperation agreements with local and overseas education institutions, professional organisations and industry practitioners to create synergy in the delivery of training programmes at all levels. Such programmes range from summer day camps to placement programmes, professional certificate courses and accredited programmes including an Advanced Master Programme in Air Transport Management. They are well received by both local and international industry stakeholders, and the HKIAA received the ICAO Platinum Member / Training Centre of Excellence status under the TRAINAIR PLUS Programme in May 2023.

2.9 In this connection, it is noteworthy that for all these training programmes offered by the HKIAA, interested applicants of both genders are considered with equal weighting on their own merits. Recent admission statistics indicate that about one-third of the students enrolled in the Advanced Master Programme in Air Transport Management are female, whereas training courses targeting post-secondary school students record a consistent 1:1 participation from both genders.

2.10 In summary, gender equality is a common value practised by all key players of civil aviation in Hong Kong, China. We stand ready to work in collaboration with our international aviation partners in nurturing the future talents of both genders for the global aviation industry. With the support of relevant policies and legislation, we strive to continue our efforts in achieving gender equality in the

aviation sector, including those among all professional and higher levels of employment. Where our forerunners have established Hong Kong, China as an international aviation hub as it is today, it is up to us and our next generation of aviation professionals to keep up the good work and steer ahead.

**3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

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

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