

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

*Dhaka, Bangladesh
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AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

**PROMOTING ICAO GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME IN
CONJUNCTION WITH NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION
PROFESSIONALS (NGAP) INITIATIVE**

(Presented by Bangladesh)

SUMMARY

The aviation industry faces a significant shortage of skilled professionals, including pilots, mechanics, engineers, and technicians. This shortage is expected to continue in the coming years, which poses a significant challenge to the growth and sustainability of the industry. By collaborating with academic institutions, training organizations, the aviation industry can help create a pipeline of skilled professionals trained and ready to enter the workforce through various strategies.

Implementing ICAO's Gender Equality Programme with the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative will ensure that the global aviation community will have sufficient competent human resources to support a safe, secure and sustainable air transportation system while achieving gender parity and the empowerment of all women and girls.

This paper presents the promotion of ICAO's Gender Equality Programme with the NGAP initiative.

PROMOTING ICAO GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS (NGAP) INITIATIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO launched the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Programme in 2009 to address the shortage of aviation professionals and ensure sufficient number of skilled aviation professional to support the future air transport system. As one of the integral parts of capacity building, the ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-29: *Next Generation of Aviation Professionals* was adopted to encourage Member States, international and regional organizations, academia and industry to support the NGAP Programme. NGAP issues are of immediate interest to many stakeholders, including airlines, air navigation service providers, airports, manufacturers, training providers, universities, and others.

1.2 In addition, the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly recognized the importance of advancing gender equality in aviation. Pursuant to the Assembly Resolution A39-30, ICAO established an ICAO Gender Equality Programme with the primary aim of facilitating and coordinating targeted programmes and projects to enable progress towards the gender equality by 2030. More recently, in 2022, the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A41-26: ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector. The Assembly Resolution contains a clear focus on professional and higher levels of employment, within ICAO and within States and the global aviation sector.

1.3 Moreover, recently ended Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023 was a global gathering for gender equality convened by ICAO and hosted by Spain with an aim of achieving gender equality and women empowerment in aviation.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The aviation industry is recognized as forward-looking and known for the early adoption of new technologies and constantly stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship. Notwithstanding such pioneering characteristics, gender equality in the aviation sector remains elusive, and women's engagement in technical areas and leadership positions is persistently low.

2.2 According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 of the World Economic Forum, it will take a staggering 132 years to close the global gender gap if we do not act. It would take some 40 years for men and women to be represented equally in national political leadership roles. If we turn our attention to the aviation industry, we will see that much work must be done to close the gender gap. And according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), globally, only 6% of airlines CEOs are women.

Women's participation in Bangladesh to promote gender equality in aviation

2.3 To support the objectives of ICAO's Gender Equality Programme and Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative, Bangladesh proposed the "Theme Topic" for the upcoming 58th DGCA Conference, which was adopted by the 57th Conference. Bangladesh is promoting the theme topic by initiating Bangabandhu Women's Aviation Scholarship Program to support young women in the Aviation profession. This Scholarship Program encourages women to pursue their dreams in aviation as professional pilots, engineers, safety or security executives. The scholarship recipients will become role models, to inspire other women to join the flight deck.

2.4 Recently, on 05 April 2023, Bangladesh was elected for the second time to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) for a four-year term, 2024-2028. Over the past decade, under the visionary leadership of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has made significant progresses in reducing gender disparities in education, health, and political representation, and in increasing women's access to economic opportunities. Bangladesh is committed to further advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and the election to the CSW will provide a

platform to showcase its achievements and share best practices.

Challenges in the Aviation Sector

2.5 The aviation sector is facing significant challenges in achieving the UN SDG goal 5. To mitigate the challenges in the aviation sector we need to address the following issues:

- a) the barriers women face within the aviation industry;
- b) concrete actions to foster gender balance in aviation and the next generation of aviation professionals; and
- c) how to encourage greater participation, training, recruitment and retention of women and girls in the aviation industry.

Barriers in Gender Equality Achievement

2.6 As the aviation industry changes rapidly with technological and scientific developments, the women workforce needs up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities to stay abreast of the latest advancements of experienced and knowledgeable women professionals.

2.7 Lack of a gender-sensitive approach to attracting and retaining women workers by creating, developing and strengthening women's capacities as aviation professionals had been a barrier in many countries.

2.8 Lack of diverse and gender equal leadership: Diverse and gender-equal leadership is crucial for creating workplace cultures where all can thrive. Flexibility in terms of allowing women to rise to the highest levels, and acknowledge the different experiences, perspectives and skills that women bring to the table as decision-makers are not very common in many corners of the world.

2.9 Lack of data and measures to assess gender equality in ministries responsible for air transport and Civil Aviation Authorities prohibit acquiring a comprehensive picture and therefore progressing towards an evidence-based policy change may not be feasible.

How to remove of the Barriers

2.10 Women and men must reflect the diversity of the society at all levels of the industry. Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented in aviation leadership and decision-making positions due to various structural, institutional and individual barriers.

2.11 Capacity building for women through skills development, training and lifelong learning could be an effective tool. Tailored learning opportunities may close critical skill gaps.

2.12 Empowering better decisions through inclusive leadership and decision-making, will require not only a change in culture but also needs setting targets and goals to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles across our organizations and plan accordingly for the steps needed to achieve those targets.

2.13 Technology and innovation plays an ever-increasing role in the ways we learn, work and communicate. Innovation and technology have the potential to provide key opportunities to break trends and achieve gender equality. From gender-responsive approaches to innovation especially in developing tools and methodologies, promoting women as aviation professionals, aviation innovators and entrepreneurs, to invest in innovations and technologies that meet the needs of women in aviation, are few of the approaches in advancing gender equality in aviation.

2.14 Gender equality is not going to happen on its own; we need enforceable policies and plans at all levels of the industry to promote the inclusiveness and empowerment of women and girls. A course correction through gender-responsive policies and investments, are essential for narrowing

persistent gender gaps.

2.15 Stronger commitment from the States are required for educational outreach to younger generations to ensure students are aware and have accesses to the tremendous opportunities that aviation holds for them.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note and discuss the information contained in this paper; and
- b) Encourage States, regional and international organizations, academia and industry to support the NGAP Programme as one of the integral elements of capacity building, by providing technical expertise and guidance, and resources to help achieve the Programme's objectives, while promoting gender equality.

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