

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

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AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

**THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING A POOL OF FEMALE
AVIATION PROFESSIONALS FOR SUSTAINABLE AIR
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

(Presented by the Republic of Korea)

SUMMARY

Recognizing that half of the world's population is made up of women and the gender ratio between women and men in aviation is 4.94 and 95.06, the Republic of Korea believes that the participation of women in the aviation sector could play a key role in having sufficient competent human resources to support safe, secure and sustainable air transport system. Therefore, the Republic of Korea would like to emphasize the importance of attracting women, retaining women employed and developing their career throughout all aviation sectors in order to address the forecasted shortage of aviation professionals in the future.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING A POOL OF FEMALE AVIATION PROFESSIONALS FOR SUSTAINABLE AIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 According to the analytical dashboard published by ICAO, as of April 2023, the total number of license holders - *airline transport pilot license, licensed aircraft maintenance engineers/technicians, air traffic controllers* - worldwide is 947,615. ICAO forecasts that 620 thousand for pilot, 125 thousand for air traffic controller and 1.3 million for aircraft maintenance personnel will be additionally needed by 2036 as a dramatic surge in retirement and increased traffic volume are expected. In other words, approximately twice as much additional personnel as the current number of personnel is needed. In response, ICAO launched the NGAP initiative in 2009 to ensure the sufficient number of qualified and competent aviation professionals available to operate, manage and maintain the future international air transport system.

1.2 The percentage of female and male aviation personnel by sector at the global and regional levels can be found in the following table and it shows that the percentage of women is very low in all aviation sectors. In particular, the pilot and maintenance sectors showed the lowest levels while air traffic controller sector has a little bit higher female participation than the other sectors.

[Table 1. Proportion of Female and Male by Sector at the Global and Regional Levels]

	Airline transport pilot license		Licensed aircraft maintenance engineers/technicians		Air Traffic Controllers	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Worldwide	4.10	95.90	3.11	96.89	21.12	78.88
Africa	5.21	94.79	2.79	97.21	15.01	84.99
Asia/Pacific	2.69	97.31	4.44	95.56	19.59	80.41
Europe	4.20	95.80	4.08	95.92	21.97	78.03
Latin America/Caribbean	1.62	98.38	2.60	97.40	34.45	45.55
Middle East	3.05	96.95	1.91	98.09	7.07	92.93
North America	4.61	95.39	2.64	97.36	18.03	81.97

1.3 The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) cited that the additional growth of 12% is possible by 2030 if the gender gap in economic activity participation between male and female is reduced while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) analyzed that women's economic empowerment boosts productivity and increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes.

1.4 Recognizing that half of the world's population is made up of women, the Republic of Korea believes that the participation of women in the aviation sector could play a key role in having sufficient competent human resources to support safe, secure and sustainable air transport system. Therefore, the Republic of Korea would like to emphasize the importance of establishing and implementing policies, programmes and projects to attract women, retain women employed and assist female workers to continuously develop their career in aviation.

2. DISCUSSION

Attraction of Women to Aviation

2.1 The percentage of female and male aviation personnel by sector in the Republic of Korea can be found in the following table. While the proportion of women in the air traffic controller sector is much higher than the global and regional average, the proportion of women in the pilot and maintenance sectors is very low, a similar level to the global and regional average.

[Table 2. Proportion of Female and Male by Sector in the Republic of Korea]

Airline transport pilot license		Licensed aircraft maintenance engineers/technicians		Air Traffic Controllers	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1.9	98.1	2.7	97.3	43.5	56.5

2.2 To address the forecasted shortage of aviation professionals in the future, it is necessary to find ways to attract more women to roles in aviation, especially in the pilot and maintenance sectors where men are still dominant.

2.3 Since the start of NGAP initiative, ICAO has put much effort in promoting and carrying out projects that attract young generation, regardless of gender, such as Aviation University Forum, Model ICAO Council, Pink Hard Hat Workshop, which is for female students, Global Aviation Training, and etc.

2.4 The Republic of Korea has been promoting jobs in aviation via campus recruiting, job fairs and field experience in engineering (K-Girls' Day) in order to arouse the interest of young female talents to the position with low female participation.

2.5 In addition, the Republic of Korea ensures the equal opportunity for recruitment, leave of absence and education for men and women in all areas through relevant laws and national plans. In particular, the government and public sector bodies, which include the regulators and operators, ensure that the percentage of either men or women does not exceed 70% when recruiting in accordance with the *bisexual equal employment objective system*.

Retention of Women Employed in Aviation

2.6 Aviation personnel could be easily exposed to the employment instability which may bring about career breaks and weakening of competence since the aviation industry is susceptible to the economic crisis, pandemic, etc. Furthermore, women are more likely to experience temporary or permanent interruption due to family responsibilities such as childbirth. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the main causes of the low retention of women in civil aviation are wage disparities, sexual harassment and incompatibility of work and family life, etc.

2.7 The poor retention of skilled aviation personnel due to the reasons mentioned above can bring about a shortage of skilled aviation personnel and serious deterioration of the aviation safety driven by increase judgment errors and lower work efficiency and productivity. Therefore, the Republic of Korea views that it is necessary to create an environment in which allow skilled female personnel to work continuously without concerns about any possible disadvantages in their career following the break in order to prevent them from leaving the civil aviation permanently.

2.8 The Republic of Korea has been ensuring gender-equal working conditions at the national level in accordance with the *Master Plans for Gender Equality Policies* which contains specific tasks and methods to pursue gender equality such as improvement of gender wage gap, resolution of gender discrimination in employment, prevention of career interruption, guarantee of right of maternity and paternity, protection of human right, etc.

2.9 In addition, various systems/projects are being implemented by service providers/operators in order to improve the retention of women in the aviation field such as flexible working hours for pregnancy or child rearing, high-quality child care services, education for prevention of sexual harassment, granting additional points to women with career breaks when hiring, etc.

Development of Women's Career in Aviation

2.10 During ICAO Assembly 41st session, ICAO adopted the resolution on increasing the pool of women in the aviation sector, encouraging women to further develop their aviation careers and establishing ambitious goals and targets with respect to gender equality in their aviation workforce, especially in professional, technical and management capacities.

2.11 The ILO cited the main reasons of failing to realize the potential of women in aviation sector are limited opportunities for training and career development and a lack of female role model, which both can be categorized as a “glass ceiling”. Therefore, the Republic of Korea views that it is necessary to establish and implement policies and tasks that ensure the equal opportunities for career development and advancement for women in order to expand the pool of female human resources at or above the manager/senior level in the aviation field, which is fit for *ICAO 50-50 (women-men) by 2030*.

2.12 The Republic of Korea guarantees every personnel to take and complete not only recurrent training and technical/specialized trainings but also education necessary to advance career and take on a higher level position in accordance with the *Framework Act on Gender Equality*. In addition, the Republic of Korea has established and implemented policies on improving women's representation in the public sector, the expansion of women's engagement at the director level, etc. in accordance with the *Master Plans for Gender Equality Policies*, aiming to achieve 30% of women among high-level positions in central and local governments by 2027.

2.13 Service providers/operators have also been striving to realize gender equality in manager/senior-level positions by joining IATA's 25 by 25 and conducting trainings that strengthen women's professional and leadership capacity, etc. and accordingly airport operators have the largest number of female executive vice presidents among public sector bodies.

2.14 In addition, the Republic of Korea has contributed to strengthening capacity of global female aviation professionals by supporting the ICAO Train air plus - global female professional capacity building and providing Member States with the *Fellowship Training Programme for Aviation Personnel* which ensures gender-balanced selection of trainees.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) request ICAO to analyze the reason why the female proportion is too low in male-dominated occupations such as pilot, maintenance, etc. and the main factors causing women to hesitate to select these occupations, and to seek ways to attract women to these position and promote them to Member States;
- b) encourage Member States to re-evaluate workforce supply and demand for and to establish policies and plans for attracting women, improving retention of female workers and ensuring women's career development in order to prevent potential interruption to the international air transport due to workforce issue; and
- c) encourage Member States/ICAO to ensure that gender equality is not neglected in employment, education, promotion and to pay close attention to prevent reverse discrimination in the process of establishing and implementing gender equality policies.

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