

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

*Dhaka, Bangladesh  
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**AGENDA ITEM 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OF AIR TRANSPORT**

**PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION  
AMONGST AERODROME OPERATORS**

(Presented by Airports Council International)

**SUMMARY**

This paper aims to propose policies and measures that States and aerodrome operators may adopt to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at airports. It explains why the Airports Council International (ACI) is promoting DEI, a concept broader than gender equality, and the benefits of adopting DEI in all segments of the airport organization, e.g. governance, human resources, operations, customer services and procurement. It also advocates that ACI, as the international association of more than 2000 airports worldwide, is best placed as a partner for States and ICAO to promote gender equality and DEI at airports.

## PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AMONGST AERODROME OPERATORS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to propose policies and measures that States and aerodrome operators may adopt to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across airports and to encourage States to partner with the Airports Council International (ACI) in the promotion of such initiatives amongst aerodrome operators.

### 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 On a global scale and across all industries, the World Economic Forum 2023 Global Gender Gap Report asserts that without positive intervention, it would take 131 years to close the global gender gap.<sup>1</sup>

2.2 ACI recognizes the need for positive intervention within the airport community to promote gender equality. An example of such intervention is to provide awareness, education and training as well as career development opportunities for airport personnel at all levels. In September 2014, ACI signed an agreement with the International Aviation Women's Association (IAWA) with the intention of working collaboratively on providing education, training and job opportunities to women in the airport sector. This includes an annual scholarship for a future female leader from an airport to the ACI Airport Executive Leadership Programme (AELP), which prepares students for senior-level responsibilities and provides more opportunities for professional growth.

2.3 ACI also recognizes the importance of State policy tools and the leading roles that States and ICAO play in promoting gender equality and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) in the aviation industry. ACI, as the association of more than 2000 airports worldwide, is best placed to develop and encourage best practices in the promotion of gender equality amongst its members as it has been in the strategic areas of ICAO, e.g. aviation safety.

2.4 ACI has been actively engaging with ICAO, States and other International Organizations in gender equality, DEI and, in a broader scope, the challenge of ensuring an adequate workforce to meet future aviation demand.

#### WHAT IS DEI?

2.5 In the context of aviation, DEI refers to the commitment to create an inclusive and equitable work environment that promotes diversity, respects individual differences, and values all contributions regardless of background. The aviation industry encompasses a wide range of jobs and roles, from pilots and air traffic controllers to airport operations staff and maintenance crews. They all play important roles in ensuring that the entire aviation ecosystem functions sustainably.

2.6 Diversity refers to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religions, and other factors that make each individual unique.

2.7 Equity means a levelled playing field for all employees, regardless of their background or identities. This means providing equal opportunities for career advancement, access to training, and support for all employees.

2.8 Inclusion refers to creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported. This involves actively promoting diversity, equity, and a culture of belonging where all employees feel they can contribute and be themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023/digest>.

2.9 By prioritizing DEI in the recruitment and consideration for training and promotion, the aviation industry can benefit from different perspectives and experiences in leadership, which can lead to more innovative solutions, decision-making, and a stronger competitive advantage.

2.10 Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is important for businesses because it shows respect and opportunity for all people, fosters creativity and innovation, enhances growth and performance, boosts employee happiness and well-being, and connects better with customers. DEI can give businesses a competitive advantage and a moral value.

2.11 In addition to these benefits, DEI can also help make the workplace more successful and prevent issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PROMOTING DEI?

2.12 In summary, for an airport operator, embracing DEI can:

- Enhance reputation as an employer of choice;
- Help attract talent and provide relief for the manpower shortage challenges by broadening the working population pool from which the airport recruits;
- Better understand and respond to the needs of customers, for example, airlines, passengers, retailers and shippers, coming from different and diverse backgrounds, especially those at an international airport;
- Enhance innovativeness amongst employees; and
- Boost employee morale and productivity if DEI is promoted on a fair and continued basis.

2.13 The 24<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> ACI World General Assemblies held in 2014 and 2022, respectively, called for airports and stakeholders to create an environment conducive to building a strong and diverse airport workforce.

2.14 At the end of 2023, ACI will be launching a global study to identify what practices and policies States and airports currently have in place with the view of getting a better understanding of actions and policies that may be put in place to promote DEI.

2.15 Pending the outcome of the study, preliminarily, here are some policies and measures airports may consider to promote DEI:

- Adopt a corporate human resources policy favorable to DEI to demonstrate commitment from the leader of the organization;
- Coordinate with States and other industry sectors for the promotion of DEI;
- Encourage airport business partners to embrace DEI;
- Conduct surveys within the airport organization and amongst stakeholders to assess the status of DEI policies and implementations;
- Provide facilities to meet the diverse needs of its workforce, e.g. daycare center, prayer room;
- Develop job rotation schemes with due consideration of competency and skills;
- Provide DEI awareness training to employees;
- Create affinity groups for people with a common interest or identity;
- Consider DEI in commercial and customer service and procurement; and
- Produce regular status reports on DEI of the airport organization.

2.16 As indicated in paragraph 2.2 above, States can play a leading role in promoting gender equality and DEI, for example, by:

- Legislating on and creating a commission for equal opportunities;
- Promoting DEI policies, actions and commitments across multiple industry

sectors;

- Enacting statutory requirements to promote gender equality, such as “equal pay for equal work”, and provide for maternity and paternity leave; and
- Enacting other labor regulations that may promote DEI.

2.17 ACI enthusiastically notes that the ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit held in Madrid from 5 to 7 July 2023 called for strengthening cooperation between ICAO and partners, including ACI, in data collection and analysis and the development of future policy in this domain.

2.18 In conclusion:

- Promoting DEI, including gender equality, is, in the long term, beneficial to the development of airports and air transport;
- ACI, as the association of airports, would be a willing and fitting partner for States and ICAO to promote good practices in promoting DEI and gender equality at airports. Examples of such partnerships being joint organizations of thematic seminars, sharing of data, and development of guidance materials; and
- States could play a leading role in promoting DEI and gender equality in the aviation industry.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the information in this paper, in particular, ACI’s efforts in broadening the promotion of gender equality to the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI);
- b) Encourage ICAO and States to consider partnering with ACI and airport operators in the promotion of gender equality at airports at national and regional levels;
- c) Encourage States to consider the development and adoption of gender equality and DEI policies for the aviation sector and beyond where relevant; and
- d) Encourage ICAO and States to continually support and promote gender equality in the region.

— END —

**Executive Summary for consideration for inclusion in the Conference Report**

**PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AMONGST AERODROME OPERATORS**

With DP58-6-xx ACI stated its support to the promotion of gender equality and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) within the airport organization. It also advised the conference that it had been actively engaging with ICAO, States and other International Organizations in gender equality, DEI and in a broader scope, the challenge of ensuring an adequate workforce to meet future aviation demand. As the association of more than 2000 airports around the world ACI would be a willing and fitting partner for States and ICAO to promote gender equality and DEI amongst aerodrome operators, ACI stated. The paper explained the benefits of promoting DEI for airports such as becoming an employer of choice thereby helping resolve the acute issue of manpower shortage, having a more innovative and productive workforce, and being able to better understand the needs of their customers coming from a diverse background especially those at an international airport. The paper also suggested a number of practices airports might adopt to promote DEI such as adopting a corporate human resources policy favorable to DEI, providing facilities to meet the diverse needs of its workforce and providing DEI awareness training to employees. Then it suggested actions States might take to enhance DEI and gender equality, namely legislating on and creating a commission for equal opportunities and enacting statutory requirements to promote gender equality such as “equal pay for equal work”.

In conclusion the paper invited the conference to note ACI’s effort in broadening the promotion of gender equality to the promotion of DEI and consider partnering with ACI in promoting gender equality at airports for example by jointly organizing seminars, sharing data, and developing guidance materials on the subject.