

SUMMARY OF APAC DGCA/58 – HIGH-LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION, 15 October 2023

Dr. Rubana Huq (Vice Chancellor, Asian University for Women, Dhaka):

- It was refreshing to know that gender equality was part of the conference theme and an ICAO priority.

All:

- On a scale of 1-5, the panel ranked the status of gender equality for women in aviation between 0 and 2.5.

Ms. Poppy Khoza (Director of Civil Aviation, South African CAA):

- It is difficult to measure your status and progress in gender equality if you do not have a plan; therefore, gender equality must be a part of a national aviation authority's strategy.
- Leaders must champion the necessary change, but first, they need the vision; therefore, it is good to know that gender equality is an ICAO Global Priority.
- States have made some progress on gender equality, but the pace of change is slow, and the Director Generals are responsible for leading the necessary change.
- Effective policy, implementation and culture are essential.
- Personal experience as the first woman president of the ICAO Assembly in 2022 illustrated the burden of pressure to succeed facing emerging women leaders.

Mrs. Michele Merkle, (Director, Air Navigation Bureau, ICAO):

- The aviation industry is still far from reaching the UN SDG-5 – *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*; recognising this, ICAO has implemented the Gender Equality and ICAO initiative as one of its highest global priorities.
- People now realise that gender equality is not only the right thing to do, but it is essential to ensure enough qualified and competent aviation professionals are available for the future international air transport system.
- To support the aviation industry's SARPs, we frequently invest 15-20 years to develop the necessary technologies, but we do not do the same with young people needed to support the growing industry.
- Opportunities exist, but people do not know about them; therefore, to attract more women and young people of all genders to meet the growing need for aviation professionals, the industry must take action and band together with Government, education and communities on the necessary outreach and advocacy.
- To guide enough young women and girls into aviation professions, in addition to women, we also need men to be mentors.

Mr. Laurence Wildgoose (Assistant Administrator for Policy, International Affairs & Environment, FAA):

- Historically, aviation has been male-dominated, but it is not an "old boys' club".
- The story of Bessie Coleman, who made history in 1921 as the first African-American woman to earn a pilot's license, shows that aviation has presented opportunities for determined young women since its very early days.
- More recently, the FAA has made progress on gender equality, with almost 33% of executive positions held by women, including the top-level Administrator and Deputy Administrator.
- Aviation leaders are responsible for engaging the best and brightest talent, including women and men.

Ms. Xiaomei Li (Secretary General, China Civil Airports Association):

- The Chinese Government's Outline for Women's Development in China in 2021 defines goals and measures for gender equality in eight sectors.
- The Civil Aviation Administration of China's Five-Year Plan in 2021 explicitly includes adherence to an open and inclusive policy to build a talent pool with innovative and technically skilled professionals with global vision.
- Training the next generation of aviation professionals and implementing gender equality are inextricably linked.
- China's overall employment rate for women reached 44%, on its way to a 50-50 goal. Senior executives at more than 70% of the 41 busiest airports in China are women.
- From experience in recruitment at Beijing Capital International Airport, many successful job candidates were women.

Ms. Polana Pramesti (President Director of AirNav Indonesia):

- The Indonesian Government focuses on gender equality, with currently 20% of Director-level positions in State-owned Enterprises being held by women.
- In aviation, gender equality is a problem. Only eight C-level executives in aviation in Indonesia are women.
- Government and industry should implement policies and work together to enforce gender equality.
- Challenges and constraints for women pursuing careers in aviation include cultural gender stereotypes, work/life balance and lack of women leadership role models.
- Networking is a valuable tool for women's professional development; AirNav Indonesia established the Srikandi AirNav Indonesia employee network for women, which collaborates with Australia's women@airservices on women in aviation initiatives, including mentoring programs.

Dr. Harpreet A De Singh (ED – Headquarters & Quality Manager, Air India):

- The influence of role models on the career paths of girls and young women can be significant, for example, instilling the belief that there is nothing a man can do that a woman can't do.
- The Indian Government and culture do promote gender equality.
- At the family and local community level, successful strategies include starting young and instilling a culture of helping others be better than oneself.
- Air India's all-women flights resulted from an attitude of "decide to do it, then plan and make it happen; it is doable and enjoy what you do".
- To attract and retain talented women in aviation, Governments and industry must implement policies that care for their women professionals.

How can we change the system?

- Implement policies to hire women deliberately.
- Create opportunities for women's professional development.
- Bangladesh Government has created scholarship opportunities for women in aviation.
- Improve women's salary and career prospects, enable work/life balance, and allow women to choose their uniforms.
- Do more to make the opportunities visible and encourage young girls and all young people into aviation.
- Make aviation an exciting prospect for young people; promote contemporary issues such as environmental action and new technologies, eVTOL, etc.

- Advocacy programs targeting primary and secondary level children and under-represented communities.
- Encourage more participation by marketing aviation as a means for a better world tomorrow than it is today.
- Employers and industry must support women to pursue professional careers and have families.
- Commit to mentorship of young girls and women.

— END OF SUMMARY —