IFALPA
The Global Voice of Pilots

Position

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Gender Diversity Leads to Gender Balance

INTRODUCTION

Aviation is a forward-looking industry that stimulates development, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It connects people, cultures, and businesses across the globe and strengthens socio-economic development worldwide.

To keep pace with the rapid growth of the aviation industry, there is a pressing need to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the national, regional, and global levels. One of the ways the desired improvements can be achieved is for the aviation industry to consider gender diversity that would lead to a gender-balanced industry. This means increasing women's participation rates in the industry, as pilots and other professionals, hired for their abilities and qualifications.

POSITION

IFALPA believes it is time for gender balance in the airline industry. It is time to demonstrate gender diversity by ensuring that female pilots have the same contracts, treatment, and opportunities as male pilots.

IFALPA believes it is time to implement measures to attract, select, and retain women in aviation. It is time to overcome barriers associated with workplace stereotypes that have hindered women from developing and advancing careers in the aviation sector.

The outdated notion that piloting is an unsuitable profession for women needs to be challenged. This is a shared responsibility between operators, pilots, and their representative associations. It cannot be achieved overnight and requires a long-term proactive commitment to supporting and raising the profile of female role models to future generations.

It is time to implement policies to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the industry. Pay equity, maternity/paternity leave, and work/life balance need to be made concrete and reliable through policy. Leadership and mentoring initiatives supporting women in career development facilitating access to leadership positions in all parts of the industry are needed.

Terms of service need to be of equal benefit to men and women. This should pertain to the seniority list, pay, and pensions. An inclusive environment where the opportunity to progress is available to both female and male pilots is what the industry needs.

The identification of crewmembers, principally pilots, is essential, particularly if there is a safety incident or issue. The female pilot needs to be instantly recognised and respected within the chain of command. This could be achieved through a series of measures including education, design of appropriate uniforms, and corporate safety culture.

Maternity leave should be recognised as a momentary pause in a career, not a career-ending event. However, family responsibilities are an ongoing commitment that do not end with return-to-work. Airline initiatives to recruit and retain staff should consider better rostering/lifestyle protections and flexible work/part-time provisions for all employees, identifying and removing road-blocks to promotional opportunities for candidates with families.

Building more supportive workplaces is key. When women are looking at aviation as a long-term career, they should be able to access flexible working conditions that provide a balance and enable them to progress in their careers; encouraging development and further opportunities.

IFALPA encourages all Member Associations to take action and ensure that female pilots are represented at all levels within the Association, on their Board, and on their Committees. The Association should look to establishing diversity programmes and structures to redress the balance and provide opportunity for their female members. It is especially important that there are female pilots on the governing bodies, negotiations committees, or works councils, as well as the safety and technical committees.

By empowering our female pilots and promoting a diverse workplace, we strengthen our profession.

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