

IAWA – International Aviation Womens Association
34th Annual Conference
A Way Forward – Aviation through a Sustainability Lens



The 34th Annual IAWA conference gathered around 300 participants, mainly women, but also some daring, visionary(!) men, in the beautiful capital of Portugal, Nov 9 – 11, 2022.

The International Aviation Womens Association (IAWA) is an international organization for women who hold positions of impact in the aviation and aerospace industry. Founded in 1988, IAWA brings together women of achievement and promotes their advancement throughout the world.
[\(\[https://www.iawa.org/mission_statement.php\]\(https://www.iawa.org/mission_statement.php\)\)](https://www.iawa.org/mission_statement.php)

After two years of Covid-19-related remote and virtual events, it was great to see each other in person again. The annual conference is the most global IAWA event bringing together women in senior positions as well as high potentials from all continents.

Building connections, being innovative and supporting the next generation of women in aviation is in the heart of the IAWA mission. The annual conference made the voice heard again for women in aviation around the globe who are aware that we still need changes for a better gender mix and women representation on all levels, particularly the most senior ones.

The first day offered several pre-conference workshops and sessions to address the challenges women still face for advancing their careers in the aviation and aerospace industry. There are various ways to serve as inspiration and mentors to other women and to support career success and advancement. We contribute to the creation of an environment where women feel supported and confident to

excel in their careers, while also keeping a healthy work-life balance enabling sustainable lives.

Roundtable discussions fostered on how IAWA connections and networking can advance our professional goals through raising our profiles, generating new business opportunities and securing leading roles, where women in aviation are still underrepresented.

To display the lacking gender parity evidence, IAWA and [Oliver Wyman's Lift off to Leadership study](#) and [IATA's 25by2025 initiative](#) provide unique data and insights so the industry can refocus on initiatives that will have an impact and finally achieve gender balance. ¹

There is aviation's urgency to achieve gender parity post-COVID, since the aviation industry continues to struggle to attract and retain diverse talent, including a substantial lack of women in leadership positions. Rich discussion and mutual exchanges addressed what can current and future leaders do to help attract, support, and develop women in leadership positions.

The afternoon of Wednesday 9th, November was then devoted to the optional local industry tour with the visit of the [OGMA](#) facilities (Indústria Aeronáutica de Portugal S.A. – today part of Embraer Group) and a buffet lunch generously provided in the ancient, beautifully restored first hangar of the Portuguese aviation industrial site since 1918. The newly appointed CEO [Paulo Sérgio Monginho](#) gave a warm welcome speech and also recognized that the promotion of women at all levels is a priority to reduce skills' shortages and achieve talent balance in the industry.

The evening saw the opening reception and **Grand Opening Dinner & Scholarship Presentation with the distinguished guests: Mr. Carlos Moedas, Mayor of Lisbon, City Council of Lisbon and Christine Ourmieres-Widener, CEO of the airline TAP Portugal.**

Beyond the gender parity objectives, an important accent is on sustainability of the aviation industry, as the only self-committing industry sector for [net zero carbon emissions in 2050](#) since 2021 so far.

The evening offered an amazing opportunity to network and to integrate the young generation, since eight of the nine [IAWA Scholarship](#) recipients from 2022 were present.

¹ See also: <https://www.iawa.org/studies.php>

Two days of extremely interesting round table and expert panels were following, addressing the challenges of the industry. The various events gave also excellent ideas on how to promote women talent after the post-COVID recovery skill shortage. On Thursday morning, **IAWA President Kathy Guilfoyle gave the Official President's Welcome which was completed with a National Industry Welcome by Tânia Cardoso Simões, Chairwoman Portuguese Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC).** Both leaders emphasized that women have an active voice to make change happen and promote the inclusive workplace.

The opening panel united key players for partnering for aerospace sustainable growth. Moderated by Elena Schmidt, Executive Director, [RSB](#), five representatives from the worlds aerospace industry² discussed how the aerospace sector can connect the world and do so sustainably, today and in the decades leading to net-zero goals for 2050. What will be technologies explored today to fuel tomorrow's flights? Best practices were shared, and lessons learned throughout their decarbonization journeys including the skills that are needed to advance and accelerate aerospace sustainability. It is also important to display how players across the aviation value chain are contributing to the UN sustainable development goals through their Environmental, Social, and Governance missions.

The theme of sustainable growth for the future of aviation is crucial and was also addressed at the 41st ICAO Assembly last October 2022. *“Culminating 2 weeks of intensive diplomacy by over 2500 delegates from 184 States and 57 organizations at the 41st ICAO Assembly, ICAO Member States adopted a [collective long-term global aspirational goal \(LTAG\) of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.](#)”*

Nina Brooks, Vice President and Permanent Representative to ICAO, ICCAIA offered a report on the ICAO General Assembly.

Our Covid-19 experience was not only negative, even if it shut down many aviation operations, but enhanced the digital means for communication. Therefore, this conference combined some virtual presence among some speakers who could not be in person in Lisbon this time. **Yvonne Manzi Makolo, CEO of RwandAir Ltd. gave a virtual keynote and brought in the African perspective.** The desire to travel and to discover the world is

²· Sophie Lane, Chief Relationships Officer, Aerospace Technology Institute
· Claudia Sender, Board member Embraer, Embraer S.A
· Amy Comer, Vice President Engineering, Commercial Engines, Pratt & Whitney
· Sheila Remes, Vice President Global Environmental Sustainability, Boeing
· Julie Kitcher, EVP Communications and Corporate Affairs, AIRBUS.

remarkable in the global South, not (yet?) tarnished by sobriety and only restrained by the far higher cost for sustainable aviation fuels, often at a ratio of 4 to 1 (!) compared with the North.

Many senior Aviation leaders were sharing their experience and we are glad at IAWA that so many high-level executives made it to Lisbon in person. **Rachel Barrie, Group Chief Executive, Global Aerospace gave her *View from 36,000 Feet***, in conversation alike a fireside chat with Zoe Layden, Managing Director, Claveaux Consulting.

Several occasions arose during these days to know more about the life of a Chief Executive, the challenges and opportunities facing businesses in a post pandemic world and the future of work. Career journeys and what does it take to reach the C-Suite and/or Boardroom were shared by various senior women executives with candid discussion on the “trade-offs” professionally and personally versus career opportunities.

Another **virtual statement from the European Commission on sustainability, gender equality and aviation was given by Henrik Hololei, Director General, European Commission, Brussels.** The European Commission is taking global leadership in greening aviation and women in aviation are part of the solution.

Other panels discussed about the whole value chain in aviation like airports and operations the challenges and innovative solutions where the Cargo and Commercial industries intersect most often. Important questions raised concerned: How do they plan to increase sustainability in the future? How will they improve the Airport environment to be more attractive for the next generation?

To give way and voice to the next generation IAWA offered a platform for the IAWA’s Scholarship Recipients to share their insight on the next generation workforce. Organized by Christine de Gagne, Marketing Director at Airbus and Chair of IAWA scholarship committee, this was also a perfect occasion to acquire insight into the professional needs of young women entering aviation and aerospace, with particular focus on issues as such workplace diversity, equity and inclusion, flexibility in working arrangements, support of work/life balance and commitment to larger issues such as climate change.

The Thursday was closing with a Gala reception and awards gala dinner in the wonderful National Coach Museum (Picadeiro Real) –*Museu dos Coches, where*

Katherine Bennett received her 2022 Women of Excellence Award from Sir Michael Arthur, President, Boeing International, UK, The Boeing Company.



The Friday, November 11 offered again exciting panels and sessions, including reflection on broad opportunities to engage with IAWA throughout the year for all members through committees and specifically with our Mentorship Program. The **Fireside Chat with Sir Michael Arthur (Boeing) and this year’s Woman of Excellence award recipient Katherine Bennett CEO, High Value**

Manufacturing Catapult, UK, engaged a conversation where Katherine told us more about her background and accomplishments leading to this distinguished award.

Further panels looked at exploring the **New Aviation Frontier of Urban Air Mobility** as the technological, legal and regulatory landscape for the newest frontier in aviation. Urban Air Mobility continues its rapid evolution and impact the path ahead for the aviation community. Beyond the technical aspects of eVTOL vehicles in air transportation, Urban Traffic Management (UTM), as well as the regulatory and infrastructure challenges facing these emerging technological innovations are discussed.

In the wake of the Russian war against Ukraine, the **geopolitical and government policy impacts on aviation** must be on the agenda. Hence, a panel is dedicated to the far-reaching implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on all facets of the aviation industry³. This geopolitical event coming on the heels of COVID has created continued and unprecedented challenges for everyone from lessors, OEMs, supply chain, financiers and insurers, to the legal community, governments and regulatory authorities. This panel conversation will bring in perspectives from multiple industry sectors. Ultimately, our distinguished panelists contemplate how the crises of the past two years may fundamentally change our industry and how we can better prepare for the future, given the volatile geopolitical dynamics affecting our interconnected business.

The 34th Annual IAWA conference closed with a Networking Lunch under the motto “Flying Forward Together” in Epic Sana Hotel Restaurant
Overall, the sessions provided engagement and discussion with conference attendees on what IAWA committees are about, how to get involved as volunteer and how we can grow into the future together. Key takeaways were discussed during our closing networking lunch and plans to take our learning forward to next events.

Looking forward to seeing all of you for the next conference but also for local and regional IAWA events.

³ Geopolitical Panel members:

- Brian Glod, Managing Director - US Practice Leader, MARSH - Moderator
- Carol FORSYTE, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Air Lease Corp.
- Sandra Walter, Director of Development, Airlink Inc.
- Stephanie ROSTREN, Deputy Head of Production and Maintenance Department, EASA
- Silje Brandvoll, VP Communications and PR, WiderÅe AS [\[an Airline that was still operating for the Norway Islands and North during Covid...\]](#)

Connect, Inspire and Lead.

Cordula Barzantny, 12/12/2022