

Event Summary

International Women's Day 2025

Corporate Partnership Board of the ITF

7 March 2025



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International Women's Day

Pathways to Inclusion: Women Shaping the Future of Transport

About the Corporate Partnership Board

The [Corporate Partnership Board](#) is the International Transport Forum's platform for engaging with the private sector and enriching global transport policy discussion with a business perspective.

With millions of employees worldwide, the group of companies belonging to the ITF's Corporate Partnership Board plays an important role in transport. In November 2018 at its plenary meeting in Seoul, Korea, the members of the Corporate Partnership Board decided to launch a '[Workstream on Gender](#)'.

Since then, each year the Corporate Partnership Board holds an event to celebrate gender diversity on International Women's Day. Past topics have included '[Hiring and Retaining a Gender-balanced Workforce](#)', '[Optimising Women's Networks and Mentoring Programmes](#)', '[Addressing Gender Bias in AI Data](#)', '[Women and Road Safety](#)', '[Gender Biases in Career Advice](#)' and '[Women in STEM](#)'.

Background

As the world transitions towards more sustainable and equitable transport systems, the role of women in driving innovation and leadership is more important than ever. Notably, 2025 is the 30th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, the most popular and progressive document for the rights of women and girls around the world. Despite progress, women remain underrepresented in key areas of the transport sector.

This International Women's Day, we connected with experts, advocates, and industry leaders working towards a more inclusive and sustainable future for women in the transport sector.

Event Summary:

A webinar entitled [Pathways to Inclusion: Women Shaping the Future of Transport](#) was held on 7th March 2025 to celebrate some of the exciting progress made by and for women in the transport sector as well as highlight the challenges and stereotypes that remain to be overcome.

The event began with an introduction of the International Transport Forum’s Corporate Partnership Board and its activities by **Sharon Masterson, Senior Manager of the Corporate Partnership Board and Institutional Relations.**

This was followed by welcoming words from the **Secretary General of the International Transport Forum (ITF), Young Tae Kim**, who emphasised the importance of promoting gender equality in the transport sector and highlighted some of the ways in which the [ITF incorporates gender mainstreaming into our work.](#)



The Secretary-General emphasises ITF's commitment to gender mainstreaming through global collaboration.

H.E. Nadia Ernzer, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the OECD, delivered a keynote speech on the OECD’s ongoing gender initiatives, accompanied by examples of the situation for women in transport in Luxembourg.

Next, **Ms. Yuki Tanaka, Director-General for International Affairs at Japan’s Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism**, showcased Japan’s progress in applying the ITF’s perspective and gender mainstreaming to transport policies in Japan. Her speech emphasised the importance of public-private collaboration and provided an optimistic outlook for a future of greater gender equality in Japan’s transport sector.



The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the OECD delivering a keynote speech.

Gender mainstreaming through Public-Private collaboration

- Public-Private collaboration is key to mainstreaming gender in transport.
 - Mainstreaming gender is not only an important societal topic but is also an important consideration for the growth of the transport industry.

Public-Private collaboration

Public: policy development and implementation

Private: operation and management of transport services



Director General Tanaka presents Japan's efforts towards gender mainstreaming through public-private collaboration.

Panel Session: Encouraging greater female participation in the transport sector: How can university partnerships boost female talent in the transport sector?

SPEAKERS:

- **Amina Lahbabi, Head of Corporate Communication, University Mohammed VI Polytechnic**
- **Brechje Merckx, Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager, Alstom**
- **Mario Tartaglia, Leader of FS Research Centre, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane S.p.A**
- **Cate Brancart, Director, European Safety & Sustainability Development, GAMA**

MODERATOR:

- **Magdalena Olczak, Senior Manager Institutional Relations and Summit, ITF Focal Point on Gender**

Panel Session: Fuelling Sustainable Transport: How Women are Shaping Biofuel Innovation

SPEAKERS:

- **Laura van Rijn, Global Feedstock Portfolio Manager for Shell's Low Carbon Fuels Business, Shell**
- **Gabriela Viñales, Paraguay Country Manager, Investancia**
- **Linda Schmid, Manager of Ethanol Policy and Sustainability, US Grains Council**

MODERATOR:

- **Sharon Masterson, Senior Manager, Corporate Partnership Board & Institutional Relations**

Case Study: Uber by Women

Rym Saker, Driving Change Program Leader for Uber France presented Uber's new initiative 'Uber by Women' that recently launched in Paris and aims at promoting women's safety and involvement in the transport sector.

Uber by Women is a service designed to provide safer and more comfortable transportation options for women by allowing them to request rides exclusively from female drivers. This initiative aims to address safety concerns and create a more inclusive ride-sharing experience, particularly in regions where women may feel uncomfortable or at risk using traditional ride-hailing services. By empowering female drivers and passengers alike, such services contribute to greater economic opportunities for women while fostering a sense of security and trust within the community. As demand for safer mobility options grows, "Uber by Women" represents a step toward a more gender-inclusive transportation landscape.

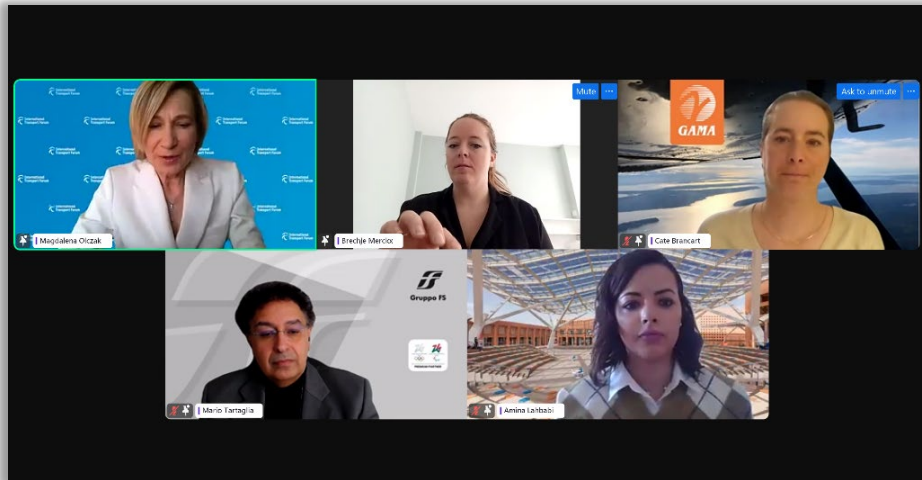
Key Takeaways:

During the webinar we heard a diverse range of perspectives from our speakers who covered many different roles and areas of expertise across the transport sector.

Participants highlighted the initiatives they are working on to promote greater female involvement in transport and discussed the challenges that remain to be overcome on the journey towards greater gender equality.

Below is a list of the key takeaways from the interventions and discussions:

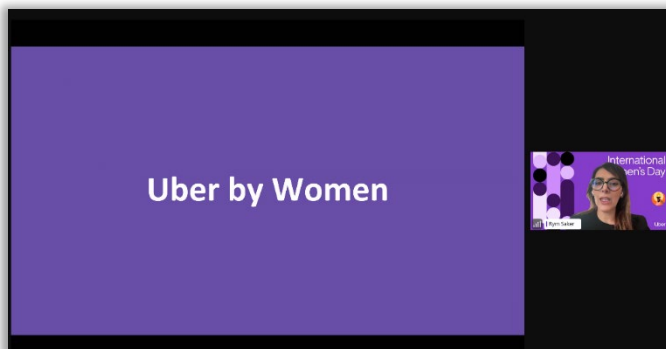
- **Successful gender equality policies should lead to the normalisation of female participation in the transport sector.**
While the proportion of women in various areas of the transport sector is growing, there is still a prevailing unconscious bias and many note that they are surprised to see a women truck driver or pilot, for example.
Addressing these biases and normalising the appearance of women in these roles should be a key metric for the success of gender equality policies and initiatives.
- **Gender mainstreaming is an important tool for uncovering the hidden needs that result from gender differences in transport use.**
As seen from the case in Japan, by collecting disaggregated gender data, stakeholders and policy makers can better understand the specific transport needs of women versus men. Then, by ensuring female involvement across all different levels of transport projects, we can create policy interventions that effectively address the needs of a society, ultimately contributing to better transport systems for all.
- **Mentorship is a key tool for attracting and retaining female talent in transport.**
By increasing the visibility of women in transport and providing young professionals with role models early on in their careers, we can promote greater female involvement in the sector. Several of our speakers expressed great appreciation for their mentors, male and female, and discussed the importance of creating safe spaces for young female professionals to get advice on their careers and work on improving the workplace.
- **Early engagement by the transport sector in the recruitment of women is essential for fighting stereotypes and making women feel welcome in the industry.**
Women and girls are confronted with stereotypes regarding their abilities, particularly in STEM fields, at a very early age. This type of messaging can severely hinder women's perceptions of their capabilities and the opportunities available to them.
Early intervention programs, such as job fairs, scholarships, or internships can help promote female participation and deconstruct stereotypes through opportunities specifically targeting women. Early engagement is important, as school subject choices (which later affect potential areas for further education) are made in some countries at as young as thirteen years old.



Our speakers and moderator from Panel Session One on university partnerships as a tool for greater female participation in the transport sector. From top left to bottom right: Magdalena Olczak, Brechje Merckx, Cate Brancart, Mario Tartaglia, and Amina Lahbabi.

- **We should work to empower women as both providers and beneficiaries of innovations in the transport sector.**

As seen from the case study on ‘Uber by Women’, the project’s success is largely attributable to the fact that it gives women the power to address safety concerns for themselves while also allowing them to serve as the provider of safety for other women.



Rym Saker presents the new Uber by Women initiative that launched in Paris in November 2024.

Uber’s initiative promotes a dual role of women in the transport as service providers who have the flexibility to create a career built around their specific needs and as transport users who have the right to feel safe and comfortable when using the service.

By promoting innovations by women for women, the transport sector can be sure that it is more accurately addressing their needs.

- **Recognising women’s contributions to innovation.**

Looking at the growing biofuels sector, we can see women at the forefront of innovation. While we work to increase female participation across the transport sector, we should also spotlight the countless women who are already responsible for significant innovations and progress. Through conferences, networking events, and awards we can help ensure that female innovators and changemakers in our industry get the recognition they deserve, which can subsequently serve to empower future generations of female professionals to continue these missions.



- **Advancing gender equality requires balancing structural change and localised action.**

Creating equal opportunities for women requires recognising both their diversity and the systemic barriers they face. Women make up more than half of the global population, representing a significant market share and a vital force in the economy. Policymakers must take a two-pronged

approach to advancing gender equality: addressing universal challenges—such as gender bias, unequal pay, and underrepresentation—while also considering local contexts to ensure solutions are relevant and effective.

It is essential to balance efforts that tackle structural inequalities with local actions that meet specific needs. Some organisations may need to focus on increasing female participation in STEM, while others may need to improve parental support and access to affordable childcare. Recognising both the common obstacles and the varied experiences of women is key to driving meaningful and lasting progress towards gender equality.

For more information on the Gender Workstream of the ITF’s Corporate Partnership Board and a look at past International Women’s Day events you can visit our website: [Gender Workstream of the Corporate Partnership Board](#).



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