

Women and Organizations from Africa Represented at the Women in Emerging Aviation Technologies Awards

The awards ceremony was recently held in Washington D.C. in the United States

CHICAGO, IL, U.S.A., October 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Five women and one organisation in the African drone industry have been honoured at the Women in [Emerging Aviation Technologies Awards](#). The ceremony took place October 25th in the United States, at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

In its 7th year, the prestigious [Women and Drones](#) programme seeks to recognise women and companies who are collectively: driving change and leading the drone industry closer to gender parity; encouraging more girls and women to embrace UAS and pursue careers in the industry directly or by their example; and/or, are promoting and supporting women in leadership and key team roles.

Those honoured from Africa include Sonet Kock (South Africa) and Mercy Makau (Kenya), both selected as 2023 inductees for the Women and Drones Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame recognises highly experienced and accomplished professionals and businesswomen in the UAS and AAM industry and selects inductees from around the world. Sonet Kock, is the Director of Drone Policy & Regulatory Development, Founder and Managing Director of AviComply (Pty) Ltd, a leading South African consulting firm specializing in Aviation Compliance Solutions. She is known for her expertise and extensive experience in Aviation Regulatory Compliance and has dedicated her efforts to ensuring quality and safety assurance for both crewed and uncrewed flight operations. Mercy Makau, President and Founder of the Young Aviator Club of Africa as



Emerging Aviation Technologies Awards Honorees



well as Chairperson of Drone Club Kenya, is considered a passionate change maker. She is deeply committed to empowering youth and promoting gender equity in Africa's aviation and aerospace industry.

This year's individual honourees from Africa for the Women and Drones Women to Watch Awards included Kim James (South Africa) and Dr Debbie Jewitt (South Africa). The Women to Watch Awards acknowledge those who are driving change and leading the way toward greater female participation in the drone industry. Recipients are recognised for their leadership, research, teaching, or advocacy. Kim James is Director at UAV Aerial Works, which specializes in the UAS surveillance industry, safeguarding people, and high value assets. Dr. Debbie Jewitt (South Africa) is a Conservation Scientist for the provincial conservation agency KZN Wildlife. She uses drones to identify and mitigate threats to the ecosystem by collecting important biodiversity data in more efficient and effective ways.

The recipient of the inaugural Humanitarian Aid and Social Impact Award was Queen Ndlovu (South Africa). This award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the community and advancing the drone industry and promoting its benefits to society. Queen Ndlovu has been instrumental in introducing STEM/ aviation via drones and raising awareness of the positive impact of drones. Her efforts have helped to foster public trust and acceptance of drones across stakeholders and communities.

A final award was given to UNICEF's Malawi based organisation, the African Drone and Data Academy, which was the recipient of a special '2023 Impact Award'. This award is presented to organisations making a significant contribution to the development of women in the African drone industry. The African Drone and Data Academy was selected for being instrumental in raising awareness of the positive impact of drones; helping to bridge technology gaps through training; for their efforts in fostering public trust; and promoting the acceptance and application of drones across the region.

The award was collected by Ms Nadi Albino, on behalf of the programme director, Dr Michael Scheibenreif (UNICEF).

Tamiko Sher, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the South African based African Institute for Entrepreneurship(AIfE) made the presentation to the attending recipients at the Awards Ceremony that was held at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Washington DC, USA, on 25 October 2023.

A special dedication was made to the late Kelebogile Molopyane, CEO of AB4IR (South Africa). Ms. Molopyane, who passed away September 2023, was a highly respected businesswoman, passionate advocate, coach and mentor in the technology industry in South Africa and was instrumental in bringing technology to South African youth and communities. She was also a strong supporter of Women and Drones Africa, the African chapter for Women and Drones.

For more information about Women and Drones, the Women and Drones Annual Awards and the Inductees/Honourees available visit: www.womenanddrones.com.

About the Emerging Aviation Technologies Awards

Since 2017 Women and Drones has recognized the trailblazers, innovators, mentors, and business leaders who are making significant contributions to the UAS/AAM industry. Each year the company runs a global search for the women and organizations who are inspiring innovations and solutions, positively shaping the public perceptions of UAS/AAM technology, empowering more women to enter the industry as well as advocating for more inclusive practices in STEM and aviation.

About the African Institute for Entrepreneurship

AlfE is a non-profit research organisation established in 2021 which focuses on exploring the entrepreneurial opportunities brought by new industries and technology. In just two years, AlfE has gained a reputation for its thought leadership and ground-breaking publications.

AlfE also co-published, together with SAIS and 10 drone and aviation experts, an influential paper on Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) in 2022, showcasing expertise in deeply exploring technological industries. The NGO has actively contributed to the advancement of dronetech, fintech and health tech sectors. These publications and their insights have successfully introduced entrepreneurs to emerging technologies by highlighting the vast opportunities available and assisted the entrepreneurship ecosystem with valuable insights.

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