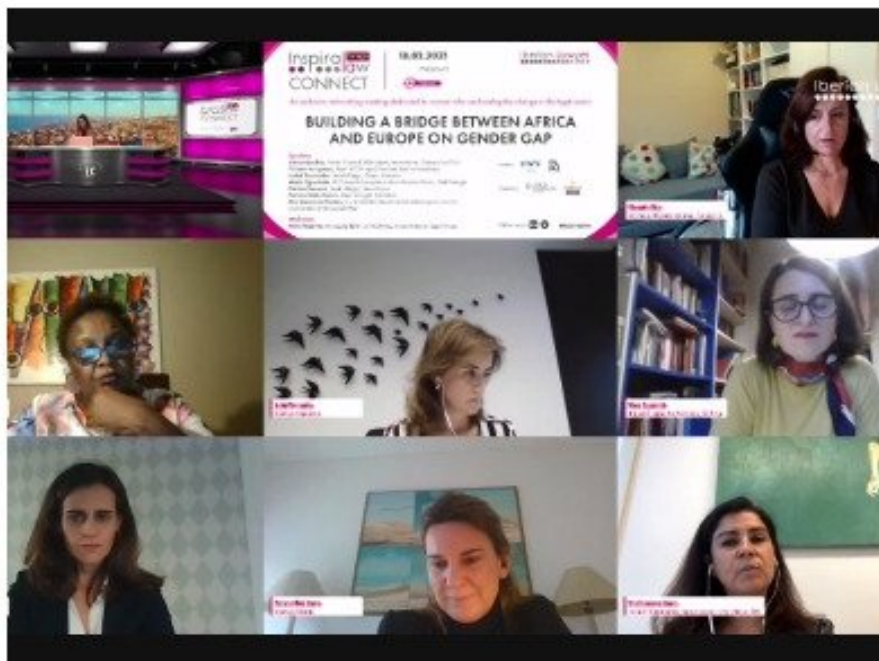
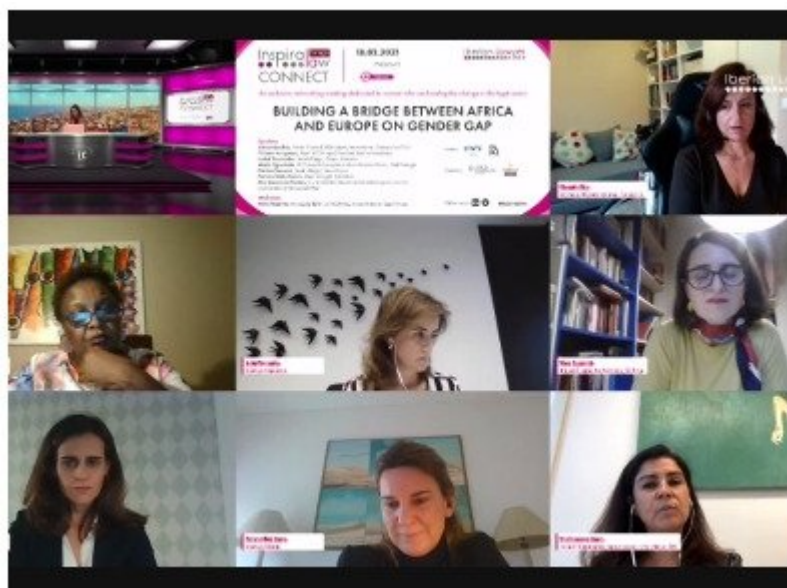


IBERIAN LAWYER HOSTS ITS FIRST EDITION OF INSPIRALAW CONNECT

Posted on 19/02/2021

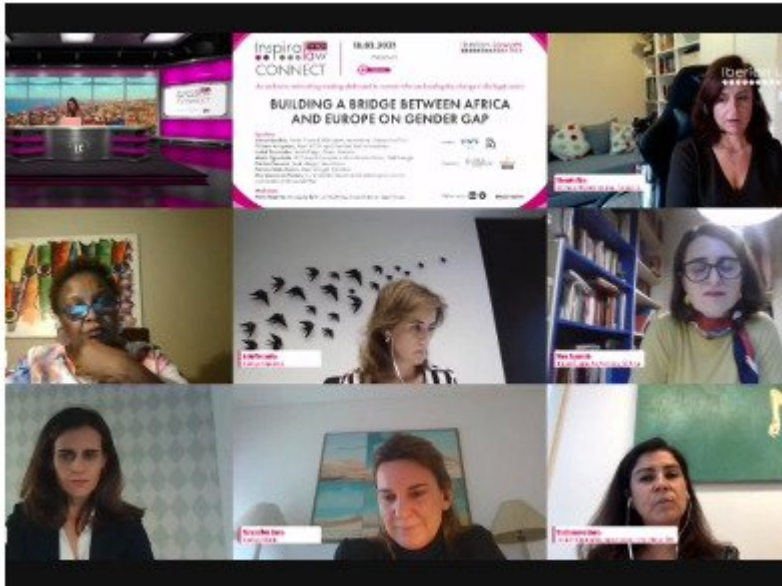


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The event was held fully online and counted with the participation of prestigious in-house and

law firm practitioners from Portugal and Mozambique



Iberian Lawyer hosted its [first edition of InspiraLaw](#) Connect that is part of the full InspiraLaw initiative. The InspiraLaw initiative is made up of two main events: InspiraLaw Connect, the networking roundtables dedicated to women who are leading change in the sector, and InspiraLaw celebration night, the gala event dedicated to the top 50 women from Spain and Portugal whose work inspires others while promoting the role of women in the legal sector and in our society.

The event was presented by LC Publishing Group managing director Aldo Scaringella, moderated by managing editor Ilaria Iaquinta and in partnership with the law firms CMS Portugal and PLMJ. It also counted on the support of Portugal's Católica | Faculdade de Direito (Escola de Lisboa) and Spain's Universidad Pontificia Comillas.

The audience in attendance on-line and the following speakers were instrumental in ensuring a vibrant debate and discussion on the gender gap in law and business, as well as the differences between Europe and Africa:

- Alexandra Reis, senior counsel, Philip Morris International - Tabaqueira
- Cristina Hunguana, head of CIB Legal, Standard Bank Group Mozambique
- Isabel Fernandes, head of Legal, Grupo Visabeira
- Maria Figueiredo, of Counsel of Lusophone Africa Practice Group, CMS Portugal
- Patrícia Afonso Fonseca, head of Legal, NOVO BANCO
- Patrícia Melo Gomes, head of Legal, Fidelidade
- Rita Samoreno Gomes, co-head of the Dispute Resolution practice area and member of the board, PLMJ

The highlights included Isabel Fernandes from Grupo Visabeira talking about her experience of living and working in Mozambique for 10 years and explaining that the gender gap still exists with regards to ownership of a mobile device and access to the internet but that the University she taught at in Maputo, was full of legal talent, which she subsequently hired from when working at PWC Mozambique.

Patricia Melo Gomes from Fidelidade added that men needed to be brought into the discussion as they are our fathers, brothers and managers and that according to the Global Gender Gap Report published in 2020 by the World Economic Forum, which projects current trends into the future, the overall gender gap will take 54 years to close in Western Europe and 95 years in Africa.

Maria Figueiredo from CMS injected a lot of positivity into the discussion by sharing her own personal story from working in Angola. She said that during the last five years, all the GCs she had worked with at Energy companies that were largely dominated by men, today more than 50% of these positions are occupied by Angolan women. Maria added that the formal and informal networks that these women had created were instrumental in supporting each other.

Rita Gomes from PLMJ gave her perspective on the importance of talent management and how to

balance this with gender equality policies. She said that the firm had a zero-tolerance gender discrimination policy and that there had been an increase from 19 to 30% of female partners at the firm in recent times.

Alexandra Reis from Philip Morris spoke about diversity needing to come from within the organisation and that the company was the first to receive the Equal Salary Foundation Seal in Portugal which ensures equal pay to male and female employees for the same responsibility. Alexandra went on to say that Philip Morris was building a standard KPI for external counsel to ensure that law firms they work with are making efforts and progress with regards to gender balance.

Patricia Fonseca from Novo Banco stressed that she was unsure if banking was more progressive than the legal sector with regards to gender equality but that since a 2013 directive was established at the bank to set targets on the representation of women at board level, there had been progress.

Finally, Cristina Hunguana from Standard Bank Group Mozambique spoke about the different challenges in Africa and the importance and influence of the law. Cristina said that the day to day of society is impacted by the kind of laws in place and gender law is no different. She added that she has witnessed good examples of law firms and banks with strong diversity policies.

InspiraLAW is the initiative promoted by Iberian Lawyer with the purpose of recognising the important work carried out by women from the legal field (both private practice and in-house lawyers) in Spain and Portugal.