

UFI General Assembly wraps up a transitional year for the industry, highlights progress on key issues

- UFI's General Assembly has reviewed a year of activity, highlighting advocacy efforts, events, research, and education
- UFI membership numbers rising strongly
- Post pandemic industry recovery faced additional challenges from war in Europe to global inflation

Paris, 14 November 2022: Representatives from UFI member companies from around the world met in Muscat (Sultanate of Oman) today to review UFI's activities throughout 2022 and to confirm plans for the year ahead.

The 2022 UFI General Assembly took place before the UFI Global Congress. At the end of a year defined by both the post-pandemic industry recovery and new global challenges, the Congress is welcoming hundreds of participants from around 50 countries and regions.

Chaired by UFI's 2022 President, Monica Lee Müller, the General Assembly reviewed and previewed the association's initiatives to support UFI's members - more than 800 strong, and across 86 countries. Many new members are joining the Global Congress for the first time, as 70 companies from around the world have signed up as UFI members in the past twelve months.

Monica Lee-Müller, UFI's 2022 President, summarised the year as follows: "Throughout the last 12 months, so much has happened that deserves a mention."

Lee-Müller continued: "As a global association, we need full participation by talented, committed women, and men, from different cultures and backgrounds, to drive our industry forward. Personally, I think there is work to be done. But I can see changes coming: If you look at the demographics of participants in this year's Exhibition Management School, more than half of the participants were women. Among the six winners of this year's Next Generation Leadership Grant, four are women, and the six come from a diverse geographical mix: Asia, Africa, Central America, Europe and the US. These talented young people with high potential will one day lead our industry upward and forward."

Lee-Müller emphasized: "On sustainability, the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative is definitely our signature achievement in the past year. Over 400 companies have pledged, spanning 55 countries and regions and all spectrums of the industry. A tremendous amount of work has been done since its launch at COP26. I owe it to members of the Operational Group who have selflessly shared their expertise, experience and wholehearted commitment."

Lee-Müller concluded: "Our spirit of collaboration goes way beyond our own industry. I am exceedingly impressed by our members' humanitarian actions. When the conflict in Europe broke out, I heard news about our member venues being converted to shelters for displaced people, and supplies and volunteer services flooding in from other members. I heard about the six truckloads of emergency supplies brought from a member in Italy to the European Conference in Poznan. I heard about the enthusiastic donation drive that raised funds for the needy. I am so proud of what our community has done, and I sincerely hope the conflict and the suffering will come to an end in no time and that peace will prevail again."

Summarising UFI's activities for 2022, **Kai Hattendorf**, CEO and Managing Director of UFI says: "From post-pandemic recovery to refugee support and war in Europe, and from sustainability challenges to the return of inflation rates not seen in a generation – 2022 has it all. What makes UFI so strong in times like this is that many UFI members have encountered one or more of these challenges before, and they are happy to share their learnings and strategies with each other. As the UFI team, we remain committed that all resources we provide are there to help our members navigate these challenges successfully. With this, we are well positioned for whatever we will encounter in 2023, and beyond."

Throughout the year, UFI's work focused on industry reopening and recovery, against a challenging backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, fluctuating economic conditions around the world, and ongoing pandemic closures, especially in China.

UFI's main activities in the past year included:

Advocacy

UFI's engagement around industry advocacy is growing significantly – in line with the fact that the association is being seen and recognized as the global representative of the exhibitions segment of the events industry. Two examples: UFI has recently become a registered Liaison Organisation with ISO, and is involved in projects with the OECD.

As a founding member of the "Net Zero Carbon Events" initiative hosted by JMIC, UFI has been running the project office for the initial twelve months. At COP26 in Glasgow, UK, the initiative presented the industry's net zero carbon events pledge in a special session. Recently, in Sharm el-Sheikh at COP27, the initiative presented the Roadmap to implementation.

Through the European Exhibition Industry Alliance (EEIA) in Brussels and the Exhibitions & Conferences Alliance (ECA) in Washington, DC, UFI has been driving and supporting ongoing advocacy work around post-pandemic reopening conditions and support.

UFI continues to operate and update a designated COVID19 web presence at www.ufi.org/coronavirus, and provides regular updates on the reopening of markets around the world (UFI Market Tracker), as well as other relevant information. As pandemic pressures diminished, this work has been scaled down.

Research

UFI delivers regular research insights on global, regional, and topical themes, most of them widely considered as global industry benchmarks, and many are made available to the industry at large. A selection of key releases in recent months include:

- A white paper titled, "The Event Organiser's Perspective on Data Ownership". This paper shares critical areas that must be considered for organiser and supplier data relationships.
- A new edition of the "Global Recovery Insights" report, by UFI & Explori, tracked the customer response to the pandemic based on surveying 9,000+ exhibitors and visitors globally. The project was supported by SISO.
- An entirely updated "UFI World Map of Venues". The report provides a global overview of exhibition venue capacity, and 21 market profiles. The report lists the largest venues for all 21 markets whose total capacity exceeds 300,000 sqm of gross indoor exhibition space.
- The 29th edition of the "UFI Global Barometer" report. Conducted in collaboration with 19 UFI association members, this edition continues to track the pandemic's impact on our industry, and focuses in large part on the ongoing recovery and 2023 outlook, as well as the evolution of digitization of the industry.

- An update on “The Global Economic Impact of Exhibitions”. The calculations now include final 2019 numbers.
- A report called “FINDING THE FUTURE, TOGETHER – Towards a more sustainable B2B trade show industry in the U.S. and Canada”. This research set out to evaluate the most material impacts on the environment from the operations of the B2B trade show industry. UFI is one of 14 partners who collaborated on this project.

UFI Events & Communities

The focus of UFI events has shifted back to in person, face-to-face formats wherever possible. “UFIconnects” webinars and other digital formats are being used as a complementary type of event.

The Global CEO Summit (GCS) took place 22-24 June, 2022, in Hamburg, Germany, rescheduled from its original date due to COVID.

The travel restrictions across the region due to the pandemic and the omicron outbreaks have made it impossible to hold a regular Asia-Pacific Conference in 2022. Instead, together with members across the region, the “UFI Asia Pacific Week” took place, which has seen more than a dozen local and national events and meet-ups for the UFI members in the region.

A group of UFI members joined a specially arranged UFI delegation visit to “Expo 2020 Dubai” in early March. In addition, a one-day “Africa Exhibition Industry Outlook” conference took place on 13 September, 2022, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The European Conference took place from 4-6 May, 2022, in Poznan, Poland, and the LatAm Conference took place from 11-13 May, 2022, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Last but not least, this year saw the inaugural edition of the Asia CEO Summit & Joint Leadership Summit - a collaboration between AEO (UK), SACEOS (Singapore), SISO (US), and UFI, which took place from 5-7 October, 2022, in Singapore.

In addition, UFI is a partner and shareholder of the “Exhibition Think Tank Club” – a global community platform for industry professionals. Through the partnership, staff from UFI member companies have free access to the platform, which has grown to be a vibrant, 1,000-member strong industry community.

Education

UFI’s “UFI Certified Professional” (UCP) designation, launched in the previous year, continues to evolve. Since its launch, UFI has awarded 26 industry professionals with the global designation, with more than 100 additional colleagues in the process. Six editions of the “Exhibition Management School”, have taken place since the launch of the new programme.

The “Next Generation Leadership Grant” programme is back again. Six winners have been selected, and they are presenting their findings at the UFI Global Congress in Oman. This year, the focus of the NGL project is the development of a talent narrative for the exhibition industry, a topic of critical importance to the future of our sector.

Global Exhibitions Day 2022

Global Exhibitions Day took place on 1st June for the 7th time. The 2022 GED campaign focused on the irreplaceable value of physical exhibitions and face-to-face business events in creating platforms for economic growth and recovery, as well as being the perfect occasion to network and meet new people.

The UFI team registered activities in 116 countries and regions, had an online reach of 782 million people, and a growing number of in-person events. In 2023, GED will take place on 7 June.

UFI's outlook for the year ahead

The months ahead will see UFI maintaining the focus on industry support and the evolution of industry business models, with advocacy, research and educational activities ongoing.

In-industry collaborations with global umbrella bodies like the Joint Meetings Industry Council and the "G3" partnership with fellow global trade associations AIPC and ICCA, UFI will help to drive industry wide core projects like the "Net Zero Carbon Events" initiative.

UFI's Global CEO Summit will kick off the 2023 events roster, taking place on-site in Lisbon (Portugal) from 1-3 February 2023.

In 2023, the UFI Global Congress will take place in Las Vegas, USA, from 1-4 November, hosted by the Las Vegas Conventions and Visitors Authority (LVCVA). For 2024, UFI's Board of Directors has selected Cologne, Germany, as the destination for the UFI Global Congress.

Michael Duck (EVP – Commercial Development, Informa Markets, and EVP – Commercial Development, Group at Informa Group) is UFI's next President, taking up office at the end of the Global Congress in Muscat. He is joined in UFI's new presidential leadership trio by **Geoff Dickinson** (CEO, dmg Events) as Incoming President, and **Monica Lee-Müller** (Managing Director of Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited (HML), Hong Kong) as Outgoing President.

UFI is grateful to all its members, partners and sponsors, notably the Diamond Sponsors: Freeman, Qatar Tourism Authority, and TCEB.

Attachments:

- [Michael Duck's biography](#)
- [Michael Duck's photo](#)
- [Photo of UFI's Presidential Trio for 2022-23](#)

About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the global trade association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 780 member organisations in 83 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

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