



LAURA TABER BARBOUR AIR SAFETY HUMANITARIAN AWARD SPEECH

November 7, 2022, ATLANTA - FSF 75th Anniversary

I am sorry. Unfortunately, I do not speak English. However, my nephew Diego Fraguas Vera will read my words.

I am from Gran Canaria, one of the eight Canary Islands located in the Atlantic Ocean, two thousand kilometers from Madrid, Spain's capital. For the people who are from there, the plane is essential in our lives.

On August twenty, two thousand and eight, a Spanair MD eighty-two crashed during takeoff at Barajas Airport in Madrid. One hundred fifty-four people died and eighteen survived. I lost my oldest niece when she was only twenty-nine. More than eighty people on that flight were from the Island of Gran Canaria.

I decided I did not want to live with spite and revenge. It was necessary to modify, repair, and establish rules based on respect and dignity for people who suffer an air disaster.

I became part of the Association of Affected by Flight JK5022 and since twelve years ago I am its President. I looked for people involved in similar disasters outside of Spain to share knowledge and actions. In 2015, I founded the Air Crash Victims' Families' Federation International of which I am also its President.

Nobody wants a plane crash to happen, but they do. Families have a responsibility to find out why their loved ones died. Correcting the errors that caused their deaths will prevent more innocents from dying of the same or similar causes.

I learned of the existence of ICAO Circular 285, which was an Assistance Plan for Air Accident Victims and their Families. Spain did not follow these indications and emergency management was undignified.

It was surprising to me to learn since the establishment of ICAO in 1944, no one cared about the victims until 2011 when the Circular was published. The objective was updating it, which was made between two thousand eleven and two thousand thirteen.

Milestones have been achieved since then. Such as the ICAO Policy on Assistance to Air Accident Victims and their Families, the inclusion of ACVFFI in the ICAO list of International Organizations invited to its events as the only representative of victims, establishing the February 20 as the International Day Commemorating Air Crash Victims and Their Families, for the first time of ICAO hold a Symposium on family assistance, among many other achievements raised in the last 12 years.

The distance between Atlanta and Gran Canaria is six thousand four hundred and eighty kilometers, the language of the heart does not understand distances. I have come to accept this award and to make the voice of the victims and their families visible at the Flight Safety Foundation's International Aviation Safety Summit.



It is recognition of a fight leading on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of people who died in air accidents because everything I have done and will do is in their memory, to achieve family assistance more humane and respectful.

I appeal to the Industry, Governments, Public and Private Organizations and to all those present so do not forget the Air Accident Victims' Families' Federation International. We are willing to speak with everybody, with loyalty and knowledge acquired from our tragedies. Because together, we all have to minimize the suffering of being involved in an air disaster, avoiding a failed management of the emergency.

The Federation does not have financial resources because our beneficiaries do not even know that we work for them. Our vision, VICTIMS HELPING VICTIMS, is easily explained: we work for future victims who do not suffer the pain that we suffered when we lost our loved ones.

I was moved to learn the story of Mrs. Laura Taber Barbour and her family's commitment to keeping her alive in everyone's hearts. For me, it is a great honor to receive this award, a feeling difficult to express. This Award represents the fight against oblivion and for air safety, the axis of my life during the last fourteen years. Extracting knowledge from air accidents and generously putting them at the service of society is safety for all aircraft users. Recognizing who dedicates their efforts to making the tragic face of air disasters visible to effectively contribute to humanitarian air safety.

I dedicate this Award to my deceased parents and brother Mario, my life partner, my six siblings, and the rest of my family. To the memory of Ana Vera, she was the origin of my engagement. In memory of Hans Ephraimson, an international pioneer of family assistance. To all the people who believe it is possible to have space for families and victims, with a more humane vision of aviation, in the complex world of global air transport.

Many thanks to the Laura Taber Barbour Foundation, its President Mrs. Nancy Graham, and the Governing Board for this Award, which further commits me to humanitarian civil aviation in all its facets. To the Flight Safety Foundation for being a host and to those who helped me so that I can be here with you today.

For each deceased victim since the first plane crash in the history of international civil aviation... WHO ARE SOMEWHERE... ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS.

THANKS, A LOT.