

President's Report 2020

Dear Members,

The current year is a difficult one. It is presenting us with novel experiences such as social distancing and lockdowns, and it is personally affecting almost everyone. Surveys show how Covid-19 is disrupting long-standing business practices and behaviours, with the acceleration of digitalization and working from home becoming the norm.

While we all face this unprecedented situation together, we have continued our work for WISTA, albeit with a lot of difficulties, especially in the first months. Many of our projects are collaborative projects and this characteristic, as well as their global nature, meant that we experienced some delays while we adjusted to a new way of working. However, we are committed as ever to follow through with our planning and our strategy for the year.

WISTA continues to be considered the go-to association for diversity matters in the shipping industry globally, and we are keeping a steady presence, establishing and maintaining collaborations and we are respected for our contribution to the industry and the quality of our membership.

Membership

In 2020 we have celebrated the establishment of three new NWAs, namely WISTA Angola, WISTA Guatemala and WISTA Romania. This brings our membership to 52 National WISTA Associations. We are close to the establishment of two more NWAs, WISTA Cameroon and WISTA Lebanon.

In terms of individual membership, the number has increased by about 500 members compared to 2019, and we currently have close to 3900 members.

Collaborations

MoU signed with the International Maritime Association

WISTA International and the IMO signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Technical Cooperation on 27 January 2020. The MoU aims to promote greater diversity and inclusion through enhanced cooperation activities in the maritime field and it outlines how WISTA will play an important role in helping IMO further its reach to women in the maritime industry.

Four key areas of activity are outlined in the MoU:

1. to look for opportunities to partner on maritime issues; which may include organizing workshops or speaking on panels at annual conferences or other events and will endeavour to make panels diverse.
2. to promote greater engagement for women in maritime, among members, the broader ocean business community, ocean stakeholders and the public.
3. to develop and participate in relevant training, workshops, among other business related to their areas of mutual interest;

4. to support the implementation of Assembly Resolution A.1147(31) on *Preserving the legacy of the World Maritime theme for 2019 and Achieving a Barrier-Free Working Environment for women in the maritime sector.*

In addition, WISTA and IMO agreed to ten areas of collaboration, including a joint IMO-WISTA International study to collect and analyse data on the number of women employed in the maritime sector. These areas of cooperation leverage WISTA International's observer status at IMO as an opportunity to promote industry leadership and cooperation on gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

MoU signed with the World Ocean Council

WISTA and the World Ocean Council signed an MOU to partner in advancing women's leadership in the ocean and coastal business community and the Sustainable Blue Economy. The purpose of the MOU is to provide a foundation and agreement for WISTA International and the WOC to develop and enhance the collaboration in bringing together women industry leaders in the marine and maritime industries to address ocean sustainable development, stewardship and science and promote business opportunities in support of responsible ocean economic activity. The MoU was signed on 20 November 2019 at the annual WOC Sustainable Ocean Summit 2019 in Paris.

UNCTAD

We have been working to establish collaboration with UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). We are still in the initial stages, although due to these discussions we have already been asked to contribute with names of female speakers for UNESCAP's (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) online events.

International Chamber of Shipping

The ICS has set up a Women in Maritime Panel, for the promotion of diversity in the maritime industry. The Panel is chaired by the undersigned and WISTA Int'l ExCo Member Sanjam Gupta is one of the panel members.

Projects

1. **IMO – WISTA Women in Maritime Survey:** The purpose of this survey is to obtain baseline data on the number of women in maritime and oceans fields and the positions they occupy. It is the first time that we undertake such a study, and we plan to conduct it every three years to support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We aim to have comparable data that will assist us in creating programs and proposing policies that will increase the participation of women in maritime, thereby creating a more diverse and inclusive environment in our sector. IMO and WISTA are working together with IHS Markit as our consultants and the survey is now in the testing phase.

2. *Gender Diversity Survey:* WISTA International, Anglo-Eastern Ship Management Limited, International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) have launched a public online survey to collect data for the next edition of Anglo Eastern's Gender Diversity Manual. The Manual was first published in 2018, and it aims to sensitize junior and senior officers to the challenges female seafarers may face. It addresses a wide range of challenges from sexual harassment and bullying to negative attitudes.
3. *Project on monitoring Covid-19 and how it affects women in maritime:* WISTA International is working on a project to monitor the effects of Covid-19 on women in maritime and more specifically to its members. We are working with Universidade Federal de Espirito Santo in Brazil, who are sponsoring us with 240 hours of researching work for this project.
4. *Focus Group in Africa:* Earlier in the year WISTA held a productive session with ideas and suggestions on how to strengthen co-operation and best practices amongst National WISTA Associations and Women In Maritime Associations in Africa. As a result, WISTA International and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) decided to further continue the discussion on strengthening co-operation and sharing best practices amongst IMO established WIMAs and WISTA International and its National WISTA Associations, (NWAs) and created a Focus Group for Africa. The Group will see how best to implement the IMO Assembly Resolution on "*Preserving the Legacy of the World Maritime Theme For 2019, and Achieving a Barrier-Free Working Environment for Women in the Maritime Sector.*"
5. *Speakers Bureau:* IMO and WISTA are working together on this project to establish a Speakers Bureau, which essentially will be an online database of women from around the world (and not necessarily only members of WISTA or WIMAs) that will upload their resumes so that conference organisers can reach them based on their location, expertise etc. In the meantime, and until this online speaker's database is built, WISTA is working with event organisers such as Nor-Shipping, to provide them with female speakers for their events. We have also provided speakers names to UNESCAP and other organisations or publications, such as ShipInsight where WISTA Members contributed with articles on technology in the industry.
6. *Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers Scholarships:* Five scholarships were given to WISTA members for the academic year 2020-2021. They are the following (by NWA alphabetical order):
 Isabella Mochel - WISTA BRAZIL
 Monica Potsou - WISTA CYPRUS
 Justyna Hapanionek - WISTA POLAND
 Agnes Olsson - WISTA SWEDEN
 Beth Kirkpatrick - WISTA USA
 Furthermore, for the academic year 2019-2020, WISTA Norway member Natalja Sunevica successfully completed her Foundation Diploma.

Meetings

Due to the Covid-19 situation, many meetings on the national, regional and international level had to be cancelled or postponed. Nevertheless, many meetings were rescheduled online and here is a summary of these meetings.

Online Presidents Meeting: An online presidents meeting was held, as it has become customary in the last three years, on 23 April 2020. The Strategy for the year was presented to the Presidents and issues of interest were discussed.

Mid-Term Meeting: The Mid-Term meeting was scheduled to be held in Ghana in May 2020. Due to the travel restrictions, it was decided to postpone the meeting to 2021. This decision was made in consultation with WISTA Ghana's President and Board, who also postponed their 10th Anniversary Conference that was to be held on 07 & 08 May 2020. The ExCo held its Mid-Term meeting for 2020, online.

Extraordinary General Meeting: An EGM of WISTA International was held on 31 August 2020. The purpose of the EGM was to decide on whether the term of the current Executive Committee Members should be extended for one year, due to the extraordinary circumstances imposed by COVID-19. With 35 votes in favour, 11 votes against, and one void, the resolution passed. The voting process was audited by an external auditor.

Annual General Meeting and Conference (Hamburg): Following weeks of consultation between WISTA Germany and WISTA International, it was decided that the AGM and Conference in Hamburg would be postponed to 2021, ensuring the health and safety of our Members and all participants. The new dates for the Conference are 12-15 October 2021. WISTA Brazil has graciously accepted to organise the AGM & Conference a year later, i.e. in 2022.

Furthermore, WISTA International has been asked to speak at several industry meetings like the European Shipping Week Flagship Conference organised by the European Shipowners' Association, the Crans Montana African Women's Forum, the African Union conference and the UNESCAP Regional Conversation Series.

Working Committees

NWAs were asked to submit names for participants in all the active committees, namely:

Human Resources Committee

Diversity Committee

Futures and Technology Committee

Furthermore, a new Committee was established, namely the Trade Committee. It is planned to announce a Ports Committee before the end of this year.

The ExCo Members responsible for these Committees will contact the new members and resume the operations of all Committees.

Awards

WISTA International was the winner for the 2019 CAREER4SEA - EUROPORT award Women in Shipping Award in November 2019 in Rotterdam. The award goes to an organization that has sparked, initiated, implemented or promoted the idea of gender equality towards advancing position of women in shipping.

Before closing this Annual Report, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the Executive Committee of WISTA International for their work and commitment under challenging circumstances. We are committed to the goals of WISTA and to continuing the work towards the benefit of this Association.

Thank you to everyone supporting the work of WISTA, the communications team and all the Committees, that work hard to fulfil our commitment to a more diverse and inclusive shipping industry.

A heartfelt thank you goes to all of you, our Members.

We are proud that in our membership, we have such a great number of women who are role models and can bring positive change. Women who I personally respect and admire. As a women's association with both female and male members, it is our mission to remind everyone that diversity and equality in the workplace are not only an ethical responsibility, but also imperative to successful businesses. WISTA is important because it attracts gender diversity to the maritime industry and that improves women professionals' position in shipping but also improves the bottom line for companies, countries, regions and the global shipping industry. In times like these, when the world is suffering, it has become even more evident, that we need all capable people at the table.

Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou
President
WISTA International

