



MG NEWS



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ARTÍCULO #1

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: VENEZUELAN WOMEN AND THE AQUATIC SECTOR. VISIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.

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**B**eing in the position of vice president of the Venezuelan Branch of the Ibero-American Institute of Maritime Law (IIDM) I received several invitations to celebrate International Women's Day, an opportunity in which I was able to make some conferences in the commemorative mark of this date. On each of those occasions I had the privilege of honoring the outstanding women of the maritime world of my country, to whom I have professed my respect and admiration.

I have told many times my promise to a beautiful and extraordinary maritime law professional, Dr. Sonia Acuña, to honor her outstanding career. I confess,

I never thought I would have the opportunity to remember her publicly and in a digital space like this, but being the editor of MG Newsletter, is a certain possibility and the perfect place to record all those women with whom I have shared memorable and glorious moments of my life.

Certainly, Dr. Sonia Acuña, who left an indelible mark on me, allowed me to dream of the possible. She taught me the courage to be, and the strength to fight. I still remember the last time we saw each other and swore to work in the Venezuelan Association of Maritime Law until we got to occupy a place in it. She left early, but there were other great women whom I want to remember and applaud today, I mean Dr. Olga Fuentes, Josefina Alcaide, Nelly Arcaya, Dora Briceño, Alida Marcano, Consuelo Bernal, Marina



Monte Negro, Eva Matute de Corrales and a few others who were rotated in the history of the Association as precursors. I would also like to mention, with special affection, Naval Engineer Maritza Avilan, an example of what is the empowerment and professionalism of a woman in our maritime universe. Her work at the time reminds us of what it was like to work on board a naval engineer, when there were no women on our ships. Today businesswoman and expert in the maritime commercial world becomes an example to follow and the reason to assume the challenges of the XXI century, which among other things implies, being or remaining with capacity and knowledge. Definitely, this maritime universe that at first was not designed for women, we have made it part of our lives in the course of time, and we are still working for many others to join this world. Likewise, I must highlight the trajectory of a medical professional, Dr. Maite Duque, president of the Venezuelan Society of Maritime Medicine, who has dedicated her life to working for the health of seafarers.

In 2020, the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was celebrated. For those who don't know, this is a progressive manifesto for women's equality. We should also mention that the United Nations organization has a programme to achieve equality for women in the world and this year will be developed under the theme "For an inclusive digital world: Innovation and technology for gender equality".

Over time and effectively, agendas have been programmed to achieve an action plan that manages to reduce and minimize the differences that still exist.

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to build up communities, companies and even countries. And this is not my authorship, it is the result of a study conducted by The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards.

It is proven that women's participation is related to economic growth and perhaps that is why we see more and more women in key and important jobs for the maritime industry. That is why again, I want to remember my colleagues Juana Méndez first naval registrar, Elizabeth Chandler, Judith Silva, Ana Mary Ramírez, Ivith Umaña, Patricia Martínez, Grecia Parra, Erika Chumaceiro, Cristina Mujica, Inés Tovar, Carolina Romero, Jacqueline de Man, Carla Hurtado, among others.

In my performance for teaching many others have stood out and continue to be a bastion of knowledge and dedication to the formation of new generations I refer to Mery Rosales, Emma Peraza, Yelitza Acevedo, Silvia Milles, Maria del Cielo Froilan, Patricia Martinez, Dorelys Macias, Nayiber Flores, among others.

What we have verified over time is that everything



is easier when our participation in activities, projects, actions and works within any sector is established. In short, we have proven that we put effort, intensity and a lot of love into what we do and want. We have a virtue, as millennials would say, we are multitasking and that is why we surely manage to reflect success in our work, in our homes and in any space in which we perform.

It is again an honor to write and to have the opportunity to be part of the commemoration of International Women's Day that MG NEWS has prepared for its readers, thus contributing to exalt the great women who have preceded me in this extraordinary navigation through seas of knowledge, work and maritime institutions. Moreover, emphasize that in this navigation, I have been fortunate to register the new generations of women who day by day show me that we have enough to trust that we will embrace the future, ensuring that the times will be of progress and well-being.

But being part of the international maritime institutions, I could not fail to mention on this occasion, great professionals who have been labeled in the history of the Ibero-American Institute of Maritime Law, exercising the Presidency of this institute, such as Dr. Katerina Vuskovic of Peru or its vice-presidents Dr. Nélide Angelotti of Argentina, Deysi Rincón from Colombia, Jessica Coindet from Honduras, Carmen Codes from Spain, Mónica Ageitos from Uruguay, Esther Mallach from Germany, Elizabeth Turnbull from the United Kingdom, Gabriela Vidal from Uruguay, Saleta Rosón from Spain, Dagniselys Toledano from

Cuba, with whom I shared during my four years as vice president for Venezuela.

It is important to emphasize that in this struggle for labor and social demands, women have not sought to be men. In the specific case, I think that being a woman is an adjective that defines me, that makes me unique and different. Therefore, I have often said that the world will be better when we begin to understand that we can all contribute without having to distinguish ourselves by gender. In diversity is the future, because together we are the key to success. I think we must focus on recording that we are able to look at the universe that is presented to us, from the place we have proposed to look at. Overall, this is about tracing or setting the routes that lead us to the achievement of the objectives.

31 years ago, the IMO began to work for women in the maritime world, I have been traveling through training and workspaces for 32 years, so I have been able to see the changes and I feel part of them. I was the first woman to assume the vice presidency for Venezuela of the Ibero-American Institute of Maritime Law, and in 2019 together with Dr. Patricia Martínez, we established ourselves as the first Venezuelan women to conquer the degree of full member of the International Maritime Committee.

At present, we can say that we have not met the job expectations we have, but we continue rowing to conquer them. Today when I walk into my class, I am pleased to see female officers fighting side by side with their peers of the opposite sex, and this is what



makes my world more enjoyable. Everything is learned, and today I welcome IMO's recognition of women's inclusion as a guarantee for the best results within the maritime sector. Indeed, there is a programme at IMO called Women in the Maritime Sector, whose theme is Training-Visibility-Recognition.

IMO wishes to "Achieve equal opportunities between the genders and empower all women and girls", this programme began in 1988 and remains a benchmark for the 2030 agenda.

We have recalled that in the past it has not been easy for a woman to enter a maritime training institute. However, a constitutional framework has been created to resize IMO policies and procedures, thus ensuring access to maritime training and employment opportunities for women in the maritime sector.

It is confirmed that women work harder and more successfully on issues that are sensitive, such as health, education and human rights, but now, we are conquering the seas successfully. In a way, we have learned as a minority.

We still have a commitment, that of reversing the statistics that indicate that women represent only 2% compared to 98% of seafarers that exist today. Historically, shipping has been dominated by men, but IMO has been making a sustained effort to assist the industry in its progress and development. Most importantly, she has worked tirelessly to ensure that women have a participation that meets the

expectations of the twenty-first century. It is important for IMO to involve women and that is why strategies have been developed to increase women's work at the ship-to-shore interface.

It is important to note that IMO supports the empowerment of women, i.e., believes in equal opportunities, considering preparation, education and training. This is what they are constantly working on in the training of women so that they can achieve their professional development in maritime and port administrations and maritime training institutes. Seeking thus, to collapse the glass ceiling that has been established in time.

To end and embrace the present, at the conference held by the International Maritime Committee in October 2022, in the hometown of Antwerp and with almost 400 delegates who joined the festive ceremonies of its 125 years, a brilliant woman assumed the first magistracy of this body, outstanding in professional attributes and exalted by her efforts and work in the maritime world. Her arrival confirms that paradigm shifts are taking place, Dr. Ann Fenech is a sample of the development and evolution we have experienced over time.

With these women I want to seal the commitment to continue this planet waving the flag of freedom, seas of opportunities and horizons that allow us to reach the port of great maritime development. I belong to a generation of equality and believe in an egalitarian future.







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