

# CHARTING A NEW COURSE:

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY,  
AND THE MARITIME DOMAIN



**OUR SECURE FUTURE**

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# **CHARTING A NEW COURSE: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY, AND THE MARITIME DOMAIN**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is a transformative policy mandate with a global constituency. It provides policymakers with the tools to end cycles of violent conflict, create more equitable peace processes, and promote gender equality on a global, national, and local scale. Passed in October 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) underscores women's agency, voice, and capacities as intrinsic to creating more effective international peace and security policies.

Since 2000, more than 80 countries have adopted Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans and other policies to robustly implement the WPS agenda. In 2017, the US Congress adopted the Women, Peace, and Security Act to incorporate the principle of gender equality into US foreign policy. The two main objectives of the WPS agenda are to 1) increase the representation of women in decision-making positions, and 2) to apply a gender perspective to matters of international peace and security.

Women are increasingly represented in higher positions internationally both in government institutions and in civil society. Similarly, women have been active in every aspect of the private sector, including in the maritime space. However, more needs to be done to increase women's participation in the maritime sector, from coastal welfare to the Blue Economy in order to reap the benefits of the WPS agenda. In addition, actors in the maritime domain rarely incorporate a gender perspective into their work because maritime issues have traditionally been considered gender neutral. And yet, two decades of experience on the ground and research show that when applied, the WPS agenda increases the effectiveness of programs, policies, and individual actors--male and female.

As the global agenda on Women, Peace and Security is increasingly implemented, the benefits of using a gender perspective and the transformational role of women as actors in a variety of issues is becoming more obvious. But the participation of women, and the use of a gender perspective in the maritime space remains relatively unexamined. This paper aims to address that gap, and provides a baseline examination of the intersection between the WPS agenda and the wider context of maritime security.

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### WHAT IS UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY?

In 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously passed the landmark resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 is the first formal recognition of the critical role women play in the effective resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding. It mandates attention to gender in all aspects of international peace and security decision-making. UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent related family of resolutions are now known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The agenda champions the meaningful participation of women in decision-making in all matters of international security and peace, including prevention, mitigation and resolution of violent conflict, and in non-traditional security threats such as preventing and mitigating violent extremism and creating adequate responses to climate change disasters. In the words of UN Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh, ret'd) "Gender equality between men and women is intrinsic to international security and peace."

## II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The intersection between the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) and the wider context of maritime security remains unexplored. This is due to the fact that women are underrepresented in the maritime domain. It is also partly due to the evolution of the Women, Peace and Security agenda itself. For the past several decades, the WPS community has been applying a gender perspective to a wide spectrum of security issues, both “soft” and “hard.” Maritime security is traditionally considered a “hard” security issue-set and has remained relatively untouched by the public conversation on gender equality and women’s participation in security decision-making. However, understanding the role of women as equal actors in addressing maritime security issues is critical to improving the effectiveness of maritime industry, governance mechanisms, the Blue Economy, and initiatives to address security threats.<sup>1</sup>

This report examines the connection between the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) with key issues within the maritime domain. In particular, the study provides a review of:

- women’s roles in the maritime space,
- women’s decision-making in maritime governance,
- women’s participation in a variety of issue-sets from the Blue Economy to food security, and
- women’s engagement in maritime protection and defense initiatives.

### Methodology

International datasets on military forces lack robust information on sex and gender. Because of this, information on women’s participation in the maritime sector is characterized by a shortage of statistics. This includes a lack of data on topics such as the number of both female seafarers and shore-based maritime staff. Due to the lack of gender-sensitive maritime datasources, this study employed a mixed-methodology to examine women’s participation and impacts in maritime spaces. An in-depth literature review, as well as individual interviews with 21 maritime leaders and experts was conducted May to August 2019. Interviewees included

both men and women from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. The group of experts include high-level international and national policymakers, and civil society representatives at the grassroots level. Their collective expertise includes the military (Army, Navy, Coast Guard); seafaring; international maritime law; national maritime administration; marine biology; marine environment protection; fisheries, the shipping industry, the Blue Economy and maritime education.

The interviews were tailored to individual maritime specializations, and were conducted as semi-structured discussions about the intersection of each contributor’s expertise with the WPS agenda. The interviews with experts focused on the strategic intersections of WPS and maritime issues, and gender-sensitive entry points in the maritime space.

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### Summary of Key Findings

1. **EVERY INTERVIEWEE NOTED THAT THEY APPLIED A GENDER PERSPECTIVE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR WORK AND PLANNING**, often initially because of their personal interest and commitment. However, only those from a military background explicitly referenced the WPS agenda in the description of their work.
2. The interviewees were unanimous that **PEACE IS BEING REDEFINED ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE** and is no longer categorized as just the absence of war. In redefining the concept of peace it is time to broaden the understanding of security, and of maritime security in particular.
3. **THE ROLE OF LEADERS AND POLITICAL WILL AT THE TOP IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS** of integrating a gender perspective and women into the maritime space.



Left: Khadra Abdi Ahmed, Director of Legal Affairs, Somali Maritime Administration. Right: Crew working for Chelsea Logistics, Philippines.  
Photos: International Maritime Organization.

4. A primary point of mutual interest to both the Women, Peace and Security community and actors in the maritime domain is **AMPLIFYING THE FOCUS ON WOMEN'S INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING ROLES**. Experience from the field shows that this leads to the increased protection and promotion of human rights.
5. A review of literature, policies, and programs in the maritime space shows that **GENDER ANALYSIS IS UNDEREMPLOYED**. However, when a gender perspective is applied to a variety of maritime issues, such as in the case examples of the Philippines, Somalia, and Kenya, it shows positive improvements in the outcomes of poverty reduction programs and an increase in food security in maritime-related initiatives.
6. Multiple stakeholders across government institutions, private industry, and civil society can **COLLABORATE TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR MARITIME SECURITY**. Every stakeholder that touches the maritime arena has specific actions that they can take to advance gender equality and increase stability.
7. One of the **BEST PRACTICES EMPLOYED IN THE MARITIME SPACE TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IS FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS TO COLLABORATE** across sectors. Specific practices identified include the following:
  - a. Connecting Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) to government initiatives to promote the recruitment of women into the maritime space improves recruitment practices, training, and retention of women.
  - b. Connecting private sector/private industry actors to government on policy implementation to promote gender equality improves the implementation of human rights and security policies in the maritime space.
  - c. Connecting non-governmental organizations to government programs and policies on gender-sensitive disaster assistance, climate change approaches, and anti-trafficking programs in coastal areas can increase overall stability and protection for local populations.

### III. SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE OF HOW WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE MARITIME SPACE

Although global recognition of the stabilizing benefits of gender equality has been on the rise, until recently, the maritime space has remained gender-blind. The maritime community has overlooked the significant roles women can and do play.

Collectively, interviews that were conducted for this study identified three important contributions of the role of women in maritime security: 1) as agents for change, 2) as key partners with existing governance structures, and 3) as mitigators of risk in the prevention of social unrest and instability.

Gender equality is relevant not only on land but also offshore. In developing regions of the world women are increasingly present at sea. In most fishing communities, for example, women play important roles such as by mending nets, building boats, gathering shellfish, and marketing goods, and they make valuable contributions to the fishing industry. Women are involved as governors, operators of artisanal businesses, military peacemakers, officers of the Coast Guards and navies, marine biologists, and maritime law specialists. At the community level, they are custodians of the structures that maintain community cohesion. They act as peacemakers across communities, serving to defuse emerging points of conflict. They also influence the behavior of men and youths--both positively and negatively--within their families and communities.

*Interviewees identified three important roles of women in maritime security: as agents for change, as key partners with existing governance structures, and as mitigators of risk in the prevention of social unrest and instability.*

As is the case in other arenas, stakeholders in the maritime space tend to work in silos and stay exclusively in their respective lanes. Individuals and organizations from shipping, insurance, governments, navies and coast

guards, civil society organizations, and women's networks all have a vested interest in sharing information and lessons learned, yet currently there is little observable collaboration across these stakeholder lines. Including and empowering individual women as well as the networks they have created in programming and policy considerations can help to solve this. At the individual level, women contribute in fishing communities, navies, and boardrooms. They shape policy and procedure and help to improve the culture on board ships. Women's professional networks, and women's civil society organizations facilitate dialogue and information sharing, identify opportunities and challenges, and advise on how best to proceed.

Rather than identify areas where women and women's networks might play a role, interviewees argued it is more important to acknowledge the impact women already have by institutionalizing and reinforcing their participation within existing frameworks.

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#### Increasing Women's Participation and Visibility in the Maritime Space

The UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO) continues to be a leader in terms of promoting women's participation across the maritime domain. At the time of the formation of IMO's gender program in 1988, few maritime training institutes would accept female trainees. Today, this trend has largely reversed. This is thanks to initiatives like IMO's gender-specific fellowships, scholarships for women to attend the World Maritime University in Sweden, and quotas to ensure a gender-equal student body at the International Maritime Law Institute.<sup>2</sup> Other countries have made similar commitments domestically; most recently, the Maritime Training Trust—a joint partnership of the Indian government and a local shipping company—made scholarships of ₹1,00,000 (approximately USD

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO	
ACTIONS	THOSE WHO WORK IN THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY
	RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION
Actively recruit and retain female merchant marine officers	Lack of access to human capital and trained officers to crew their vessels
Establish safe contact persons	Lack of competitiveness in a crowded market
Expand awareness of the WPS agenda by establishing formal channels of communication with the International Chamber of Shipping and with regional networks for ports and harbors	
SEAFARERS	
ACTIONS	SEAFARERS
	RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION
Provide training berths for women cadets to complete mandatory sea time	Outsourcing of skilled labor
Prioritize protection of female seafarers from harassment and bullying	Reduced Coast Guard and patrol capabilities

\$1,400) per female trainee available during the 2019–2020 school year.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to a strong emphasis on increasing women’s access to training, education, and mentoring, the international community, with IMO at the helm, has creatively leveraged the power of social media campaigns to raise the visibility of the number of roles women already play. On Instagram, profiles like @SheFarers, @women.in.maritime, @womenoffshore, and @womensailors, among others, focus on highlighting women’s successes and advocating for gender equality both on- and offshore. Individuals can also join the conversation and share their own experiences by using hashtags like #iamonboard, #womeninmaritime, #womenoffshore, #WomenInFisheries, #instashipping, and #bridgegap. It should also be noted that these accounts are doing much more than simply sharing their insights out into a void. The growing number of these accounts and their followers demonstrates an increase in the attention paid to women’s participation in the maritime space.

IMO was the original champion and leader of women in maritime, and the organization only further solidified its status as a leader on this issue with the announcement of the theme for the 2019 World Maritime Day: “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community.” IMO released its own video for the occasion, and states and companies around the world released statements and pledged their own support for the advancement of gender equality in the maritime space.

To preserve all of the momentum gained over the course of 2019, in December, member states of the IMO adopted a 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.” In addition to highlighting testimony on some of the obstacles to women’s entry into this field, the resolution urges governments, maritime administrations, and the industry to strive for a barrier-free environment for women.<sup>4</sup>

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO	
ACTIONS	MARITIME EDUCATORS
	RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION
Ensure equal access for women and men to maritime training institutions	Lack of human capital for seafaring, Navies, Coast Guards
Incorporate WPS into curricula	

Private industry has engaged in producing a wide range of articles, videos, and independent campaigns all designed to raise awareness of women's participation in the maritime space. For example, Svitzer Australia, the largest employer of Australian seafarers, released a video highlighting the experiences of their female employees.<sup>5</sup> The World Maritime University, on the heels of its conference on Empowering Women in the Maritime Community, also announced the launch of a new project to explore gender equality and women's empowerment in the conduct and delivery of scientific research, in particular in relation to fisheries, oceanography, hydrography, and climate change.<sup>6</sup> Another industry campaign carried out by Celebrity Cruises on International Women's Day 2020, touted the first ever all-female bridge and officer team (with Captain Kate McCue at the helm), on the flagship, *Celebrity Edge*.<sup>7</sup>

While efforts to raise awareness of women's participation in the maritime industry are important, there may be a danger of slipping into pink-washing campaigns that deliver rousing PR on women's rights, but do not substantively address the barriers to women's participation in the maritime sector. Working with women's groups to meaningfully address social, economic, and institutional barriers is key to address pink-washing, and to advance gender equality in maritime spaces.

## Facilitating Collaboration and Dialogue through Women's Maritime Associations and Networks

Over the last few decades, as the participation and visibility of women in the maritime space has grown, various women's maritime associations have emerged to foster collaboration and identify new and innovative solutions to the challenges women still face. As new advocates for gender equality are brought into the fold, the international community has learned firsthand the value and effectiveness of networks at the local, national, and international levels.

Two types of networks—the Women's International Shipping and Trading Associations (WISTAs) and Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs), as well as their affiliate networks—have been particularly active and effective in empowering women in the maritime community. Although WISTAs and WIMAs are rooted in industry and government, they function quite similarly to other more traditional civil society organizations by reaching across silos, facilitating the sharing of information and lessons learned, and holding governments' and the international community's collective feet to the fire.

### *Women's International Shipping and Trading Association*

Formed in 1974, the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA International) is an international networking organization whose mission is to attract and support women at the management level in the maritime, trading, and logistics sectors, thereby connecting over 4,000 female executives and decision-makers around the world.

Specifically, WISTA works to minimize the existing gender leadership gap in the maritime, trading, and logistics sectors; build a community among its members, facilitating the exchange of contacts, information, and experiences; promote the creation of business relationships among its members; facilitate the professional development of its members; and liaise with other related institutions and organizations worldwide.

More than 50 countries also support a National WISTA Association (NWA), each of which in turn is a member

of and guided by WISTA International. NWAs provide in-country and regional networking, business and skill-building opportunities, and corporate visibility, and they also facilitate relationships within the industry. On a global scale, WISTA members have access to a diverse network of executives in the shipping and trading field on whom they can call for referrals, connections, advice, and business collaborations. Similar to the other campaigns mentioned above, WISTA International is actively engaged on social media, with an Instagram account that is “hosted” by a different member each week. Social media platforms are particularly effective at recruiting women and maintaining their professional maritime networks.

### *Women in Maritime Associations*

The first WIMA was established in Fiji in 2005, based on the need for formal regional linkages between women managers in the maritime and port sectors, to support maritime gender programs and provide a permanent channel for the exchange of information among women employed at the management level of the maritime sector. These associations now provide a springboard for developing regional training opportunities to match the specific needs and requirements of women, taking into account the socio-cultural elements that may determine access to training and career paths.

The main objectives of these regional associations are to enhance national and regional recognition of the role of women as a resource for the maritime industry; strengthen cooperation networks among women in the port and maritime sectors of the region or subregion; build capacity at the national and regional levels; and increase employment opportunities for women at the higher management levels of the port and maritime sectors.

Membership of WIMAs is drawn primarily from the civil service, including the Ministry of Transport or the Ministry of the Environment, with limited if any budgetary support from government sources. This contrasts with the WISTA membership, which, by virtue of including commercial and trade entities, has greater access to financial support in the implementation of WISTA’s goals. Cooperation between WIMAs and national WISTA Chapters varies from country to country, although greater efforts are being made to facilitate synergies between these associations. For a general overview of WIMAs as of 2020, please see annex.

### *Intergovernmental and International Nongovernmental Organizations*

Aside from the above groups of women-specific maritime associations, international NGOs have also increasingly focused on supporting women’s roles and participation in the maritime space. As with the women’s organizations identified above, this list of NGOs and IGOs is certainly not exhaustive but rather provides some excellent examples of the benefits that can unfold as a result of increased collaboration and dialogue.

For example, the Council of Marine Professional Associates (COMPASS) is an Association, based in Canada, of private-sector businesses and public-sector organizations involved in transportation. In recognizing the need for gender equality, COMPASS has developed a Gender Equity Strategy and published a series of supplementary papers on issues ranging from participation to recruitment and retention best practices. **In doing so, COMPASS initiated collaboration with shipping companies, which illuminated new ways to support women seafarers and their employers throughout their job life cycle.<sup>8</sup>**

Other NGOs, such as the Secure Fisheries program of One Earth Future Foundation, have also begun to mainstream gender in their programmatic work, to the benefit of men as well as women. At the Somalia Fisheries Forum 2019, Secure Fisheries convened fisheries stakeholders to explore opportunities to encourage the success of small-scale fisheries, which included a conversation on the possibility of implementing cooperative management (co-management). This style of fisheries management “has been used successfully in fishing communities around the world to involve community members in local management of their resources.”<sup>9</sup> **This form of co-management can provide a feedback loop that relays challenges and opportunities between government policy decision-makers and the men and women working in the fishing industry.** Since Secure Fisheries is mainstreaming gender into its programmatic work, this feedback loop will amplify insights provided by Somali women fishers, thereby increasing their participation and visibility and transforming fisheries best practices from the ground up.

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)—another powerful example of how NGOs can meaningfully support their stakeholders—devotes an entire section of

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING SUCCESS: LESSONS FROM JAMAICA

There are explicit interconnections between Women, Peace and Security, and the maritime domain in Jamaica, resulting in part from the decision, taken in the 1970s by Chief of Defense Staff Rear Admiral Peter Brady, to admit women to the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF). This facilitated the empowerment of women in the JDF, which now encompasses women officers at every level of command. This case demonstrates that the role of the top leader is key: it is only when the instructions come from the top of command structures that change becomes embedded within institutions.

Epitomizing this success is Antonette Wemyss-Gorman, former Commanding Officer of the JDF Coast Guard, who in February 2019 became the first woman to be appointed to rank of Commodore in the JDF. Key to this process of integration was the overarching government support for gender mainstreaming and inclusion. The success is tangible, with a strong culture of women in decision-making roles supported by a policy of equal access to education: the enrollment of women in higher education, a key indicator, is now at a ratio of 3:1.

One interviewee for this study emphasized the importance of recognizing the cadre of qualified women already available as maritime security resources: “It is not a case of doing women a favor.” The success of Cdre. Wemyss-Gorman should be a strong motivator for other women in the Caribbean and other regions to join the military.

The gender-maritime-security interface is reinforced through the Women in Maritime Caribbean (WiMAC) Association, whose establishment in 2015 was actively facilitated by the Director General of the Jamaica Maritime Authority (MAJ), Rear Admiral Peter Brady. The deputy Director General of the MAJ, Claudia Grant, also elected in September 2018 as chair of the Sub Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III), served as the first Coordinator of WiMAC, while Cdre. Wemyss-Gorman was a founding member of the network.

In this case, as in many, it is a high-ranking male official with power and influence who provided the enabling environment. One interviewee stated that while the process needs an authority figure for the initial launch of an entity such as WiMAC, support at the middle rank level is essential to make the network sustainable. According to this interviewee, the “buy-in of the people is essential,” and “often it is quite a job to persuade them.”

One interviewee reflected that UNSCR 1325 should be added as a component to all the work programs across the gender networks, including that of the Jamaica Gender Bureau,<sup>46</sup> which is actively seeking the introduction of gender certification to encourage the dissemination of policies that recognize and acknowledge gender issues.

its work to supporting women at sea. Its work includes calling on the International Labour Organization (ILO), employers, and trade unions to prioritize issues that have been identified as vital to women seafarers' success, in addition to providing women seafarers with information about their rights under the umbrella of various ILO conventions. **The ILO has also championed the importance of gender equality in this space, as seen in February 2019 when, at a sectoral meeting on “Recruitment and Retention of Seafarers and the Promotion and Opportunities for Women Seafarers,” the organization adopted specific measures to promote opportunities for women seafarers.**

## Challenges to Women's Participation in the Maritime Space

Despite a number of successes in boosting women's participation and visibility, and the effectiveness of women's organizations and NGOs in facilitating important and timely conversations, women still face a range of barriers that prevent them from fully and meaningfully participating in the maritime space. In the seafaring profession in particular, women remain underrepresented, comprising only 2 percent of serving seafarers.<sup>10</sup>

## *Safety and Security*

Transport by ship accounts for over 90 percent of world trade, in terms of tonnage, and the movement of millions of passengers, making security paramount.<sup>11</sup> Qualified seafarers are essential to achieving safe, secure, environmentally sound, and efficient shipping. This requires attracting new qualified entrants and retaining experienced seafarers, including women. A creative approach is needed that involves civil society partners, women's organizations, and all other relevant stakeholders, to achieve both meaningful and viable solutions to the challenges that may dissuade young people from becoming seafarers and cause experienced seafarers to leave the sea.

One interviewee stated that standards for the protection of ships' crews should be robust enough to offer the highest level of security to everyone, irrespective of their gender. This aligns with the concern that gender-specific guidelines have the effect of defining women in terms of their weaknesses, thereby reinforcing the stereotype of the "vulnerable woman." The key consideration for shipping companies is to evaluate the risk level to the vessel and to the crew, on a case by case basis. This approach assumes that the support mechanisms onboard are sufficient to protect female seafarers, irrespective of other factors such as the size of the ship's company.

While there are increasingly more examples of successful women seafarers, including women captains on some of the most modern cargo and passenger ships, too many women in the sector face problems of discrimination, isolation, and sexual harassment. Seafarers work in uniquely isolated conditions, at sea for long periods of time, separated from their families and support networks. It makes them particularly susceptible to bullying and harassing behaviors, challenges that face both men and women, although the limited number of female seafarers places them at an additional disadvantage when working among a primarily male crew. The shipping industry takes a largely gender-blind approach to safeguarding the well-being of its crews. In spite of the support made available to women seafarers by organizations like the ITF, no explicit reference is made to gender in the ICS/ITF<sup>12</sup> "Guidance on Eliminating Shipboard Harassment and Bullying," issued in January 2016, where female seafarers are offered the same protocols and channels of communication as male complainants.

## *Lack of Training for Women*

Completing mandatory sea time remains a major obstacle for both female and male cadets, although the impact on female cadets is greater. The Jamaica Maritime University was compelled for a while to reduce its intake of female cadets due to the shortage of training berths to complete their years of training. Only recently has a proactive partnership with the Belgian Ship Management Company Exmar resulted in the provision of more training berths, particularly for female cadets. One interviewee observed that getting more women appointed to the boardroom-level of shipping companies was a prerequisite for driving gender awareness policies from a top-down perspective.

For women in coast guards and navies, it was noted that recruitment into such services and other security agencies typically requires applicants to have extensive seagoing experience. Inevitably, the current lack of female seafarers is a de facto limitation to the number of women filtering through that selection process. Furthermore, there are anecdotal indications that there may be limited appetite among women for certain categories of security and policing careers, although there is insufficient data to empirically support this claim.

## *Social and Cultural Bias*

Although progress is slow, the rising number of women in shipping should be celebrated, as should the considerable progress achieved by "first generation" women leaders in the maritime world. This success notwithstanding, neither gender equality nor gender empowerment has been attained, and insufficient numbers of young women are coming up the middle-manager ranks. Instances of harassment and sexual aggression against women seafarers, including the Sex for Fish blackmail sometimes levied against fisherwomen, and the lack of training opportunities for women in the maritime sector are all primary examples of the need for robust strategies in support of women who seek to work for peace and security within the maritime domain.

There has been a growing acceptance of women in the maritime space over the past 20 years. This sentiment was confirmed by two female interviewees with a military background. They confirmed that in certain military spaces women no longer have to construct a "macho" persona in order to be accepted by their commanding officers and their peers.<sup>13</sup>

These observations indicate a slow move away from the traditional “male versus female” behavioral dichotomy. Many interviewees expressed the hope that changes in socialization of girls, boys, men and women taking place more broadly in society, will enable women to act in accordance with their individual persona, beyond the confines of established and sometimes restrictive societal norms.

## SEX FOR FISH

Traditionally, the fishing industry has been a man’s world. While women are often heavily involved in the processing and selling of fish, the catching of fish has almost exclusively been the responsibility of men. In some fishing communities across sub-Saharan Africa, where fish stocks may be dwindling and vendors may not be able to sell all of their catch, men and women have arranged a trade—women agree to have sex with the men in exchange, and sometimes as payment for, fish. For these women, many of whom are widows with children to feed, the ability to sell their fish at market makes all the difference in being able to support their families.

On the shores of Lake Victoria, for example, where fish stocks are low, women sometimes agree to have sexual relations with fishermen in exchange for guaranteed fish to sell at market. In Malawi, some women will offer to engage in sex with fishermen as payment if they are ultimately unable to sell all the fish at the market.<sup>14</sup> Inevitably, the consequences of this can be devastating—fishing communities in Kenya report up to a 40 percent rate of HIV infection as a result. Several NGOs are engaging in efforts to stop the trade, such as Kenya-based No Sex for Fish (which provides women with grants to buy their own fishing boats) and Rio Fish (which provides women with alternative supply streams).<sup>15</sup> Though promising anecdotally, data illuminating just how effective these programs have been at stopping the Sex for Fish trade are missing.

## IV. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS CONNECTING WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND THE MARITIME SPACE

There are a number of domestic and international frameworks that provide a blueprint for how the WPS agenda connects with the maritime space. Specifically, these frameworks illuminate how maritime stakeholders can more robustly mainstream the use of a gender perspective in their work and institutions. Given the incredibly diverse range of stakeholders involved in this space, it can be difficult to identify a common framework or governing body with which to charge the oversight and maintenance of gender equality in the maritime domain. Although far from exhaustive, the following discussion highlights important legal and policy frameworks that could serve as levers by which the maritime community can push for gender equality.<sup>16</sup>

### International Maritime Frameworks

At the highest level, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was signed in 1982, replacing the Geneva Conventions of April 1958 pertaining to the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the high seas, fishing, and conservation of living resources on the high seas. UNCLOS has since become the legal framework governing all marine and maritime activities. In terms of gender, UNCLOS “does not expressly mention women and does not contain any provision that formally prevents women from engaging in any of the activities mentioned in it, or participating in any of the institutional mechanisms created or endorsed by it.” Within this framing, UNCLOS, as is the case with many other maritime frameworks still to be discussed, is deemed by most maritime stakeholders to be “gender-neutral.”<sup>17</sup>

Internationally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015, as a call to action for all countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030. SDG 5 on Gender Equality, and SDG 14 on Life Below Water are both

particularly relevant in shaping the further development of gender equality in the maritime space.<sup>18</sup> However, given that “all 17 SDGs and the 169 associated targets are described in the 2030 Agenda as integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable. Therefore, it will be important to integrate the implementation of SDG 5 and SDG 14 so that they can mutually reinforce one another.”<sup>19</sup>

At the national level, Maritime Security Strategies (MSS), and their accompanying action plans, are frameworks used to guide governments and international organizations in the maritime sector. Although these strategies directly impact the empowerment (or not) of women and the discriminations to which they are subject, no existing MSS strategy contains an explicit reference to the importance of gender mainstreaming. The African Union’s MSS strategy comes closest, with references to gender-sensitive international frameworks, particularly initiatives related to SDG 5.<sup>20</sup>

From an operational and technical perspective, the maritime community traditionally recognizes four main pillars that govern industry: the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, 1974, as Amended (SOLAS); the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL); the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as Amended (STCW); and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as Amended (MLC 2006). Of the first three conventions, only Resolution 14 of the STCW recognizes women, but only as “important maritime human resources.”<sup>21</sup>

By contrast, the MLC 2006, which embodies “all up-to-date standards of existing international maritime labour Conventions and Recommendations, as well as the fundamental principles to be found in other international labour conventions,” is slightly ahead of its counterparts.<sup>22</sup> When the MLC was updated in 2014 and again in 2016, references to harassment and bullying were, for the first time, included. While the MLC contains no explicit reference to gender mainstreaming or analysis, gender is implicitly referenced in sections focused on equality and nondiscrimination of recruitment, the placement of seafarers, remuneration and access to onshore services, separate accommodations, sanitary facilities, and maternity with respect to social security and leave policies.

## GENDER NEUTRAL? OR GENDER-BLIND?

*This is an example from a conflict situation that can be instructive to consider when thinking about gender blindness in the maritime space.*

One of the challenges to the effectiveness of women's involvement in peace and security processes is the challenge of proving a negative. If women are involved in peace processes, and if indeed they are successful in their efforts, inevitably the "proof" of their success is the absence of conflict. In fact, it is easier to demonstrate the catastrophic consequences of not including a gender perspective--also known as being "gender-blind," as noted by Ambassador Donald Steinberg, in his reflections on his role in the Angolan peace process in the early 1990s:

*In 1994, while serving as President Clinton's special assistant for African Affairs, I supported negotiations to end two decades of civil war in Angola that had killed a half million people and left four million homeless. When the Lusaka Protocol was signed,[vi] I was asked by a journalist how the agreement took into account the needs of war-affected women. "Not a single provision in the agreement discriminates against women," I said, a little too proudly. "The agreement is gender-neutral."*

*President Clinton then named me ambassador to Angola. It took me only a few weeks after my arrival in Luanda in June 1995 to realize that a peace agreement that calls itself "gender-neutral" is, by definition, discriminatory against women and likely to fail.<sup>23</sup>*

The agreement failed for a number of reasons. First, the peace implementation body known as the Joint Commission was composed of 40 men and no women, an imbalance that silenced women's voices and ultimately led to the absence of provisions to address sexual violence, abuses by government and rebel security forces, human trafficking, and reproductive care and girls' education. Women, many of whom had been kidnapped or coerced into the armed forces, were also excluded from demobilization programs that were offered only to those individuals listed as ex-combatants by the warring parties. Furthermore, camps for demobilized soldiers were built primarily with men in mind, forcing women to risk rape or even death each time they left the camp to collect firewood or used latrines in dimly lit settings.

Even assistance that was provided to male ex-combatants proved to be dangerously gender-blind, as demobilized men were

*sent back without skills or education to communities that had learned to live without them during decades of conflict. As in all such situations, the frustration of these men exploded into an epidemic of alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, rape and domestic violence. This was especially true for young boys, who had never learned how to interact on an equal basis with girls their own ages. In effect, the end of civil war simply unleashed a new era of violence against women and girls.*

*Even such well-intentioned efforts as clearing major roads of landmines to allow four million displaced persons to return to their homes backfired against women. Road clearance sometimes preceded the demining of fields, wells and forests, resulting in premature resettlement and return. As women in this environment went out to plant the fields, fetch water and collect firewood, they suffered a new rash of landmine accidents.<sup>24</sup>*

Today, Ambassador Steinberg is now one of the strongest allies the WPS community of practice has, and he uses his platform to share this story and motivate peace and security actors to use a gender perspective in their work. His story presents an eye-opening example of the risks the international community will face if gender is not comprehensively mainstreamed—even, and perhaps especially, as it increasingly intersects with the maritime domain.



Zhang Chunyan, Third Officer, China. Photo: International Maritime Organization.

The Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190) and accompanying Recommendation 206 further reinforce the progress made by the updates to the MLC 2006. Adopted by the ILO in 2019, together the convention and recommendation represent a first of their kind treaty recognizing the universal right to work free from violence and harassment. The Convention applies to the public and private sectors, formal and informal economies, and urban and rural areas, and includes work-related communications given the increasing amount of work that is done remotely.<sup>25</sup> This further serves to codify gender equality in terms of both men's and women's rights to a violence- and harassment-free workplace.

In addition to the above efforts to formalize safety and professional protections for female seafarers, the maritime community has also been working to change the language used in the industry. Specifically, the goal most recently has been to ensure that whenever conventions are newly adopted or updated, the language used within the text is gender neutral. For example, often terms and phrases such as "man the ship," "seaman," and "fisherman," have been replaced instead with "crew the ship," "seafarer," and "fishers." For many maritime practitioners, this step goes a long way to transforming a cultural practice from one of blatant sexism toward one of inclusion within the maritime industry and related institutions.

Perhaps one of the most underappreciated steps forward is the Busan Declaration, which emerged out of a conference held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in April 2013. The seminar was organized and funded by the government of the Republic of Korea through the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries and hosted by the Korean Institute of Maritime and Fisheries Technology, together with the IMO. The conference, as well as the resulting Declaration, is useful for encouraging participating member states to generate support for women onboard ships. The resulting Declaration was brought to the attention of the IMO through the Technical Cooperation Committee, as a way to informally elevate the voices of female participants to policy decision-makers at the top. Agreed upon by participants in the conference, the Declaration<sup>26</sup> calls for commitments to:

- Enhance awareness of the role of women as valuable resources to the maritime industry, and promote safe, secure, and efficient shipping and the protection of the environment;
- Advocate for the adoption of policies and regulations that support access for women to maritime education and the merchant marine professions;

- Participate in the development of a Global Strategy for Women Seafarers through the sharing of information, experience, and best practices, and contribute to relevant associations and networks;
- Encourage their respective governments to work with the International Maritime Organization, through the Technical Cooperation Committee, to endorse the objectives of the Global Strategy for Women Seafarers;
- Forge partnerships and solicit support of governments and NGOs (including national and regional Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) as well as international and regional bodies to facilitate the implementation of a Global Strategy for Women Seafarers; and
- Work with national and local organizations to raise awareness and facilitate the implementation of the Global Strategy for Women Seafarers.

As of early 2020, no such Global Strategy has been released. However, the Busan Declaration represents a significant moment from which the international maritime community can and should learn. Despite concerns that the Busan Declaration is not a legally binding document, it provides a useful blueprint for how future collaborations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the maritime space should look.

## National and International Gender Frameworks

Maritime stakeholders who are seeking to support gender equality frequently focus on a handful of international conventions related to gender equality. Most common among them is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Adopted by the UN in 1979, CEDAW is a comprehensive agreement on the basic human rights of women. The treaty is frequently called a "Bill of Rights" for women, and sets the standard for protecting and promoting women's human rights. This policy instrument is a necessary foundation to promoting women's rights within the maritime space.

Another useful policy instrument for the promotion of women's rights within the maritime space is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Adopted in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is yet another foundational framework. The result of two weeks of political debate, with representatives from 189 countries, 30,000 NGO activists, and 17,000 participants, the Declaration imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate equally in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work.<sup>27</sup> The Beijing Declaration made comprehensive commitments under 12 critical areas of concern.<sup>27</sup>

Less frequently recognized as a meaningful policy and legal framework is the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is the first formal recognition of the disproportionate impact conflict and war can have on women and girls, as well as the critical role women and girls can and do play in effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Its preamble characterizes women not only as beneficiaries but as equal actors, placing human security and the use of a gender perspective at the core of peace and security decision-making. UNSCR 1325 and its related normative frameworks are known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and are organized around the four pillars of prevention, participation, protection, and gender mainstreaming.

As of 2020, over 80 countries have adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, representing approximately 40 percent of all UN member states, with a commitment from a further nine member states to develop their first-ever NAPs in advance of the 20th anniversary of WPS in October 2020. While the specific structure and content of each individual NAP varies from country to country, ideally NAPs should include provisions for funding, as well as time-bound and measurable goals. None of the existing WPS NAPs include the maritime domain in their approaches to national and regional stability, or in their strategies for mitigating risk and security threats.

Domestically, only two countries in the world have legislation focused on Women, Peace and Security. In Israel, Amendment 6C of Israel's Women's Equal Rights Law (1951), as amended, includes language specific to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. More recently, the United States passed the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (WPS Act), which mandates women's meaningful participation in international peace and security. The WPS Act requires that the US government develop a strategy (and that the relevant agencies create individualized implementation plans) for precisely how to uphold the tenets of the WPS agenda. Included under the purview of the WPS Act are the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, as well as the United States Agency for International Development.<sup>28</sup> To put it more explicitly, the US Navy, Coast Guard, and diplomatic and development personnel responsible for maritime portfolios are now mandated to incorporate the use of a gender analysis into their work.

As a comprehensive framework, WPS presents a practical mechanism by which peace and security actors can mainstream gender throughout their decision-making. Implementing the WPS agenda transforms the way international maritime actors define, understand, and approach gender within their policy and programming. The WPS community of practice has been successful in many contexts in creating much-needed culture change—redefining security in human- rather than state-centric terms. As such, recommendations for the maritime community can be drawn from both successes and failures in the implementation of the WPS agenda.

## V. MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN MARITIME WORK

In addition to identifying challenges and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in their particular issue areas, interviewees highlighted the important work already being done to lay the foundation for gender equality moving ahead. Interestingly, many of the stakeholders and programs have already adopted the key tenets of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including consultation and dialogue with women and other marginalized groups, and the use of a gender analysis in policy and programming development.

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### Civil Society and Coastal Welfare

Too often, the work done by civil society actors has been categorized by traditional security actors as a “women’s issue.” This has had a marginalizing effect, notably in the military and maritime sectors. And yet, the voices of women must be heard in order to challenge these entrenched perceptions. By encouraging the meaningful participation of women in leadership and managerial roles, the UN gender narrative has played a key role in dispelling the notion of the “weaker” gender. Aligned with the objectives of UNSCR 1325, Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), and other key international instruments, the UN regulatory framework provides a platform for girls and women to accede to civil rights, equal education, equal opportunities to employment, and the right to participate in governance. As considerations that impact both men and women, these issues do not merit marginalization as “women’s issues.”

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO	
ACTIONS	RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION
Hold government accountable for the implementation of international, regional, and national commitments	Inability to prevent conflict before it breaks out
Engage women as peacekeepers and stabilizers through participatory engagement of local communities	Increase in disaffected youth—key targets for criminal gangs
Ensure access of women’s networks to local, regional, and international government and industry forums	Increased costs incurred from social instability and unrest

Instead, it is important to note that civil society translates government legislation into targeted, achievable goals and works at the local community level. Grassroots networks and professional entities such as Women in Shipping and Trade Association (WISTA), Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs), fisherwomen groups, women in business affiliations, NGOs, and development aid agencies all intersect in the civil society space. Recognition of this interaction, in which women lead various efforts at the grassroots, helps facilitate the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the local level.

Facilitation of informal interaction and discussion, access to funding streams, and a place at the table in local governance are all tactical steps toward implementing a gender perspective at the grassroots level.

## RULE OF LAW AND CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT: COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

The successful gender and maritime nexus in the Philippines centers around direct government funding for women and development. The government mandates a 5 percent allocation of all budgets to gender programs at the national and local levels. Direct beneficiaries include women in security through the Coast Guard and the Port Authority, and women in the Blue Economy through the Philippines Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA). Outcomes of women's participation include reduced poverty, and integrated fisheries management techniques, which combine fish production, mangrove development, and the regeneration of coastal biodiversity while providing options for increasing income and food security for poor fisher households.<sup>29</sup>

Supported by dedicated government funding, the gender, human security, and marine environment protection nexus is further driven by the Women in Maritime Philippines network (WIMAPHIL). Building on its civil society advocacy role, WIMAPHIL was instrumental in fostering collaborative strategies to rehabilitate Manila Bay, bringing together representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine National Police–Maritime Group (PNP-MG).

*Outcomes of women's participation include reduced poverty, and integrated fisheries management techniques, which combine fish production, mangrove development, and the regeneration of coastal biodiversity while providing options for increasing income and food security for poor fisher households.*

The WIMAPHIL multiplier effect is marked by the expansion of its network into smaller Chapters with the maritime police, the Coast Guard, and the Port Authority. There are also chapters in schools, and in some industry entities such as Archipelago Philippines Ferries Corporation. Innovative action to encourage young girls and women to join the maritime sector includes the 2013 "She to Sea" Campaign by WIMAPHIL.

Because the Philippine government formally recognized, by allocating funding, the positive impact that gender mainstreaming has on its development work, civil society organizations have in turn been empowered to expand and grow their programming. Conversely, the government has benefited from civil society's unique ability to convene different stakeholders and develop innovative solutions to rehabilitate Manila Bay. This feedback loop is critical and can serve as a model for other nations.

Sustainable funding modalities through central government policies and from development aid agencies are a prerequisite for these local networks to thrive, as in the case of the Institución Financiera de Desarrollo (CIDRE IFD), Bolivia's financial institution for development, which launched groundbreaking financial services for indigenous women and women's cooperatives working in the fisheries sector.

Examples of African organizations successful in mobilizing women include Kenya's Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) and the Katosi Women Development Trust in Uganda. Led by women, both groups organize women not only to enhance their capacity to access economic resources, skills, and knowledge but also to increase their sense of agency and independence.

The key networks in the maritime space operate at regional and country levels with outreach programs to local communities and schools. One interviewee observed that the opportunities for networking and communicating at international events are contingent upon the status and grade of the association's representative. In light of budget considerations, it is often only the lead representative of an association who participates in the high-level meetings where key decisions are made. The multiplier effect of those events would be substantially increased if middle-ranking female officials were also given the opportunity to participate.

## Blue Economy

The concept of the Blue Economy has been linked to maritime security since the Rio+20 Conference in 2012. Sustainable management strategies require not only the enforcement and monitoring of regulations but also a secure maritime environment that delivers the preconditions for managing marine resources. At the first UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, the value of the global ocean-based economy was estimated at between \$3 to \$6 trillion USD a year.

The Blue Economy aims to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. It comprises diverse maritime components, including traditional ocean industries such as fisheries, maritime transport, waste management, climate change, tourism, but also emerging activities such as offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed extractive activities, and marine biotechnology. The Blue Economy reinforces core precepts that are directly linked to human security, including protection of the food security chain, and the ecological development of coastal populations and their livelihoods.

Women entrepreneurs suffer disproportionately in their engagement with the Blue Economy, primarily through lack of access to capital, investments, and the equipment that is necessary to grow their businesses, which in turn weakens the fabric of local community economies. Direct solutions can often be found through microfinancing such as the Kenya Women Finance Trust, established by Kenyan women and offering services only to low-income Kenyan women.<sup>30</sup>

Interviewees referred to the growing recognition of the risks to food security and the decline in fish stocks due to climate change.<sup>31</sup> Working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Women in Maritime Association Asia, programs such as the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security are refocusing their strategies to strengthen food production and security in their region with pilot schemes on integrated multi trophic aquaculture and other high-value aquaculture initiatives.



## Maritime and Coastal Tourism

Approximately 50 percent of all international tourists travel to coastal areas. Small Island Developing States tourism accounts for over 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>32</sup> The tourism industry is a traditional source of employment for women at every level, with a concomitant risk of negligent and abusive cultures around the work of women and girls. Robust national employment legislation is required to mitigate this, and recruitment strategies must reflect the highest standards of duty of care for all employees. It is incumbent upon local government entities and civil society groups to be vigilant in addressing the pernicious exploitation of women whose lack of education forces them into unskilled jobs, often leaving them without the protective framework of workers' rights.

## DEVELOPING A STRONG BLUE ECONOMY: LESSONS FROM KENYA

In recent years, Kenya and its coastline have been a target of destructive terrorist attacks, facilitated primarily from the sea as a conduit for the weaponry and perpetrators. Some of the latter were embedded among the coastal communities in preparation for the terrorist attacks. Susceptible to radicalization due to low incomes and lack of viable futures, the coastal communities presented an easy entry point for recruitment by criminal gangs. To counter this risk of instability, the Kenyan government launched a cohesive strategy comprising aquaculture, seafaring, and the launch, in 2018, of a national Coast Guard. Significantly, women are among the key maritime players in Kenya and the principal Secretary of Maritime and Shipping Affairs, Nancy Karigitu, who is a Governor of the World Maritime University, was voted African Union Woman of the Year 2019.



*Group members of Kibuyuni Seaweed farmers, harvesting mature seaweed.  
Photo: Kwale County Government Facebook.*

On the coast south of Mombasa, women have been employed on a project to develop seaweed farms. The communities have been offered viable income-generating activities through the export trade of seaweed products, which include cosmetics, soap, creams, and shampoo. Managed by women, the project offers productive livelihoods for young adults and men during the lull in the fishing season.

The security of the Kenyan coast extends beyond its coastline. In 2016, the *Business Daily Africa* reported that Kenya lost an estimated KSh10 billion (US\$100 million) in revenue, annually, due to illegal fishing alone. In October 2018, the government launched their Coast Guard, responsible for

patrolling Kenya's territorial waters to prevent unlawful fishing, piracy, human and drug trafficking, smuggling, and environmental damage. Further employment for women is being created at the local level by the government initiative to develop a number of fishing ports—and to publicize an Eat More Fish campaign, which revolves around improving nutrition outcomes and food security by encouraging women to incorporate fish into their family diets.

The government is reviving the state-owned Kenya Shipping Line in partnership with the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and positioning the Blue Economy as a key to job creation and a powerful economic driver. In a groundbreaking decision, both women and men, navigators and engineers of the future, will be trained at the new Bandari Maritime Academy in Kilindini Port. Kenyan students, including a large number of women, will be employed on board the MSC vessels. The multiplier effect of this initiative will provide a robust benefit to coastal women and their children in particular: it is estimated that of the current recruits to this initiative, 42 percent are from Kilifi, on the Mombasa coast, and Kualu.<sup>33</sup>

Kenya's first female marine pilot, Elizabeth Marami, exemplifies the linkage between maritime safety and gender. She has launched an online platform for women in the maritime industry called Against the Tide, to provide "a glimpse into the experiences and travails of a female seafarer and how they are charting their path in this profession." Nonetheless, one interviewee stated that while higher-ranked women in maritime remain an exception, circumstances for women working on board remain challenging, and they face additional difficulties to their male counterparts.<sup>34</sup>

The security of tourists also becomes a key issue, for Small Island Developing States in particular, where local populations suffering from poverty and deprivation coexist in close proximity with the influx of wealthy visitors. Loss of economic and tax revenues can be triggered by a serious decline in tourist levels if the crime rate is perceived as disproportionately high in holiday destinations. The implementation of effective policing and security measures, including the deployment of female police officers, becomes a key to preventing social unrest and facilitating a safe environment for sustainable tourism to thrive.

## Maritime Disaster Response and Mitigation

Climate change has exacerbated the number and strength of maritime natural disasters. While tropical cyclones in the Indian Ocean, for example, are not that rare, the recent case of cyclones Idai and Kenneth striking Mozambique in quick succession reinforces the increasing probability of risk to coastal populations in developing regions. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), “there is no record of two storms of such intensity striking Mozambique in the same season.”

The inevitable impact of natural disasters, beyond the immediate loss of life, is the ongoing threat to clean water supplies, secure food chains, and access to medicines—threats that differently impact men, women, boys, and girls. Studies by the World Bank and others have shown that emergency response and long-term recovery policies and procedures that explicitly reference gender are more effective in accounting for these differences and securing community cohesion in the chaotic aftermath.<sup>35</sup>

Maritime disaster management strategies require the inclusion of women to comprehensively mitigate the consequences of disasters by improving emergency preparedness, effective response, and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs policy, for example, delineates in detail the gender-responsive procedures and tools to be integrated into daily tasks and provides clear guidance for implementation. Local governance and aid agencies in the field need to follow suit, and engage proactively with civil society and women’s networks. Women at the local level need to be involved in decision-making processes and, through the establishment of set protocols, the specific needs of women and children following natural maritime disasters need to be addressed.

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO



### THOSE WORKING IN THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT AREA

#### ACTIONS

#### RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION

Adopt gender-sensitive emergency response and long-term recovery policies and procedures	Increased loss of life Displacement of vulnerable communities Negative environmental impact
Establish clear protocols that explicitly require the involvement of women and girls in decision-making	

## Food Security and Fisheries

Globally, it is estimated that women make up 47 percent of the 120 million people who earn money directly from fishing and processing.<sup>36</sup> They are present at all stages of the marine and artisanal fisheries value chain: from the pre-financing and preparation of fishing outings to the reception, processing, and marketing of fish. A direct contributor to community resilience and stabilization, the impact of women in fisheries provides a source of food security and economic livelihoods for vulnerable populations; greater health outcomes and enhanced child development; improved income and economic security; tax revenues for the national economies; and management of marine resources. A key resource in maintaining post-conflict stability, women involved in postharvest fisheries businesses foster social cohesion among the male population and among male youths in particular.<sup>37</sup> However, accurate sex-disaggregated data are not always available, and a large proportion of women fishers remain unreported, leaving the extent of their existing and potential contributions as yet unexplored.

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO	
	THOSE WORKING IN FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY
ACTIONS	RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION
Prioritize protection of women fishers	Depleted fishing stocks
Provide microfinancing for postharvest businesses	Unsafe territorial waters
Open and maintain new communication channels	Displaced populations Insecure food supply chains

The interlinkage between women fishers, access to financing, and collaboration with civil society needs to be reinforced through active local governance measures. The connections between these elements and protection of marine resources remain underexplored. In 2017, the Team Leader of the [Enhanced Coastal Fisheries Bangladesh](#) (ECOFISH-BD) project made key statements that acknowledge the multiplier role of fisherwomen in revenue creation and as the fulcrum of social stability:

1. “We have observed that women’s involvement in fisheries management can help influence the fishing decisions of their male counterparts, including decisions on compliance with fishing laws.”
2. “The involvement of women in conservation groups supports efforts to increase the voice of women through income generation that boosts status and influence in household and community decision-making, and through their participation in the congress.”

3. “These activities will enable around 50,000 women from fisher families to benefit from the ECOFISH-BD project, along with 50,000 men directly, with a multiplier effect of another 200,000 men and women—a large and lasting impact.”<sup>38</sup>

The [European Network for Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture](#) and the [Women in Fisheries Network–Fiji](#) (WiFN-Fiji) are among a number of networks established at the country level to push for the meaningful participation of women as decision-makers within an environmentally sustainable fishing industry. One interviewee confirmed that in their experience, partnerships between fishing cooperatives and women’s associations at the local level provide an effective platform for women’s voices to be heard. Significantly, the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the field has positively impacted community perceptions of women’s involvement in the fisheries cooperatives, giving women a long-lasting connection to decision-makers and their discussion forums.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a major governmental and intergovernmental issue that directly affects women. It fuels violent conflict with artisanal fishers and was one of the original triggers of piracy in Somali waters. Women are direct casualties of the overfishing perpetuated by large, industrial fishing vessels, leading to loss of livelihoods and nutrition in small-scale fishing communities. IUU fishing is typically linked to serious criminal acts, including arms and drugs smuggling and human slavery. Robust domestic law and practice are required to put into effect FAO international treaties on port state measures (2016) and catch documentation schemes (2017). Within the context of security and protecting the food chain for coastal populations, combating IUU fishing is a key imperative for national governments.

One interviewee discussed the example of Somalia, where seafood is considered a new nutritional food source in a country that has favored eating meat. Development aid groups are now urging the inclusion of fish in the Somali diet to improve food security, access to nutrition, and improved health outcomes, and as a food alternative in times of drought.<sup>39</sup> Diaspora women have proven effective at accessing donor aid geared toward business development services and entrepreneurial growth,

building up fish restaurant businesses to maximize the use of development funds and the large stocks of fish in Somali waters.<sup>40</sup> The interconnection between fisheries, women, and business is providing community resilience.

Specific positive outcomes that have resulted include: the development of economic livelihoods, greater health outcomes, enhanced child development, greater income, and economic security. All interviewees agreed that any disruption to the fisheries value chain could lead to local tensions and risks to the peace agreements in this post-conflict situation.

## Maritime Enforcement—Protection and Defense of Vulnerable Populations

While the specific issues facing women naval officers are not reviewed under this report, the interviewees provided insights into the wide-ranging roles that women can and should play in their maritime protection and defense systems. In recent decades many nations' armed forces have admitted women into their ranks, progressing incrementally from noncombatant roles to frontline engagement and, in some countries, as members of the Special Forces.

Contact between the Navy and civilians arises primarily around circumstances of human trafficking and mixed migration by sea, when naval officers are likely to encounter vulnerable populations whose distress is often compounded by differing social and cultural norms. It is those situations that highlight the added value of female naval officers, over and above their military skills and competences, when dealing with this aspect of maritime crime and its impact on women at risk.

Effective coast guard and maritime patrols are the mainstay of maritime security systems that control pollution of the seas, combat illegal fishing, and mitigate the overexploitation of marine resources, which all have an adverse effect on the security of women and the communities under their stewardship. Without that safeguard, coastal populations in particular face the loss of livelihoods with a consequent impact on the younger generations, notably the young men who lose any hope of gainful employment and face a bleak future, making them primary targets for criminal gangs.<sup>41</sup>

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO



### THOSE WORKING IN INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

#### ACTIONS

#### RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION

Comply with existing international standards and norms

Initiate WPS discussions in all UN meetings

Encourage WPS Focal Points to expand awareness of the WPS agenda at the intergovernmental level

Amend relevant conventions (e.g., FAO, ILO, IMO) to promote a stronger safety culture for women in maritime occupations

Mainstream the tenets of the WPS agenda throughout the international instruments that regulate the maritime domain through UN agencies, regional entities. Require national delegates attending FAO, ILO, and IMO meetings to incorporate WPS into the organizations' work plans and meeting agendas

Creating or enforcing silos between the WPS agenda and other UN standards and norms

Inefficient, siloed implementation and use of resources

Lack of practical WPS implementation at the local level

## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN DO



### THOSE WORKING IN NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

#### ACTIONS

- Include maritime components in WPS National Action Plans
- Provide funding for further exploration of the connection between gender and maritime issues
- Ensure port and flag state control and compliance with relevant conventions

#### RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION

- Disconnect between the security concerns of WPS and the wider maritime security risks
- Use of ports for human trafficking and transloading of illegal goods



### THOSE WORKING IN PROTECTION AND DEFENSE

#### ACTIONS

- Actively work to recruit and retain female navy officers
- Actively work to recruit female coast guard officers
- Perform an analysis to explore the gendered impacts of IUU fishing

#### RISK OF NOT TAKING ACTION

- Disrupted trade routes
- Illegal fishing
- Increased mixed migration by sea
- Increased unlawful acts at sea
- Population displacement

Another common observation from a number of interviewees, but most notably from those with military experience, related to the lack of Gender Advisors in most specialized fields. In the military context, little merit is given to considerations of gender equality, and there are few postings for Gender Advisors within command structures. The WPS framework supports the addition of Gender Advisors within a specific context. Gender Advisors within military operations can visibly and credibly demonstrate the tactical value that gender analysis contributes to the success of a military mission. Including Gender Advisors within militaries will encourage a change of behaviors, especially if the practical application of the WPS agenda can help to mitigate security risks and threats.

However, the role of the Gender Advisor needs to be standardized and certified under a recognized training framework in order for their advice to be valued as legitimate and sound by high-ranking military or other officials. The effectiveness of the Gender Advisor rests on the following criteria: their expertise and qualifications in the relevant substantive subjects, their approved gender-certification, their status within the hierarchy, and their communication skills.<sup>42</sup>

*"If you cannot translate gender analysis into risk analysis it will not persuade them. It is not a benefit they might incur, but it is a risk they must mitigate."*

In the military space, risk mitigation is central to decision-making outcomes. It was posited by one interviewee that only the utilitarian argument would be convincing in a military scenario. Commanders facing an immediate threat with finite resources available to them will be convinced to apply the gender lens if there is an operational risk in failing to take gender into account. The interviewee observed that "If you cannot translate gender analysis into risk analysis it will not persuade them. It is not a benefit they might incur, but it is a risk they must mitigate."<sup>43</sup>

Protection and defense need to be embedded with a gender perspective at the strategic level of the national legislative framework. One interviewee with a military background noted the dearth of information and data

regarding the WPS agenda within relevant doctrines, particularly at the joint doctrine level. Another military interviewee commented that more could be done to make constructive use of the gender lens in the military space; it felt to them that at times the issue was being forced without any substantive context. The question of gender-blindness was also raised in the military context, including the conundrum of training military staff to adopt so-called gender-neutral behaviors with their fellow combatants, while being exhorted to apply a gender lens in the theater of war, where female civilians may not be treated as social equals in certain cultures. The lack of understanding about equality between men and women, and how it is practiced requires careful training of officers and all ranks.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Across the board, the interviewees identified some common challenges, which, when viewed as opportunities for growth and improvement, can illuminate entry points for the use of a gender perspective. Three common themes emerged across the interviews—regardless of sector or echelon within the chain of command.

### 1. Mainstream Gender

**RECOGNIZE THAT GENDER MAINSTREAMING IS BOTH A PROCESS AND A RESULT:** Begin by performing a gender analysis to identify challenges and opportunities for women's full and meaningful participation in the maritime space. Ensure that stakeholders from all sectors and up and down the chain of command are consulted in the process. From there, work to address the inequities identified by the gender analysis, and start the process again at the next stage.

**MOVE AWAY FROM “GENDER-NEUTRAL” POLICIES IN FAVOR OF THOSE THAT ARE “GENDER-SENSITIVE”:** Policies and programming that don't account for differences of opportunity and access between women, men, girls, and boys will be doomed to fail to achieve gender equality. Where possible, explicitly mention gender and the disproportionate impact that conflict can and does have on women and girls.

**CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS TO BOOST WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND VISIBILITY:** Perform a gender analysis to identify specific pain-points and barriers to women’s entry into the maritime domain. Strengthen policies for the active recruitment and retention of female seafarers and fishers accordingly. Ensure training and educational programs designed to prepare future maritime employees include gender as a key component, connecting government education strategies with international frameworks on gender, as necessary.

**INCORPORATE A GENDER PERSPECTIVE THROUGHOUT ALL MARITIME POLICY AND PROGRAMMING:** Urge diplomatic and development aid agencies, as well as national governments, to include the WPS agenda in their maritime and security policy and programming, in conjunction with the SDGs and related UN instruments. Establish gender-aware emergency

response and long-term recovery procedures at the community level, with processes that mandate the inclusion of women and girls in decision-making.

### 2. Leverage Existing Legal and Policy Frameworks

**AMEND EXISTING CONVENTIONS AND DECLARATIONS TO BE GENDER-SENSITIVE, AND REFERENCE GENDER EXPLICITLY:** Current conventions on bullying and harassment, safety and security on board, and additional labor rights should recognize the current situation as it is and seek to address inequities in women’s and men’s ability to fully participate in maritime activities. New conventions should be drafted based on the results of a gender analysis and include gender-sensitive, rather than gender-neutral, language.

**LEVERAGE THE SUITE OF MARITIME- AND GENDER-FOCUSED REGIONAL AND DOMESTIC AGREEMENTS:** Assist governments in connecting their responsibility to uphold international gender norms to their responsibility to upload domestic and regional security strategies. This includes maritime security strategies, NAPs, national and regional security strategies, and countries’ obligations under the purview of the United Nations and its various agencies. Follow up on agreements, such as the Busan Declaration, to ensure that strategies, once developed, are adopted and implemented to the fullest extent possible.

**GENERATE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT FOR AN OVERARCHING STRATEGY THAT DIRECTLY LINKS THE WPS AGENDA WITH THE MARITIME NEXUS:** The Secretary-General’s annual report on WPS should expand on the interlinkages with the wider scope of maritime security, and the Security Council should adopt a new resolution directly linking gender to the maritime space.

**CONNECT MARITIME ISSUES WITH WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (OR DOMESTIC LEGISLATION, WHERE IT EXISTS):** These should identify accountability mechanisms for government agencies, with measurable and achievable maritime-based benchmarks linked to a solid theory of change. Use these frameworks to hold governments accountable.

**ALLOCATE FUNDING:** Establish dedicated funding streams across all relevant government ministries in support of gender mainstreaming efforts, including access to funding mandated through central government budget allocations. As with any other international efforts, if the problem isn't properly resourced, forward progress will be slow.

### 3. Encourage, Facilitate, and Formalize Collaboration and Consultation among Stakeholders

**EMPOWER EFFECTIVE GENDER ADVISORS, AND ESTABLISH THESE POSITIONS WHERE THEY DO NOT YET EXIST:** Gender Advisors can serve as the primary point of contact for multiple sectors and coordinate information flows across actors. Provide them with standardized training and certification programs to ensure effective communication and recognition of their role in driving the WPS agenda and its implementation in the maritime domain, as well as the various stakeholders with whom they should engage. Encourage existing WPS Focal Points to integrate the maritime dimension into their work, and encourage them to facilitate collaboration between women's networks at the grassroots level, the UN, and industry-sponsored entities, including WISTAs (Women in Shipping and Trade Associations), WIMAs (Women in Maritime regional networks), and WPS Focal Points networks.

**LEVERAGE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORKS TO COORDINATE CURRENTLY DISPARATE MARITIME STAKEHOLDERS:** as demonstrated by the Busan Declaration, women's organizations are adept at convening stakeholders across multiple sectors, while ensuring that grassroots actors as well as senior level decision-makers are in the room. Existing women's associations, rooted in industry and government, can carry out similar responsibilities to their more traditional civil society counterparts, to facilitate dialogue and information sharing, identify opportunities and challenges, and advise on how best to proceed. Use key takeaways from other women's movements as a blueprint, and to set the tone for maritime coordination and consultation moving forward.

**FORMALIZE CONSULTATION MECHANISMS TO CONNECT DECISION-MAKERS AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS:** Whether at the national, regional, or international level, formal mechanisms for consultation with women's networks facilitate information sharing between decision-makers at the top, and those with the ground truth to know how best to tackle emerging threats. Where there are none, build processes to filter ground truth from members of civil society up to policy decision-makers at the top, connecting local business groups, women's organizations, industry associations, professional networks, and government representatives. The Arria Formula, which has been used by the UN Security Council (including in the lead-up to the adoption of UNSCR 1325) can serve as inspiration for how such a process might be brought to life.<sup>44</sup>

**CONNECT SECURITY ACTORS WITH THOSE IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY:** This can be done by breaking barriers and forging an explicit link between the WPS agenda and IMO's maritime security work, a link which has so far never been considered. This can be realized in two ways. The first is the benefit derived, at the operational level, from collaboration between government entities and private industry; and the second is the establishment of a formal nexus between the WPS agenda and IMO's international instruments on maritime security, a bold but potentially groundbreaking strategy. This could be explored through the work of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) on anti-terrorism and safety and security measures, while the Legal Committee is involved in its development of the SUA Convention.<sup>45</sup> From a practical perspective, a joint discussion paper introducing the UNSCR 1325 objectives could also launch a substantive debate and provide a stepping-stone to further regulatory consideration and integration.

# WOMEN IN MARITIME ASSOCIATIONS ANNEX

Bearing in mind that WIMAs may change from time to time in order to refresh the membership and scope of each association, the current regional or subregional WIMAs include the following:

## Africa

- [Association of Women Managers in the Maritime Sector in Eastern and Southern Africa \(WOMESA\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *To advocate gender equity, improve women's access to maritime training and technology and promote their advancement to key decision-making levels in the maritime sector in Eastern and Southern Africa.*
- Network of Professional Women in the Maritime and Port Sectors for West and Central Africa

## Asia

- [Women in Maritime Philippines \(WIMAPHIL\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *A non-profit, non-stock organization of women in the maritime industry committed to the active advocacy of maritime safety, security and efficiency, environmental protection, prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the anti-trafficking of women and children, as well as, the achievement of gender equity and women empowerment in the maritime sector and its communities.*
- [Association for Women in Maritime, Asia \(WIMA-Asia\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *WIMA Asia supports regional integration and cooperation of women in the maritime community for the promotion of greater and active participation on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those relating to maritime education and training, maritime safety and security, marine environmental protection, and trading throughout Asia.*

## Caribbean

- [Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean \(WiMAC\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *To foster the development and participation of women in the maritime sector and contribute to the growth of the industry within the Region, through:*
  - *Empowerment of women through capacity building*
  - *Advocacy on issues effecting women and the industry*
  - *Lobbying and contributing to the development of responsive legislative and regulatory environments*
  - *Mentorship to facilitate career advancement and professional well-being of women in the sector*
  - *Networking to share best practices and forging of partnerships to strengthen the industry and provide opportunities for resource mobilization*
  - *Recognition of achievements among maritime women*
  - *Promotion of the maritime industry*
  - *Contribution to research and development of the maritime industry*
  - *Corporate and Social Responsibility*

## Latin America

- Forum for professional women in management roles in the maritime sector, Latin America
- Red de Mujeres de Autoridades Marítimas de Latinoamérica (Red-MAMLa)

## MENA

- [Arab Women in Maritime Association \(AWiMA\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *Encouraging and Empowering the Arab woman through*

*improving her professional skills and highlighting her effective role in the Maritime Sector.*

- [MENA and Africa Arab Women's International Maritime Forum \(MENA & Africa AIWMF\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *To promote more female induction into the marine industry in MENA & Africa and empower women's] decision-making [to] change the world in full collaboration with IMO.*

## Pacific Islands

- [Pacific Women in Maritime Association \(PacWIMA\)](#)
  - Mission statement: *To increase the involvement of women in the Pacific maritime sector by creating a platform and forum to:*
    - (i) *Advocate gender equality.*
    - (ii) *Promote education, training and career opportunities for women.*
    - (iii) *Recognize the social responsibilities relating to women.*
    - (iv) *Promote cooperation, friendship and understanding through the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of information.*

Finally, industry has increasingly been involved in coordinating and connecting various maritime stakeholders with a view to increasing women's participation in this space. A number of industry-led associations, including but not limited to the following, have been established:

- [International Association of Ports and Harbors Women's Forum \(IAPHWF\)](#): IAPHWF aspires to advance and empower women in the maritime industry, create a platform for discussing women's issues in the industry, encourage women to join the industry; and promote training programs.

- [International Women Seafarers Foundation \(IWSF\)](#): The International Women Seafarers Foundation was conceived with the intention of promoting and supporting women seafarers in their sailing careers.
- [Maritime UK—Women in Maritime](#): Maritime UK has established a Taskforce to address fairness, equality and inclusion within the maritime sector. Specific initiatives include the Women in Maritime Pledge and the Women in Maritime Charter.
- [Nautilus International Women's Forum](#): The Women's Forum of Nautilus International offers an opportunity for female members to engage in discussions on the specific challenges facing women in the maritime profession.
- [Sea Sisters](#): The mission of Sea Sisters is to promote the recruitment and retention of women in the maritime industry.

## ENDNOTES

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## ONE EARTH FUTURE

[oneearthfuture.org](http://oneearthfuture.org)     

ONE EARTH FUTURE fosters sustainable peace by partnering with innovative world leaders, global development agencies and communities to see complex problems at the root of armed conflict in new ways and solve them together through orchestrated collaboration.

## OUR SECURE FUTURE

[oursecurefuture.org](http://oursecurefuture.org) 

Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference (OSF) is a department of the Colorado-based One Earth Future Foundation. OSF works to strengthen the Women, Peace and Security movement to enable effective policy decision-making for a more peaceful world.

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## OUR SECURE FUTURE

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Women Make the Difference

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