

MTCC AFRICA

Role of Women in Decarbonization

Keynote speech

Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry

President, World Maritime University

29 October 2020

The Representatives of MTCC AFRICA,

Special thank you to Dr. Nancy Karigithu, Principal Secretary, State Department of Maritime and Shipping Affairs, MTCC AFRICA Board Chair,

Dr. Hiram Ndiritu, Project Director of MTCC AFRICA,

Ms. Lydia Ngugi, Project Head of MTCC AFRICA,

Members of the Global MTCCs Network (ETF),

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my immense pleasure to deliver this keynote speech at this very important virtual workshop on “The Role of Women in Decarbonization”.

The Introduction and Background

The anthropogenic (human-made) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are the main cause of global warming and temperature rise, responsible for climate change, which has resulted in weather pattern changes, increased sea-level rise, and more frequent floods. We are now in a new era in which we must take more aggressive action to reduce and eventually eliminate GHG emissions from international shipping in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted in 2016 and which has been signed by 195 Member States of the UN. The IMO, through its initial GHG strategy has accelerated the momentum of decarbonization efforts in the shipping industry.

There are several major issues that currently affect maritime trade and transport and will continue to shape them for the foreseeable future. Many of these issues have been brought to the fore in the 2030 UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Of

particular relevance to the maritime and ocean fields are concerns relating to climate change, GHG emission as well as air pollutants, which are reflected in SDG7 (affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all) and SDG13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts).

In the light of the above, WMU has a teaching and research stream on Maritime Energy Management (MEM), which reflects our strong commitment to the effective implementation of the UN SDGs in support of the achievement of sustainable and energy-efficient maritime and ocean industries. Through cutting-edge research in the MEM field, WMU contributes significantly to achieving the objectives of SDG7 and SDG13. The introduction of our well-received MSc in MEM, as well as the launch of the new PG Diploma in Maritime Energy which is delivered through distance learning, speak to our commitment. The close collaboration of WMU with all MTCCs since they were established by the IMO is another sign of our commitment to work with other maritime and ocean stakeholders to maximize the global efforts towards decarbonization of international shipping. Our graduates on their return home

become ambassadors in the implementation of these commitments in their countries.

The role of women in decarbonisation

Gender equality is an important instrument that can help drive the actions required to be taken in order to achieve an efficient and effective transition to a low-carbon economy. Decarbonization requires a complete transformation of society from production to consumption in a global supply chain. This enormous task will not be accomplished without the full participation of all members of the society including women, who have an important role to play in advancing this agenda.

The linkage between the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 7 (energy) has been long recognized and continues to be so by the the UN General Assembly. The UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, under Objective G of the Platform for Action in 1995, called for action in gender mainstreaming with respect to all policies and programmes to ensure that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men. This view was further reinforced at the

ninth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9) in 2001, which urged governments to ‘support equal access for women to sustainable and affordable energy technologies through needs assessments, energy planning and policy formulation at the local and national levels’.

During the MTCC seminar held at WMU in 2019, a panel discussion focused on gender equality and the role of MTCCs. It was emphasized by the representatives of the MTCC AFRICA that MTCCs should encourage and support women’s participation in their activities and capacity building programmes.

The process of decarbonization is expected to create a new job market and employment opportunities for women. The renewable energy sector employed 10.3 million people in 2017, reflecting an increase of 5.3% from the previous year. Decarbonization must also be considered as an integral component of the Blue Economy as reflected in the outcome of the Blue Economy Conference hosted by the Government of Kenya in October 2019. At that Conference, among other interventions I made, it included my participation WOMESA’s side event. It was highlighted that a huge demand for

skills in decarbonization will open up employment opportunities for women who can contribute to their countries reaching the maximum development potential enabling them to collectively contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as a whole.

WMU's contribution to SDG5 in a broader perspective

I wish to highlight the measures that WMU has taken to contribute to the effective implementation of SDG 5 (gender equality). In 1983, WMU female student representation was at 3%. Today, this number has been significantly improved to over 36% (one third) in our latest intake for 2021 at our Malmö headquarters. In our Shanghai programme in China, we have however achieved a gender parity with 50 per cent female students in 2020. This is a benchmark worthy of emulation. While this is good news, we continue to lament the number of women seafarers globally which continues to remain at between 1 and 2 per cent. The COVID-19 crisis certainly has not helped to improve the situation. On the contrary, it may have worsened it.

It is important for us to be aware of the employment opportunities that currently exist or may be created. It is also important to ensure that women as well as men have necessary knowledge and skills

for this global challenge. Our mission at WMU is to be the world centre of excellence in postgraduate maritime and oceans education, professional training and research. Gender equal opportunities in higher education and training are among the important contributions being made by WMU. We are encouraged as we see more women joining our Maritime Energy Management specialization – Women in Maritime Energy Management. One of such role models is Ms Jean Nkechinyere Omeje, from Nigeria, who was featured as the LODESTAR (a promising young researcher and future leader) by the “Journal of Ocean Technology” in 2019. We are therefore hopeful that we will be able to continue to attract more women not only in pursuit of gender equality under Goal 5 but also in maritime energy management under Goal 7.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with MTCCs. We encourage more students, including women, from all regions in the world to work together to help achieve a sustainable future for decarbonization in the maritime and ocean sectors. We owe this to the future generations to come!

Thank you.