

Professional development of women in maritime industry

Dedicated to professional development of African women working in the maritime industry by helping them through training and networking

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Each year the annual WISTA International conference is hosted in a different country. This year, the 2017 WISTA International Spring Board Meeting took place for the first time in Africa, in the city of Casablanca in Morocco.

Hosted by WISTA Morocco, a young WISTA Association that is about 2 years in the WISTA family, the conference attracted participants from Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia, Guinea. The theme of the event was “Womens’ Governance: Strength and Gender Pride in Maritime Industry.”

Asmaa Benslimane, Founding President of Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA Morocco) welcomed the gathering and shared the aim of the association which is to promote the professional development of women in the maritime industry (logistics, transport, fisheries, etc.) through continuous training, exchange and sharing of ideas and promotion of networking. She underscored the significance of professional development of women by sharing a quote by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, “... The stakes are high: advancing women's equality could boost global GDP by \$12 trillion by 2025.”

As she concluded, Asmaa remarked, the creation of WISTA Morocco is the expression of the will of the Moroccan women working in the maritime industry to make their contribution alongside their male brothers for the development of all sea related activities.

The event offered a perfect platform to: take advantage from the presence of the WISTA International Executive Committee in Morocco to strengthen the presence of WISTA in the continent, since this is the first time this meeting takes place in North



Africa; Celebrate the courage and perseverance of Moroccan women who have played a significant role in the development of sea related activities; deepen the reflection on the possibilities of cooperation offered by WISTA network to African women; organize training for members and non-members.

The key highlights of the event were four interesting sessions:

- Freight Forwarding in Morocco by M Rachid Tahri, Moroccan Freight Forwarding Association and FIATA certified trainer
- Port Handling in Moroccan ports by Professor Hassania Cherkaoui
- Tools available to the exporting company by M Aziz Mantrach, APRAM and FONASBA President, ASMEX Vice President
- International Maritime Logistics and Women Governance by Loubna Oudrhiri

Working towards the common goal of increasing the competence and education of women in all segments of the maritime industry, the WISTA Executive Committee announced WISTA International's intention to sign an MoU with the Institute of Chartered Ship Brokers. Under the

MoU, scholarships will be offered to five WISTA members every year.

The event was followed by “WISTA Morocco Award 2017” that honoured the most outstanding Moroccan and African women in the maritime sector. The recipients were:

- Kaoutar Guessous, Managing Director of WorldWide Logistic Services
- Zahra Rochdi, Director of Maritime Training, Seafarers and Rescue at the Department of Maritime Fisheries
- Lamia Znagui, Director of the Federation of Industries of Transformation and Valorization of Fishing Products (FENIP)
- Naa Densua Aryeetey, WISTA International Director for the African Region
- Sabah Lazraq, Director of Maritime Fishing Industries in the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries

The conference concluded to meet again next year wherein the 2018 Spring Meeting will be organised in Singapore. This is in keeping with the commitment to encourage more NWA (National WISTA Associations) in the Asia-Pacific region. 