AGENDA ITEM 8 – GENDER EQUALITY IN MARITIME

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to report progress on gender equality in maritime, and to request Transport Ministers to endorse the Regional Strategy for Pacific Women in Maritime (2020-2024) and commit resources for its implementation.

Background

2. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) requires addressing structural issues such as unfair social norms and attitudes as well as developing progressive legal frameworks that promote equality between women and men.

3. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ Gender Equality Declaration, the Revised Pacific Platform for Action and for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway, constitute the regional frameworks to strengthen existing policies and initiatives aimed at achieving SDG 5.

4. In 2017, Transport Ministers welcomed recent initiatives to enhance gender equality and empower women in the maritime sector. To this end, Ministers enthusiastically urged Governments, development partners, civil society and local communities to champion the provision of an enabling environment to achieve SDG 5. The development of a regional strategy for Pacific women in maritime was strongly supported and prioritized to assist with this objective.

5. In April 2018, during the 2nd Regional Conference for Pacific Women in Maritime held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, the conference established a Drafting Committee coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC), to develop the regional strategy. SPC, national administrations and women in maritime networks conducted national consultations. Further consultation of the draft Strategy was carried out to capture all relevant maritime community stakeholders’ comments, and key partners had the opportunity to provide inputs with the view for the strategy to be endorsed and launched at the Fourth Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers’ Meeting in 2019.

6. The International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) World Maritime Day theme for the year 2019, is “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community”. The theme gives IMO the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality in line with the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, and to highlight the important, yet under-utilized, contribution of women within the maritime sector. The theme gives IMO the opportunity to work with relevant maritime stakeholders achieve the SDG by fostering an environment in which women are identified and selected for career development opportunities in maritime administrations, ports and maritime training institutes and to encourage more conversation for gender equality in the maritime space.

Current status

7. Since 2017, the SPC and IMO supported the establishment of State Women In Maritime Associations (State WIMA) in eight (8)1 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to elevate the voice, visibility and engagement of women in the sector. These State WIMAs play a critical role alongside parallel national efforts to increase women’s representation and pool of women in the sector to contribute to gender equality.

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1 Fiji WIMA, Cook Islands WIMA, Kiribati WIMA, Nauru WIMA, Solomon Islands WIMA, PNG WIMA, Tonga WIMA, Tuvalu WIMA, and Vanuatu WIMA. PNG was established in 2007 when this work originally began but the rest since the reengagement work post 2016.
8. Since April 2018, the Pacific Women In Maritime Association (PacWIMA) Secretariat Office is hosted by the National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) of Papua New Guinea, which provides office space and direct administrative support, including a permanent paid officer whose work is to promote activities and networking of the Women In Maritime in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands region. This development is an important milestone in the establishment and long-term sustainability of Women In Maritime regional network. In addition, Papua New Guinea, as a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), has access to gender network and initiatives following the APEC Women and the Economy Forum held in Papua New Guinea on 7 September 2018.

9. PacWIMA, with the support of its Secretariat and its host country, has progressed its objectives in several areas:

   a) Through PacWIMA network, three women from the Pacific (Fiji, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea) were recipients of the IMO Fellowship in 2018 to attend the Port Senior Management Programme at the Galilee International Management Institute in Israel;

   b) Several side meetings were organized for Pacific women in maritime at the first Regional Workshop of the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre in the Pacific (MTCC-Pacific), APHoMSA sessions in 2017-2019;

   c) Increase of women’s participation at the national flag State inspection trainings in Samoa (2018); Vanuatu and Kiribati (2019); and Technical workshop on Disaster Response Planning and Data Recovery in Niue (2019);

   d) Three women from Papua New Guinea became the first certified and qualified women to handle and operate the new rubber-tyred gantry (RTG) cranes, trained in Manila, the Philippines at the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTS) headquarters in March 2019;

   e) Increase visibility of inspirational and success stories from individual women in the sector, resulting in more awareness of maritime professional career opportunities; and

   f) Improved connections and links established among other regional associations and global maritime institutions such as World Maritime University (WMU) and International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) to support and consider funding more women from the Pacific Islands region.

10. The regional and national networks, with the support from SPC, IMO and Papua New Guinea (as host of PacWIMA Secretariat), clearly demonstrate the potential to contribute to achieving SDG 5 in the maritime sectors of PICTs. These arrangements provide evidence that progress can be made with support from the highest levels of political leadership of PICTs and technical assistance from regional and international partners, such as SPC and IMO, to mainstream gender in their maritime programmes or projects and offer opportunities for women in capacity development activities and meetings.

11. The goal of the regional strategy is to create and contribute to a sustainable maritime community by providing a more inclusive, safe working environment, equal opportunities and fair treatment for all Pacific women in the maritime sector. The strategy establishes a vision for the Pacific region supported by three key strategic pillars: i) Recognition of leadership and contribution of women in the maritime sector; ii) Visibility of women in the maritime sector; and iii) Capacity building for women in the maritime sector. Monitoring and reporting progress will be implemented by PacWIMA with the support of its partners, IMO and SPC (See Annex A: Regional Strategy for Pacific Women In Maritime (2020-2024)).

Issues

12. It is sometimes considered improper for women to work in the maritime sector because of the perceived issue of promiscuity at sea and the perceptions that this is not a safe place for women to work both on board ships and ashore. There are also expectations about a woman’s place being at home, caring for her family, and employment on board a ships takes a woman away from home
for a long time. Such social norms has been a major impediment to women’s work in the maritime community and is persistent in the Pacific.

13. Through better recognition and visibility of existing women maritime leaders and workers, the maritime community must engage all private and public maritime operators and communities to promote and facilitate women and girls engagement in the Pacific maritime sector. Using Women in Maritime national networks, Pacific islands governments should address gender equality in maritime as a national cause and include gender perspectives in maritime capacity development and employment. Given the lack of qualified people in the Pacific maritime sector, there are opportunities for employment both on board ships and ashore, including positions in port engineering, logistics, maritime administration, ship-building, commercial marine insurance, to name a few.

14. Women in leadership roles is still rare in the Pacific maritime sector because the sector has traditionally been a male dominated sector. This is evidenced by the high number of women occupying low level and general service and administration positions both on-board ships and ashore. This creates a vicious cycle making difficult the selection of these female professionals to attend highly technical vocational trainings and higher education qualifications nationally, regionally and in reputable maritime universities such as WMU and IMLI.

15. Governments need to work closely with private and public maritime operators, national Women in Maritime networks and development partners to develop and adopt work-place policy and processes that promotes gender inclusivity and equality. These proactive policies and processes will support the increase of female participation in vocational training and education and access positions at various levels in the maritime sector. This should be supported by comprehensive baseline information and data on women in the Pacific maritime sector, undertaken without delay to update information and data of women in the maritime to identify needs and gaps and use every capacity development and employment opportunities to facilitate access to all women and girls.

Recommendations

16. Transport Ministers are invited to:
   i. **Endorse** the Regional Strategy for Pacific Women in Maritime (2020-2024);
   ii. **Commit** to implement priority actions of the Strategy such as:
      a. Collecting, through national and regional networks, reliable and accurate data and information on women employed in the Pacific maritime sector;
      b. Facilitating participation of Pacific Women in Maritime focal points to meetings and major events at the regional and national levels to increase visibility and empower them with knowledge on current issues within the maritime sector;
      c. Supporting national Women in Maritime networks to conduct in-country promotion and visibility campaigns in schools and communities;
   iii. **Commit** to dedicate resources of the maritime administration for the support of establishment and/or operations of Women in Maritime network;
   iv. **Agree** to facilitate access of women and girls to education and vocational trainings and proactively identify female candidates with ambitious targets to increase the number of women and girls trained; and
   v. **Request** development partners to coordinate support for the implementation of the strategy and implement assistance programme to achieve the Strategy’s key results.

[16 August 2019]
Annex A: Regional Strategy for Pacific Women In Maritime (2020-2024)