

# HORIZON

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01: EDITOR'S NOTE

## WOMEN MAKING WAVES

*While the world has made great strides towards gender equality over the last few decades, disparities between men and women still exist. This is evident in shipping, which historically has been a very specialised and male-dominated industry. But this is slowly changing.*

Today, much focus and efforts are made to encourage women to pursue careers in the world of maritime. We are heartened that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) supports gender equality, and has been making a concerted effort to help women in maritime through their policies, training and employment opportunities.

“Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” is IMO’s World Maritime Day theme this year. In this issue of *HORIZON*, we have the honour of featuring women at the helm who have risen through the ranks, women who are passionate about the industry and who serve as inspirational examples in the maritime sphere.

In *Feature*, we profile five inspiring women in maritime who are leaders in their respective fields - Ms Quah Ley Hoon, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), Ambassador Mary Seet-Cheng, IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador for Singapore, Ms Mary Liew, General Secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union, Ms Lu Su Ling, Head of Baltic Exchange Asia, and Ms Magdalene Chew, President of the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association Singapore. They shared with us the challenges and opportunities of holding leadership roles in the maritime industry.

We are pleased to announce that the MPA Academy will be enhancing our cooperation with the World Maritime University (WMU) on training and capacity building. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by MPA Chief Executive and WMU President Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry in Malmo, Sweden. Dr Doumbia-Henry also spoke to *HORIZON* about her priorities for the university, and the challenges and opportunities for women in the maritime world.

As one of the areas of cooperation under the MOU, MPA Academy hosted students from WMU to a five-day study visit in Singapore to gain a first-hand understanding of port management practices. *HORIZON* spoke to five of WMU's female students to share their views to young women who want to join the maritime sector.

Over the years, MPA Academy's alumni community has grown to more than 250 members from Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East, the Americas, the Caribbean and Oceania. In *Interview*, two women from the alumni - one from South Africa, the other from Singapore - talk about their personal experiences in carving out a maritime career and what it takes to succeed in a male-dominated industry.

We bring you the highlights of Ms Godelieve van Dooren's talk on "Building a Workplace for the Future in an Age of Automation and Disruption" that was presented at the MPA Workplan Seminar on 21 February. Ms Godelieve is a Partner at Mercer and she shared her thoughts on how mindsets and approaches need to change as technological advancements disrupt industries across the globe.

In *People*, we went onsite to catch up with Ms Brenda Teo, MPA Project Manager of Tuas Port Development (Engineer) and the only female engineer on her team, to get her take on working on a mega project and her experience in shaping the future Tuas Mega Port in Singapore.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *HORIZON*. Take a moment to appreciate the contributions of women in these pages, and a celebration of the fact that the sea knows no gender.

**Tan Suan Jow**  
Dean, MPA Academy



02: FEATURE

## NOT JUST A MAN'S WORLD - WOMEN MARITIME LEADERS

BY RAHITA ELIAS

The maritime industry has long been perceived as being male dominated. However, with technological and societal changes, women are making significant inroads into this important economic sector with its extensive kaleidoscope of career opportunities. Here we profile five truly inspiring maritime women, who are leaders in their respective fields.

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*My key message to women keen to work in a male-dominated industry like shipping is – be yourself. You are recruited because we think you can do the job.*

**QUAH LEY HOON**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE (MPA)**

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### Quah Ley Hoon

Chief Executive

Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

*When I joined MPA on Jan 1 this year, I became our organisation's first female CE. It wasn't something that I thought to be a big deal; after all, I have never considered gender when it comes to how I work and operate in a business environment. As a CE, I told myself that I would operate as any CE, male or female, would – working to ensure that MPA works towards fulfilling its mission and vision. On this broader level, gender is irrelevant.*



### More can be done for women

While I do not let gender get into how I work, I understand that the maritime industry is traditionally regarded as a male-dominated industry, especially when it comes to seafaring and offshore work.

As a woman, I told myself that I would like to do what I can to help ease more women in the sectors, especially if it is within my sphere of influence.

To start off, being the first woman MPA CE, I can hopefully inspire more women to join the industry.

As it is, within MPA even before I joined, I am proud to say that women make up about half of the senior management team. This is a strong testament to our enduring commitment to gender equality, ensuring that opportunities are made available to anyone.

Our senior female executives have certainly had an impact on the industry. For instance, Ms Tan Beng Tee (MPA Assistant CE (Development)), was awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards by both *Lloyd's List* and *Seatrade*. This underscores the fact that our MPA women executives have been able to work within the group dynamics of a male-dominated industry and go beyond the male-female divide. They are the trailblazers – a shining example of what women can achieve in shipping.



That said, I believe more can be done to help women navigate the male-dominated sea that is shipping. I would certainly like to help them do so. In particular, I would be more sensitive to the needs of working mothers, who have the additional challenge of juggling work with family. I myself have three children who are my pride and joy – so I understand my fellow working mums' challenges.

### **Balancing the industry**

Overall, I hope that women would not be daunted by the fact that the maritime industry, particularly seafaring is dominated by men. In fact, I encourage women to join us and balance up the industry.

In Singapore, we have been seeing more females joining the industry as seafarers, charterers, operators, shipbrokers, and maritime lawyers in recent years. Indeed, we have been actively working to attract more females into the maritime industry by promoting a diverse maritime ecosystem and its accompanying suite of attractive career opportunities in the ancillary services such as shipchartering, shipbroking, ship financing and so on. So the opportunities are there are for the picking.

### **Be yourself**

My key message to women keen to work in a male-dominated industry like shipping is – be yourself. You are recruited because we think you can do the job.

There are various layers behind group dynamics. Gender is just one lens through which we view people. Other factors come into play such as age, culture, and personal upbringing – so don't automatically self-divide based on gender.

If there is one piece of advice I can give – As a woman in a male-dominated sector, if you feel uncomfortable with your male counterparts, I would encourage you to articulate your concern and talk it through so that your colleagues can understand where you're coming from – so speak up.

On a broader level, everyone – whether male or female – has a vital role to play in the maritime eco-system. MPA is very much part of this eco-system, and I am gratified to be working as one with my colleagues and my tripartite partners to promote and improve Maritime Singapore.



### Working as one

As MPA CE, I have three key priorities. The first is to ensure that MPA moves as one organisation towards our core mission: To develop and promote Singapore as a premier global hub port and an international maritime centre, and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests.

Working as one is more important today more than ever before because we are now dealing with a lot more issues that cut across our various divisions. For example, in managing a crisis, the communications team will have to work closely with the operations team who are on the ground. If that crisis were international in nature, then our international and legal teams would also be involved. All these teams would have to work in concert to resolve the situation in a way that synchs up with our core mission.

Secondly, we will further anchor our role in keeping our waters safe and enhance our standing as an international maritime hub.

Third, we will ensure that projects already underway, such as the Next-Generation Port in Tuas, stay on track even as we continue planning for the future to stay ahead of the competition.

To achieve all these, we also need to work as one with our partners – the other governmental agencies, the industry players, the industry associations and the unions. Then there are our affiliates such as Singapore Maritime Foundation and Singapore Maritime Institute as well as the universities, which are Singapore's centres of excellence. Combined, our maritime industry is quite a big ecosystem.





### Change ahead

To ensure the viability of this ecosystem, I believe that innovation is vital especially since our industry is in the process of being disrupted. Unfortunately, I don't have a crystal ball that predicts the shape and the impact of the coming disruption. But if there's new competition coming in, especially from another sector, then the disruption could be exponential. So we need to position ourselves for it. If we look at other industries though, we can see the potential sources of disruption. For instance, ridesharing apps, such as Grab and Gojek, are disrupting Singapore's taxi industry.

Similarly in shipping, the disruption could come from the technology sector. The top 10 companies, which have the capital needed to invest in a capital-intensive industry like shipping, are the technology and the platform giants. Also, tech start-ups are creating innovative solutions that could improve the efficiency and productivity of the maritime industry. So is that an area where we could be disrupted by another industry? It could well be.

Other players from the logistic and connectivity chain could also come into the shipping industry. Retailers, too, could decide to invest in ships to facilitate faster shipping of their goods. This means that we could see a vertical or horizontal injection into our industry.

Whatever the shape of the disruption, the maritime industry is headed for a major sea change. As the industry gears up for this disruption, we will need talented people to take it to the next level. This means that our industry offers a wealth of career opportunities for all, whatever their gender. So please join us on this exciting voyage.



### Mary Seet-Cheng

MPA Special Adviser and International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Goodwill Maritime Ambassador for Singapore

*I started out in the maritime industry in 1997 when I joined the MPA and served as its Director, Policy Division, till my retirement in 2006. Even after that, I retained my connection with MPA as its Special Adviser.*

Then when the IMO decided to ask Member States to appoint IMO goodwill ambassadors to promote awareness of the maritime sector and its careers to young people, MPA asked me to take on that function as well.



### Profiling the industry

As a Maritime Ambassador, I go out to meet young Singaporeans to help them appreciate better the interesting career opportunities in the maritime industry.

Our initial problem was not enough publicity was being given to maritime industry. That was one of the reasons why the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) was established. In fact, SMF was the last thing I did before retiring.

A key job of SMF is to enhance our young people's knowledge and perception of the maritime sector, as well as to improve their educational opportunities. SMF is the nexus for the tripartite collaboration between industry, unions and government to achieve these goals.

All the information about the educational and career opportunities in Singapore's maritime industry can be found on its Maritime Singapore Connect portal (<https://www.maritimesgconnect.com/>). The wealth of information on the site on scholarships, jobs and so on bodes very well in terms of bringing people into our industry.



### **Nature of maritime jobs changing**

One thing that young people should understand about the maritime industry is that technology has changed and continues to change its nature. In the old days, before containerisation and cranes, the dockworkers had to physically carry the cargo on board. You needed brute strength then.

Not so long ago, port crane operators had to climb up the equivalent of eight storeys to operate the machinery. Today, they can control the cranes from an office using a joystick.

Technology has also changed ship operations. Ship engine rooms used to be greasy and dirty. Now with automation, they are quiet and clean.

### **Kaleidoscope of careers**

We also highlight the fact that the maritime industry offers a wide range of career opportunities, from seafaring to land-based jobs.

The most problematic area, manpower wise, continues to be seafaring because it means being at sea and away from home for long stretches. However, for those with an adventurous spirit, a seafaring job can be quite attractive. The thing is how to catch the attention and engage the interest of the right people.

A major concern among many would-be seafarers is – Is there life after the sea? The answer is yes.

One of our key messages to young people is that you don't have to stay at sea your whole life. For example, after you've made captain, there are multiple pathways to shore-based career opportunities in ports, shipyards, shipping companies and so on.

It's actually quite wonderful how the maritime industry offers so many career possibilities and opportunities. Which other sector can offer you a lifetime employment that is so varied and exciting – where you keep learning and growing your career, and not get bored?

It is one attraction we emphasise, especially now when people are talking about today's job being gone tomorrow. In shipping, the jobs keep evolving but they are still there. For instance, even if autonomous shipping becomes a reality, we will still need people to operate the ship from the office, ship surveyors, and so on. It's an industry that opens the door to all sorts of opportunities – and that really excites me.

I also like to highlight that a seafaring career pays well, and if you are good, you can progress quickly.

### Attracting both men and women to seafaring

With the shortage in seafarers, I think it's important for the industry to attract both men and women. Today, seafaring remains the most heavily male-dominated area within the maritime career spectrum. However, the seafaring gender profile is changing gradually. Certainly in the West, a female captain is no longer so unique that you can only point to one or two or three – so the change is happening already.

In our efforts to attract more young people to the maritime industry, SMF is engaging them as well as their parents. We need to educate the parents as well to assure them that their children are embarking on a wonderful career path, offering a lifetime career that has so many options. And it works – the person who signs up for a diploma in nautical studies for example has the support of their family who won't pressure them to leave the sector.

In all, I think we have successfully created a buzz in the maritime community, an enthusiasm that is evident among the young people joining us.

### Proving your worth

It would be wonderful if more women were to join the industry – whether at sea or on shore. I think they shouldn't be put off by the fact that it is male dominated.

As long as you prove your worth, and continue to grow your skills, you will do well. When I started out in the diplomatic service in the 1970s, women were a real distinct minority. But my whole approach to life is people have to take me as I am. I show my ability, I work hard and I prove my worth. If the person I work for doesn't appreciate me because I am a woman then he's not worth working for, and it's time to find someone who does. That attitude has always been with me.

The importance of women in the industry is underscored by IMO's decision to make "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community" the theme of this year's World Maritime Day. To me, empowering is about equal education, equal opportunities, providing information, breaking down prejudices, and garnering support from parents and peers. We have all of that in Singapore. Our maritime ecosystem has been totally revamped and upgraded over the last decade. In a lot of ways, we are really ahead of many other countries. We even have a woman as MPA CE – and what a wonderful year to appoint her.



*It would be wonderful if more women were to join the industry – whether at sea or on shore. I think they shouldn't be put off by the fact that it is male dominated. As long as you prove your worth, and continue to grow your skills, you will do well.*



### Mary Liew

General Secretary

Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)



*Photo credit: Singapore Maritime Officers' Union*

*SMOU's mission is to be a professional global tripartite union, championing seafarers' interests and adding value to the maritime community and beyond.*

### Putting passion into action

I joined SMOU in 1980s. It was a time when the big bosses in the shipping companies were predominantly male. Women were then supposed to be seen and not heard. They would be in the lower-paying jobs while men were the managers and the executives.

Thankfully, I was able to step forward to serve and earn the trust of my male counterparts through hard work and passion.

This passion was sparked early on in my time in SMOU. I had started out in the Finance Department. In the course of my work, I came across cases where seafarers were exploited and had not been paid for months. I was appalled. Their predicament sparked my passion to help them in any way I could.

To illustrate the magnitude of this exploitation: Over the past 25 years, we have claimed more than US\$24 million in unpaid wages. Today, even though there are many more responsible shipping companies, we still have ships that come into our Singapore port with seafarers that have been abandoned. The seafarers who come to us trust us to help them to claim and be paid their hard-earned unpaid wages. Such help was and still is critical as it deals with the seafarers' bread-and-butter issues.

The unflagging dedication of our SMOU leaders and my mentor and then-General Secretary, Brother Thomas Tay, to helping our seafarers inspired and continues to inspire me to give my all to this cause.

I am blessed to have a mentor like Brother Thomas, now Emeritus Secretary General, and my executive committee. Through the years, they have trusted and worked with me, and understood my passion for reaching out to seafarers and people. They saw a role that I could play as industrial relations in Singapore moved from confrontational to collaborative tripartism.

### **Singapore's national treasure**

In fact, I think that one of the challenges we face is maintaining our harmonious industrial relations. Singapore's collaborative tripartism has been touted as our country's national treasure and basic ingredient to success. While it takes years to build to where it is today, we must never take it for granted.

As the Chinese saying goes 家和万事兴 - if the family lives in harmony, all affairs will prosper. Likewise, if our maritime family – Government, Employers and Unions do our parts to align ourselves in the shared objective to grow the maritime industry and share its productivity gains with workers, and with our partners looking out to support each other especially when going through tough times, I think we will survive and accomplish a win-win-win outcome for all parties.

I am humbled to be elected last year to be the first woman Vice-President in Asia Pacific of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), representing the women transport workers around the world. I was also honoured to be re-elected into the International Labour Organization (ILO) Governing Body in 2017 representing the Workers group.

I hope to share with fellow unionists around the world our spirit of tripartism, and fly the Singapore flag high through my international roles.

 *...if you can stick to your passion and not deviate from your goals, you will be able to flourish as a leader in an industry of limitless opportunities.* 

### **Championing opportunities for women**

Today, we already have female Officers, Captains, Engineers and Chief Engineers, and I foresee the trend gaining momentum as long as female seafarers can have a safe and conducive work environment. Further work needs to be done to attract more women to the maritime industry. Around the world, I believe a concerted tripartite effort is key to encouraging women to join this male-dominated industry.

Employers, for example, should be open to giving women placement on board their ship. They should also ensure a safe work environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment for all their crew – women and men alike.

As for the men in the industry, I say, "Have mutual respect, extend the same support to women as your mentors did." Women expect fair, not preferential, treatment. I strongly encourage women to also take the challenge to step forward to serve in leadership capacity.



*Photo credit: Singapore Maritime Officers' Union*

### **Stay the course**

However, women thinking of becoming a ship officer need to understand that, even with the support of their employers and their colleagues, a seafaring career is not a walk in the park or a smooth-sailing river cruise. It is tough for both women and men.

However, if you can stick to your passion and not deviate from your goals, you will be able to flourish as a leader in an industry of limitless opportunities.

There are abundant opportunities in the Maritime industry, be it at sea or on shore. When a Master or Chief Engineer decided that one day their career at sea was not necessarily lifelong, she or he can undertake key management roles ashore. I strongly encourage our female officers and cadets to work towards the top and stay focused with a positive mindset.

This brings me to my next point. Women should also be given fair opportunities to take on leadership positions. Today, we have more women in leadership positions in the shipping industry, from sea to shore. I am delighted that we now have the first Women Chief Executive in MPA, Ms Quah Ley Hoon and she is an engaging and capable lady. This proves that given the right opportunity, women can excel as well as men.

However, I feel that the pace is not changing fast enough and I hope to be able to champion more opportunities for women, both at the national level and international level.

### **Developing the Singapore Core**

On another important ongoing efforts, we need to grow opportunities for the maritime workforce and ensure its relevance as the industry is undergoing a major disruption. At SMOU, we continue to be focused on developing the Singapore Core in the maritime industry. Developing the Core has always been at the heart of what we do. It not only ensures our seafarers are ready for the future but also adds value to our Collective Bargaining Agreement companies, and enhances Singapore as an International Maritime Hub.

To ensure that our members remain future relevant, continued training in partnership with management helps to transform the lives of people. I was very touched when some of our Tripartite Maritime Training Award cadets came up to me to thank the union and its tripartite partners for giving them the opportunity to launch into a new career and climb the socio-economic ladder.

Also, our training arm, Wavelink Maritime Institute, is helping to equip our seafarers with the right skillsets for the digitalised economy.

### **Importance of social dialogue**

All in all, union work is tough, challenging and is a thankless job. We have to deal with people from diverse backgrounds who have different needs. Yet it is rewarding to see mindsets changed and right values being inculcated. As union leaders, we need to enhance the welfare and protect the jobs of our members and at the same time to support our employers to do well so that they can ensure continuity in members' employment. Personally, I feel that being a union leader is a calling.

Seeing the lives of our members being impacted positively is both fulfilling and satisfying. Especially in the maritime industry, it can be a wonderful opportunity to meet interesting people from all walks of life – from seafarers to ship managers and ship owners to local and international regulators. Such social dialogue is important to build trust, cooperation and continuity in conversation with the Government, management and seafarers to balance the needs of our workers with those of the employers. This tripartite collaboration will ensure that our seafarers can navigate the seas of disruption as we sail towards digitalisation waters.

### Lu Su Ling

Head of Baltic Exchange Asia

*I'd like to start off by describing what the Baltic Exchange is. Although the Baltic is a well-established institution in Europe, where it has been operating from London for over 250 years and has a strong brand, its presence in Asia is comparatively limited.*

The Baltic Exchange is a maritime membership organisation with an international community of over 650 member firms encompassing the majority of the world's shipping interests – shipbrokers, freight derivative brokers, trading houses and shipowners as well as maritime-related professionals. As the world's only independent source of maritime market information for the trading and settlement of physical and derivative contracts, we provide freight market indices to our members, data subscribers and market-data vendors.



### Leveraging on Singapore's hub role

As Head of Baltic Exchange Asia, my role is to work with the team here to grow the business. In Asia, we have about 130 members – about 30% of whom signed up after the Baltic Exchange joined the Singapore Exchange (SGX) family in November 2016. Singapore as a major global commodity and shipping hub is naturally well-represented among our members, but there is so much more scope to grow our membership and data-subscriber base, and expand our services across the region.

We have various plans underway. For example, to capitalise on Singapore's position as the world's busiest container transshipment hub, we have hired Nadia Mirza as Container Business Development Manager. With her wealth of experience from Howe Robinsons and Clarksons, she is working to develop the Freightos Baltic Index (FBX) Global Container Index into a credible benchmark.

The Baltic recently launched an escrow service to facilitate the sale and purchase of vessels. We also plan to roll out new training programmes in Asia. We will be doing an initial run of two risk-management courses for shipping professionals in mid-2019. With these programmes and others in the pipeline, the Baltic Exchange is on an exciting growth trajectory in Asia.



“ So to women who are keen to join the maritime industry, I would say, “Go for it!” ... there has never been a better time to be a woman looking to make a mark in traditionally male-dominated fields. This includes the maritime industry. ”

### Doing new things

For myself, I am relatively new to the world of shipping since the bulk of my career has been in the financial services sector. However, I have always relished learning and doing new things. As a result, I have held a variety of roles in the private and public sectors.

After graduation, I went into auditing before moving to corporate finance. I joined SGX in 2001, and spent a number of years in corporate strategy and business development. Over the past two years, I was chief operating officer at an SGX subsidiary, the Energy Market Company (EMC), which operates the wholesale electricity market in Singapore.

Joining the Baltic Exchange has given me the opportunity to return to business development, but in a much more diverse and international industry. While it is never easy to dive into doing something new, it has been satisfying to be able to look back on my career and the opportunities to contribute in a meaningful and impactful way each time. I hope to do the same in my role at the Baltic Exchange.

Since becoming part of the maritime community, I realise that as with many industries, shipping has its own tightly knit community of stakeholders, and technical jargon (more than its fair share!), and is undergoing an unprecedented wave of change, such as digitalisation. There is a lot to learn about the maritime world.

However, I come to work each morning ready to take on this challenge – picking up market knowledge on the job and building relationships over time. What I have found is that the people with whom I have interacted so far have generally been helpful and welcoming, willing to impart knowledge, and share their networks and contacts.



### Female power

I have also found that the maritime industry is no different from the finance and energy industries in one aspect at least: it is dominated by men.

Having said that, I have already met quite a number of women with senior responsibilities in shipping in the short time I have been with the Baltic Exchange, which is very encouraging. The MPA is leading the way on this front with its Chief Executive, Ms Quah Ley Hoon, and its Assistant Chief Executive (Development), Ms Tan Beng Tee.

So to women who are keen to join the maritime industry, I would say, "Go for it!" Because of the concerted push globally for workplace diversity and gender parity, there has never been a better time to be a woman looking to make a mark in traditionally male-dominated fields. This includes the maritime industry.

Like many other sectors, our industry is on the cusp of disruption. This means that anyone who can bring a fresh and, perhaps unconventional, perspective to the business – whether by virtue of being new to the industry, or because of gender or other factors – and who can execute well, stands as good a chance of success as an industry stalwart.

### Magdalene Chew

President

Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) Singapore

*I have been involved with the maritime industry for about 20 years, and joined WISTA in 2006. That was the year when the Singapore chapter was the host for the organisation's annual conference and annual general meeting (AGM).*

#### Women-focus organisation

I got to know about it through some of my contacts here. Before that, I didn't know that there was a women-focused shipping organisation. I was fascinated and excited by the idea, and I was proved right. I still remember that event – the opening reception at the zoo, and the gala dinner. It was exhilarating being at a shipping event where the female representation was so different from the usual gender balance seen at most other shipping events.



I've been to quite a few WISTA AGMs and conferences since then. The energy is always different from the usual maritime gatherings. It isn't only because women make up the majority. It is also because people were there because they wanted to be there. The women attending the events often have to use their own money and their own time to attend WISTA events – and this makes a huge difference in the energy among the delegates as well as the speakers.

WISTA started out in 1974 in Europe as a networking organisation for women in the maritime industry. Today, WISTA has 44 chapters and 3,000 members around the world. It's a truly international organisation.

Beyond networking, we are working on several initiatives such as creating a database of potential women speakers on various topics so as to balance the gender mix at shipping conferences which tend to be very male dominated.



### Working with IMO

Last year, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) granted WISTA consultative status. This is a huge recognition of WISTA's role in the global maritime community. This year and going forward, we will be working very closely with the IMO to organise conferences, social media events, and raise awareness of what needs to be done to increase female participation in the maritime community. This synchs up perfectly with this year's World Maritime theme of "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community".

WISTA and IMO are working together to gather more data on the gender balance in the industry. One huge problem when discussing diversity and gender parity in the maritime community is the lack of statistics. The only figure available is that only one per cent of seafarers are female – and that statistic is a few years old.

As a result, nobody really knows the current gender equation across the maritime community, not just in seafaring but in the management levels too. Data gathering is clearly needed.

As a whole, we are raising our profile to create greater awareness of our organisation and our events through social media channels like Facebook and LinkedIn. We also launched a new website this year, with each country having its own page.

### Diverse membership

In Singapore, we have been very active too. WISTA Singapore, which was the first chapter in Asia, is in its 21st year. We currently have about 50 to 60 individual members and 16 corporate members. Last year to celebrate our 20th anniversary, we hosted the Spring Meeting of WISTA International, and held an Asian Conference here.

Apart from individual membership, which are for women only, we also recently introduced corporate membership in Singapore. Corporate members, which today includes law firms, offshore services companies, P&I Clubs, shipowners, global trading companies, can send up to three people – women and men – to our events at member rates. I'd like to mention that our events are never for women only. It's just that individual membership is only for women.

We hold various events which have to cater to our very diverse membership. We have lawyers, bankers, shipowners, brokers, etc so the topics have to be interesting to all. A prime example is a recent talk organised by WISTA by Dr Donna Brunero from the National University of Singapore. Given that this is Singapore's bicentennial, she talked about the maritime scene here before the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles. Her talk showed that our maritime heritage is so much older than most of us think!

It is certainly true that Singapore's maritime roots run deep and wide. Today, it remains very much an integral part of our economy.

### Maritime industry's impact

For myself, I find the maritime industry to be both interesting and exciting. Today, I am a partner in Asia Legal LLC, a Singapore law firm with a formal alliance with HFW Singapore. Both firms have a strong maritime clientele base.

However, I didn't start my career in the shipping industry. I actually began my career in general commercial litigation in a big law firm, and moved to the shipping department after about a year. The work proved to be both challenging and rewarding because every case was different. Whether the claim is small or big, the legal issues can be quite complex. Many people may not be aware of this; a lot of contractual principles in common law actually derive from old maritime cases.

This underscores the maritime industry's impact on the world at large. It's such an exciting and overarching industry that I hope more women will join us. More, of course, needs to be done to encourage women to become part of our community, especially in seafaring. One per cent is just not acceptable.

The maritime industry is important to everybody because almost everything we use and have come here on a ship. It's not an industry that will fade away so job stability is not an issue. Physicality is much less of an issue because of technological advancements. Being away for long periods of time from your family is less of an issue because of communication channels like Skype and FaceTime.

Therefore, I would urge women thinking of a maritime career to be open minded and make informed decisions. It is the path less trodden so of course it would be the more challenging track. There will always be the naysayers, but if you take the path less trodden it will inevitably make you brave, strong, adventurous and resilient, and with these attributes, success in any area is almost guaranteed.



“ There will always be the naysayers, but if you take the path less trodden it will inevitably make you brave, strong, adventurous and resilient, and with these attributes, success in any area is almost guaranteed. ”



03: CONFERENCE

WMU  
INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
CONFERENCE  
BY RAHITA ELIAS

*The promotion of a diverse maritime eco-system and technological developments are helping to attract more women into joining the maritime industry.*

This was the message of MPA's Chief Executive, Ms Quah Ley Hoon, who was invited to speak at The Third World Maritime University International Women's Conference. Held in April in Malmö, Sweden, the two-day event adopted the same theme as that of the International Maritime Organization's World Maritime Day, which is Empowering Women in the Maritime Community.

She explained Singapore's maritime strategy to the conference delegates, saying, "To continue growing as a global maritime hub, we have to continue investing and growing our most precious resource – the maritime workforce human capital."

She noted that the maritime industry, while perceived to be male dominated, is actually "diverse and provides so many different career paths and opportunities".

Singapore is actively promoting this diversity in the maritime eco-system at home as it creates a suite of attractive career opportunities, including shore-based jobs in ship chartering, broking, financing and law, and draws more women into the industry.

Ms Quah added, "I am glad to say that in Singapore, we have been seeing more females joining the industry as seafarers, charterers, operators, ship brokers, maritime lawyers in recent years."

In Singapore, more than 40 Singaporean women obtained their Certificate of Competency from 2014 to 2018, up from 24 from 2009 to 2013. MPA's Global Internship Award has seen a growing interest from female students for the maritime industry, more than tripling from six in 2014 to 22 last year.

### **Partnership with the World Maritime University**

During the visit to the World Maritime University (WMU), Ms Quah also signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, President of the WMU, on MPA's academic cooperation with WMU on global maritime leadership training and capacity building. Following the launch of the enhanced technical training package for the IMO and its member states in 2018, MPA aims to further contribute to WMU's work in global maritime leadership development.



### Interview with Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry

*World Maritime University (WMU) president Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry speaks to Horizon about her priorities for the university, and the challenges and opportunities for women in the maritime world.*



*Photo credit: Christoffer Lomfors / WMU*

#### **Q:** *What are your priorities as President of WMU?*

As President, I am keenly aware that WMU must fulfil its mission of serving the international maritime and ocean community as the centre of excellence in education, research and capacity building in the maritime and ocean fields. We also have an essential role to play in helping governments and industry stakeholders around the world to implement and make progress on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, we need to make sure that we offer the best possible academic programmes that are attractive to students, have impact on the ground, and offer current and relevant expertise. This means that our faculty must constantly evaluate what they teach and research, to ensure continuous improvement.

To ensure that WMU's service is available into the future, my second priority is to ensure its long-term financial stability. We have to engage continuously with maritime and oceans stakeholders to make sure that this happens – and to make sure that our Endowment Fund continues to grow! The Endowment Fund, launched in October 2015, is essential to ensure that we continue to provide to the world expertise that is responsive to developments.

**Q: *What are your thoughts on MPA appointing its first woman chief executive?***

This is a tremendous milestone for the maritime industry and for women! Ms Quah Ley Hoon took up her post on 1 January 2019, a timely appointment that gave action on the ground to the International Maritime Organization's World Maritime Day theme for 2019: "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community". It is the best example of real action to ensure real results!

It was also really encouraging to see the Government of Singapore's famously even-handed policies extending into this technical field, which has traditionally been so male-dominated. By bringing in the best talent from a range of backgrounds, I believe that the MPA is making sure of a very bright future. We all know that gender equality is both a moral and a commercial imperative: Diverse teams get better results. So, I say, "Bravo!", to this appointment.

**Q: *Talking about empowering women, in which areas do they face the greatest difficulties, and what can be done to strengthen their position in these areas?***

It is clear that there are women working ashore. There are many lawyers working in maritime administrations, economists working in ports, and management experts in shipping companies as well as the female CEOs and COOs in the industry, in addition to the women who actually own shipping companies.

I see the following as the main problems for women who are or who want to be at sea. Getting a berth on board, even after an excellent maritime education, is very hard for many women. For those who do succeed in obtaining a berth, they are often harassed and bullied, ranging from the personal to the institutional, such as mandatory pregnancy testing. The work environment must be suitable for both men and women, in terms of both the physical amenities and the regulatory framework. Legislation has made it impossible for many women ashore to even imagine some of the slights and humiliations that are visited on their sisters onboard ships on a regular basis. National legislation around the world must now ensure that this situation ends. Port state control must also take these issues on in their inspections – #TimesUp.

Fortunately, women in the maritime sector do have the support of mentoring and networking organisations, particularly the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA). It's a matter of personal delight to me that the maritime sector is filled with such positive women.

**Q: *What are your own experiences as a woman in the maritime industry?***

I am incredibly fortunate in the degree of support across the board that I have received, and I have been throughout my career. My proudest achievement at the International Labour Organization was steering the process that led to the adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006. In this I had the most incredible back-up from shipowners, governments and seafarers' organisations. Of course there were challenges over the six years that the process took but the support was unwavering.

As the first female President of WMU, I must say that I am fortunate to enjoy tremendous support from all concerned to move the university forward.

I would encourage the current generation to act in the same way. Let's work together so that the next generation achieves more than us, regardless of gender.

**Q: *How would you rate Singapore in terms of its efforts in empowering women in the maritime sector?***

I know personally so many women in Singapore who occupy the most senior positions, including your President, Her Excellency Halimah Yacob. She is such an incredible woman, and I first knew her in the context of her service to the National Trades Union Congress. Another very senior woman whom I am privileged to know is Mary Liew, General Secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union.

Singapore is clearly a country that values and empowers women, a society that recognises that both men and women have important roles to play, even in areas that are traditionally male-dominated. Singapore is a role model for the rest of the world, and I am delighted to be associated with this remarkable country.



04: STUDY VISIT

## WOMEN IN MARITIME EMPOWERING THE FUTURE BY ANGELA CHEW

*4 to 8 March saw 17 World Maritime University (WMU) students from across the globe arriving in Singapore for a field study visit hosted by the MPA Academy (MPAA). Aimed at bringing lessons to life, the study visit enabled students from the WMU Master of Science in Maritime Affairs with specialisation in Port Management gain a first-hand understanding of port management practices in Singapore. As one of the areas of cooperation under the Memorandum of Understanding between MPAA and WMU, the field study trip seeks to enhance global maritime leadership training and capacity building for the international maritime community.*

In light of the International Maritime Organization (IMO's) naming "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community" as the theme for this year's World Maritime Day, we got five of WMU's female students to share their thoughts and experiences on being a woman in the maritime industry.

# HORIZON > 04: STUDY VISIT

WOMEN IN MARITIME: EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

## **Mbongalle Munge**

Chief of Service for  
Economic Promotion  
of Youth, Ministry  
of Youth Affairs  
and Civic Education  
Cameroon, Cameroon



## **Poontai Yatimaporn**

General Officer  
10 – Corporate  
Governance Division,  
Port Authority of  
Thailand, Thailand



## **Aye Nyein Zin**

Superintendent, Myanmar  
Maritime University,  
Myanmar



## **Calderon Cifuentes**

### **Simdy Marcela**

Head of Department  
of Logistical Services  
Ship, Columbian Navy,  
Columbia



## **Andriamahazomandimby**

### **Sahisedra**

### **Mbolamamy Willie**

IT assistant, Agence  
Portuaire Maritime et  
IT Assistant/Assistant  
Fluviale (APMF),  
Madagascar



### **Q:** *What do you do in the maritime industry?*

**Zin:** I work in port management, handling customer service and invoice preparation for the major shipping lines.

**Willie:** I am an analyst for search and rescue operations and handle the safety and security of port facilities.

**Poontai:** I work in the Port Authority of Thailand's corporate governance division, dealing with regulations and upholding governance issues, such as combating corruption.

**Simdy:** I am a naval officer of the Colombian Navy, I have been on board warships for five years, I have also worked in logistics management processes and for the last six years I have been the personal assistant of the President of Colombia, which has given me experience in operational, managerial and governmental terms of the maritime sector.

**Munge:** Currently, I am a youth counsellor. After I complete my studies at WMU, I will look for a job in the port sector.

### **Q:** *Why did you want to join the maritime industry?*

**Munge:** It was my childhood dream. When I was young, I used to admire men in uniforms on television and I thought the maritime industry was cool.

**Willie:** I wanted to be a seafarer when I was young. That scared my mum, as she felt it was a man's job. After I finished my degree in Information Technology, I wanted to do something related to the sea. So I applied to the maritime authority and was accepted.

**Poontai:** I want to contribute to Thailand and serve my country. The pay is better in private companies which is why you need to believe in what you do.

### **Q:** *How is it like being a woman in the maritime industry?*

**Simdy:** In the past, it was considered bad luck to have women on board ships. But after the hard work that women have put in over the years, the men now see women maritime officers as good luck. Change is never easy. Rather than considering men as enemies, women should think of them as partners on the same team.

**Poontai:** I used to work as training officer in human resources development division. At that time, I'm a new comer and had to work with the older generation and I find it a bit difficult to deal with them. Although we have women heading the support functions, the port operations side is still headed by men.

**Zin:** For the maritime course at the university in Myanmar, women are only allowed to pick engineering-related majors, but men can choose any of the majors. Also, many people will question what a woman is doing in the maritime field, as they think this sector is for men only.



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*Emotional intelligence is one of the most important skills for managers to develop, and women have a natural ability in this area.*

**CALDERON CIFUENTES  
SIMDY MARCELA**

”

### **Q:** *What do you think women bring to the table?*

**Simdy:** Emotional intelligence is one of the most important skills for managers to develop, and women have a natural ability in this area. Also, women can multitask and manage stress in a different way, as they are used to juggling both work and family responsibilities.

### **Q:** *Have you faced any discrimination at work?*

**Poontai:** My job involves training staff in the operations side. When I first started, they were not willing to listen to me. After a number of years on the job, they now know me better and have begun to trust me.

**Willie:** In my workplace, women are sometimes not consulted when planning meetings or involved in major decisions. During an emergency, they will always contact my male colleagues.



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*You must be brave.  
Have faith in yourself  
and what you want.*

**MBONGALLE MUNGE**

”

**Q:** *What advice do you have for young women who want to join the maritime sector?*

**Willie:** Just follow your dreams. If you want it, go for it. Don't listen to people, even if it's your own mother. You will not live the life you want if you listen to what people say.

**Munge:** You must be brave. Have faith in yourself and what you want. People will discourage you and say that it's a man's job. Ignore them and have confidence in your abilities.

**Poontai:** It's important to have a strong attitude and passion. Remember, nothing is too difficult for you.

**Zin:** You need to be mentally stronger, as most of the staff in the maritime industry are men.

**Simdy:** Don't take anything personally. At work, it's not about how you feel but how productive you are. Get involved, work hard and you will have opportunities. Also, I think it's important to establish a community for women to network where they can share their experiences and challenges. Such a platform for women will definitely empower society in a good way.



05: INTERVIEW

## CONVERSATIONS WITH MPA ACADEMY ALUMNI BY RAHITA ELIAS

*Two women from the MPA Academy alumni – one from Singapore, the other from South Africa – talk about their personal experiences in carving out a maritime career – the opportunities and challenges they have encountered and what it takes to succeed in a male-dominated industry.*

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*Do not underestimate the variety of jobs available or the variety of skills and expertise valued in the maritime and related sectors.*

**FARRAH MOHD FADIL, FIRST SECRETARY,  
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION  
AFFAIRS OFFICE, MARITIME AND PORT  
AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE [MPA]**

*I think my biggest joy was when I obtained my Officer of Watch Certificate of Competency which opened a new world for me.*

**CAPT THEMBELA TABOSHE,  
MASTER MARINER**

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### **Farrah Mohd Fadil**

First Secretary, International Maritime Organization Affairs Office  
Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore [MPA]

*As a teen, Farrah seized the opportunity to study abroad by accepting an MPA scholarship. Since then, the maritime industry has opened a world of opportunities for her.*



As an 18 year old, what I wanted more than anything was the opportunity to study overseas. So I applied for a Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) scholarship to do an undergraduate degree in Economics in London. I was quite familiar with MPA's work as my father had built his career in the port sector.

I then decided to pursue a Master of Science (MSc) in Shipping, Trade and Finance. While my Economics degree laid the groundwork for a logical way to look at a variety of issues, including the analytical techniques that could be deployed, I realised that I could learn more about its practical application in the maritime sector from the master's programme. I believe MPA also felt that it could be of value to the organisation as it allowed me a year's unpaid leave to complete the post-graduate degree.

During my post-graduate studies, I never felt that I was treated differently because I was a woman. It was when I joined the workforce that I realised how fortunate I was, as it soon became clear that women were not necessarily treated as equals by men, whether at sea or ashore.

I believe the starkest contrast between the number of men versus women in the shipping industry, would be amongst seafarers, marine and offshore engineers, and, perhaps, naval architects. I have no personal experience in these sectors so it's difficult for me to say if attitudes have changed. I can however share what I have heard from women training to be seafarers – that it remains more difficult for them to find employment.

Ashore, there are the maritime services such as broking, insurance, legal and finance as well as the shore-based operations of shipping companies, and, of course, the public agencies that serve the sector, such as MPA.



For the shore-based sectors, I think the challenges women face aren't specific to them being in shipping-related jobs. They are more likely to be the challenges which women face in general, such as being given fewer opportunities despite possessing the same credentials, and harassing behaviour.

For women with families, there are the challenges of balancing career with family, and whether company policy, bosses and/or the office environment make it easy to do so.



I am not sure that the attitudes of men towards women in shipping and the workplace have genuinely improved over the years. There may be some recognition that they need to be more aware of gender discriminating or harassing behaviour. In my view, this has more to do with the fear of possible consequences than with the understanding that such behaviour is inherently wrong.

That being said, I would like to think that we are seeing an increasing proportion of men from the younger generation, who have had more opportunities to benefit from exposure to more progressive and enlightened thinking, and genuinely embrace the idea of equality.

Based on my experience, my advice to young women considering a maritime career, is: Do not underestimate the variety of jobs available or the variety of skills and expertise valued in the maritime and related sectors. Women or men, I would encourage anyone to pursue a maritime career if that is what they want, and not let others convince them otherwise.

I recall clearly the time I first chaired a meeting at the International Maritime Organization. It was a maritime security working group. There was, at the start, unspoken concerns over the ability of a young Asian woman to successfully manoeuvre a group of rather more experienced and mature men on some quite sensitive issues. I did though, and that felt quite good.

I also had the opportunity to take part in the Maritime Public Leaders' Programme, which I really enjoyed. The course taught me that regardless of where you work and what you do, everyone faces the same problems and can benefit from the opportunity to share their experiences. It also provided me with the rare and valuable opportunity to meet with people from around the world who do the same work as me and face the same challenges as I do, and who want to discuss how best to deal with these challenges.

### Captain Thembela Taboshe

Master Mariner\*

Ship Surveyor/Deck Examiner, Durban South African Maritime Safety Authority [SAMSA]

*Thembela turned away from pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree and plotted a course for a sea-going career with the full support of her family. She talks about her personal experiences at the helm as a mariner and, occasionally a ship shrink.*



My initial intention was to study towards a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in choreography, but a family friend suggested a marine-related career path. The fact that it would not be an office-based job really sold the idea to me. It was only when I was in the industry that I developed a passion for it.

It helped that my family was very supportive. In fact, if I didn't know better I'd say they enjoyed not having me around much. Not everyone really understands what I do for a living but they were nonetheless supportive, I have family and friends who thought I had been working on a submarine, and it really didn't help that the company I was working for, at the time, was Safmarine. And then I went on to work for South African Maritime Safety Authority, better known as SAMSA and which often gets mistaken for Samsung, so I can safely say it will be a while until people actually know what I really do.

It is true that the seafaring community is a very male-dominated one. I often found myself being taken lightly because I am a female. I don't know why some were reluctant to welcome women on board because sometimes it works to their advantage. On some ships. I played the "ship shrink" as my male counterparts could speak to me of their emotional concerns during meal times or deep sea passages on the bridge. You hardly have men offering other men a shoulder to cry on so I found myself with that extra duty by default. I took it on because in a man's world, a woman found herself with an added responsibility.

Like any other job, my sea-going career has had its highs and lows, challenges and opportunities. I think my biggest joy was when I obtained my Officer of Watch Certificate of Competency which opened a new world for me. I found myself with whole new set of responsibilities, and was amazed at how well I eased into the new world of "adulthood".



Conversely, one of my biggest challenges on board was a practical one – finding safety gear that fit, especially fire and chemical suits. Fortunately for me, I had hit the jackpot. The company I was working for then already had women among their crew and were keen to hire more women and develop our skills and careers.

Unfortunately on the whole, I think the attitudes of men, especially those who had never sailed with or been exposed to female mariners, have not changed. They continue to be quite patronising. I still have to listen to men explaining to me what dry docking is, or how fast a knot is. I just sit through it because to some, seafaring is still a man's job.

But I think we're onto something now, especially with the International Maritime Organization naming 2019 as The Year of the Woman. So the initiatives are there, it's just that individuals need to be open to changing their mindsets.

Whether attitudes have changed or not, I would encourage women to join the industry, especially those that are keen on a career path similar to mine. In particular, I would encourage people to pursue maritime careers in the fields of economics, port management, legal and even naval architecture because there's still a great need for these types of expertise.

I also believe that people need to keep updating their skills and knowledge to remain relevant and up to date. Courses like the Port Management Programme, organised by MPA Academy, also help to hone our skills and update our knowledge base. I thoroughly enjoyed myself during the course. Out of 10, I'd definitely rate it an 11.

My biggest realisation from the course was that as representatives of National Authorities, we were all looking for ways to increase the efficiency of our ports and of international waters. One thing that stuck with me was how open, current and informative the speeches and lectures were. If anything, it was indicative that Singapore was a country that took great pride in its work and training – perhaps that's the reason why it's rated as one of the best in the world.

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\* *Since the writing of the article, Capt Taboshe has left SAMSA, and is now a Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) Manager in Oceana Group in Cape Town.*



06: HIGHLIGHTS

LOOKING AT  
1ST QUARTER 2019

World Maritime  
University Study Visit



Sharing Session by  
Capt Khong Shen Ping  
and Capt Wilson Chua

Sharing Session by  
Bilahari Kausikan





**Regional workshop on the Implementation of the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), Singapore**

**Bridge Resource Management Course**



**Fireside Chat with Ambassador Tommy Koh**

**LNG Bunkering Course**

**Accessing Confined Space for Safe Entry and Work Course**



**Chemical Safety Awareness Course**



07: TALK

## NAVIGATING THE WORK PLACE OF THE FUTURE BY ANGELA CHEW

*Change is constant. In recent years, technological advancements have been disrupting industries across the globe, leaving companies and individuals to navigate the rapidly evolving landscape.*

As part of the MPA Workplan Seminar 2019 on 21 February, Ms Godelieve van Dooren, a Partner at Mercer, spoke on “*Building a Workplace for the Future in an Age of Automation and Disruption*”. Targeting the logistics and maritime industry, she shared her thoughts on how mindsets and approaches need to change through the following six key points.



### #01: *“Co-opetition”, not competition*

With strong disruption from competitors outside the industry affecting diverse aspects of the transport and logistics space, it is critical that companies embrace their competitors to co-operate with them and develop new skills and capabilities. Some possibilities include sharing the talent pool among competing firms or having employees intern in other sectors.

### #02: *Continuous learning as jobs are reconfigured*

In most cases, automation will not replace whole jobs, only specific skillsets. Hence, individuals will need to acquire new capabilities and skills. Ms van Dooren highlighted three maritime technology trends – data analytics and intelligent systems, autonomous systems and robotics, and cyber security – where new skills from coding and automation to cybersecurity and navigation are needed.

### #03: *Enhancing soft skills*

As robots and AI take on the more repetitive, predictable work, human employees will need to hone their soft skills as they increasingly focus on innovation, communication and leadership roles. Some of these include managing crises, developing solutions, interpreting patterns and practising cultural sensitivity.

### #04: *Delivering a compelling value proposition*

Technology has transformed employees' expectations. To drive employee retention, Ms van Dooren recommended using personas to identify what matters most to target populations to offer a compelling, differentiated value proposition that addresses their needs – whether it is career growth, self-improvement, job flexibility or others.

### #05: *Rethinking traditional career models*

Instead of a direct climb up the corporate ladder, employees will make lateral moves and gain cross-functional experiences as career journeys become more individualised. Companies will need to empower their employees with continuous on-demand learning, mobility and opportunities to self-select experiences within the firm.

### #06: *Valuing the Silver Workforce*

In the digital world, current and future generations will age differently from previous generations, in terms of adaptability and learning capabilities. At the same time, longer lifespans and an aging population mean older workers should stay gainfully employed for as long as possible. With careers in the future potentially spanning beyond 60 years, it is important for employers to change their mindset about seniors in their workforce.

The world is changing at an accelerated pace. Companies need to be armed with digital skills, explore new ways of working and promote continuous learning within the organisation. Remaining agile, daring to fail and thinking outside the norm can help companies ride the technological waves and innovate for the future.



#### **SPEAKER PROFILE**

Growing up in The Netherlands next to a train station, Ms Godelieve van Dooren has always had an interest in logistics and obtained her Masters in Public Law with a thesis on fair competition for the railway sector in the European Union. Today, she is a mother of two teenage girls and has lived in Singapore for the past 13 years. She plans to stay at least another 13 years, given her very Singaporean hobbies of shopping, eating and travelling around the region.



08: PEOPLE

## ENGINEERING SINGAPORE'S MARITIME FUTURE BY CHRIS CHUA

*Slated for completion in 2040 with phased launches from 2021, the Tuas Mega Port is Singapore's next generation container terminal, capable of handling 65 million TEUs a year – double the current volume. Well-equipped with leading-edge technology, it will feature over 1,000 automated guided vehicles and fully automated yard cranes.*

The engineers play a critical role in its development, from designing to building the mega structures, which will be the largest fully-automated container terminal in the world in a single location. Recognising the importance of ensuring the team have the necessary skills, MPA Academy, the training arm of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), offers courses to enhance their competencies and to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. These include the Design for Maritime Structures course facilitated by the MPA Academy, among others.

We went onsite to catch up with *Brenda Teo, Project Manager of Tuas Port Development (Engineer)* and the only female engineer on her team, to get her take on the training programme and her experience in shaping the future Tuas Mega Port.



### **Q:** *Why did you decide on a career at MPA?*

I was previously a civil engineer at a local construction firm. I wanted to be part of a large-scale engineering project and take on a managerial role. So, when I saw an opening at MPA, I jumped at the chance. It's been a year and I'm enjoying it!

### **Q:** *What do you do as an engineer at Tuas Mega Port?*

As a project manager, I work with the TTP1 project team to supervise the construction of the Tuas Terminal Phase 1 to ensure the work quality and the various phases of land reclamation work are achieved according to the contract specifications and schedule. Apart from solving challenging engineering issues on site, we have to ensure the timely fabrication and installation of caissons on site, dredging of the basins and Temasek Fairway and recycling of the dredged materials and excavated materials from land based projects for land reclamation. We also have to ensure all works on site are executed properly in a safe manner without any compromise to site safety.

I am also managing 3 sub-contracts namely the Environmental Monitoring and Management Programme (EMMP) contracts. The EMMP contracts are to ensure minimal impact to the water quality in the project area, all the Environmental Quality Objectives (EQOs) established for the project are met, and to monitor and immediately mitigate any impact of the construction works to the surrounding marine environment. In addition to the project management work, my job also requires me to oversee and process the monthly progress payments to the contractor, variation works and claims.

In addition, I am the main budget coordinator of Tuas Terminal Phase 1 (TTP1) project. My responsibility is to monitor the overall project budget and cashflow projections for each financial year, and to prepare reports for annual budget marksmanship. I am also responsible for the contract administration of the last caisson installation event, which includes planning, coordination, payments and ensuring the smooth execution of the event.



↗ Installation of caissons at TTP1



↗ Reclamation work using Conveyor Application System (CAS)

### **Q:** *What does it take to be a good engineer of such a huge project?*

You need to have sound technical engineering skills to tackle various engineering challenges faced on site and that can be developed only through in-depth experiences in managing various engineering projects. As a relatively young engineer, I possessed basic civil engineering skills. Through this mega project, I aspire to learn and enhance my engineering skills and field experience to be able to manage such mega projects in the future. I would continue to attend relevant engineering courses and upgrade my engineering knowledge.

In managing a team of consultants and contractors in the project, soft skills are equally important. You need to have good communication skills, team work, inter-personnel and time-management skills. We also need to be able to multi-task and manage various types of work at the same time.

### **Q:** *Name some challenges you have faced.*

Switching from working for a local construction firm to a client's representative is a huge change for me, and it is a steep learning curve. I used to worry about daily operations, but now, I need to manage a higher role in a project – ensuring quality of construction and monitoring whether the project meets milestones, handling the contracts, monitoring the budget and work with different parties to resolve site issues. Site issues include engineering challenges such as overcoming soft ground issues during soil improvement work, overcoming hard rock issues when dredging in the basins and Temasek Fairway, and managing interface works for the adjacent sites by other contractors. With guidance and support from my supervisors, I learnt from them on how to manage consultants and contractors, handle site challenging issues in the project and solving engineering problems by their experience and technical knowledge.

**Q: *What is your most interesting experience so far?***

With such a mega project, I get to see all these huge vessels, dredgers and equipment. It's like the Transformers movie! I also witnessed the relocation of corals to Sisters' Island, where they're growing well.

**Q: *What do you like best about your job?***

It's interesting and meaningful to see the sea slowly becoming land. I'm very fortunate to be part of this team, knowing that you contribute to a bigger purpose and all the efforts spent on the work are purposeful and worthwhile. I also like that I have a job that allows me to be outdoors and not desk-bound.



**Q: *How is it like being the only female on the team?***

My colleagues treat me like a little sister. My supervisors are great mentors, who will constantly guide me on how to overcome different engineering challenges. I'm the youngest in my department and the only girl here, but I don't get treated differently at work. It's a friendly and helpful environment. As we're in a remote location and not able to have lunch outside the site office, we'll eat together in the office pantry, just like a family.

**Q: *How has your training benefited you in your work?***

The Design for Maritime Structures course helped me understand the guidelines for designing maritime structures, such as wharves, and gave me an appreciation of the processes and considerations involved.

**Q: *Where do you see your career going in the future?***

I still have two more years before completing my role in phase one of the Tuas mega port project. After that, I will be in the team for phase three. Once that's over, I hope to do job rotation and switch to the planning side of the Engineering division and gain experience in different aspects of engineering.

## BY INVITATION:

### 3rd Advanced Maritime Leaders' Programme

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: 7 – 12 April 2019

Participants: Senior maritime officials

### World Maritime University Study Visit for MSc students specialising in Shipping Management and Logistics

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: 21 – 24 May 2019

Participants: WMU MSc students specialising in Shipping Management and Logistics

### Maritime Blockchain Forum

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: 22 May 2019

Participants: MPA and industry

### Reception at the 69th session of Technical Cooperation Committee

Venue: IMO, London

Date: June 2019

Participants: MPAA alumni, IMO member states

### 12th Maritime Safety Management Course conducted by MPA and Japan Coast Guard

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: July 2019

Participants: Maritime officials

### 6th Port Management Programme

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: 26 – 30 August 2019

Participants: Port masters, harbour masters, middle management personnel

### 9th Maritime Public Leaders' Programme

Venue: MPA Academy

Date: October 2019

Participants: Senior maritime officials

## FOR MPA STAFF:

### Vessel Traffic Officers

Vessel Traffic Service Operator Course:

September 2019

### Marine Surveyors

E-Learning on

Ship-related Knowledge:

March – December 2019

Risk Management and Investigation IMO Model Course:

1 – 5 April 2019

### Port Systems Officers

ISO 9001 Auditor Course:

11 – 12 April/ 27 – 28 May 2019

Maritime Risk Assessment Course:

8 May 2019

ISO 45001:2018 Internal Auditor

Course: 16 – 17 May 2019

## (CONT'D) FOR MPA STAFF:

### Port Inspectors

**LNG Bunkering Course:**  
January 2019

**Basic Occupational Safety  
and Security Training Course:**  
Q2 2019

**Oil Spill Clearance  
IMO Level 2 Course:**  
Q2 2019

### Port Chemists

**Assess confined space for  
safe entry and work:**  
22 April – 10 May 2019

**Maritime Risk Management  
and Incident Investigation:**  
8 – 9 May 2019

**Shipyard Safety Assessor  
-Hotworks Certification:**  
2 – 18 April and 1 – 19 July 2019

**Basic tanker Training:**  
9 – 22 May/ 8 – 18 July 2019

### Hydrographers, Cartographers, Survey Officers

**EAHC Maritime Safety Information  
& Database Management Course:**  
Q3 2019

**IHO Cat 'B' Nautical Cartography:**  
Q3 2019

### Civil Engineers

**Project Management Course:**  
April, May, June 2019

### All Staff

**Design Thinking for Innovation Course:**  
May, June, July, August, September 2019

**Cyber Security Awareness:**  
June, July, August, September 2019

## ABOUT US

As the training arm of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), the MPA Academy was repositioned in 2014 to be a full-fledged academy with a dedicated premise with a focus on global maritime leadership training. The academy's vision is to be a global learning centre for maritime and port administration. The academy's mission is to enhance the specialist skills and knowledge of MPA officers and to conduct flagship training programmes for overseas port and maritime officials, including supporting the training needs of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a Council member. The MPA Academy's dedicated facility is located at PSA Building and was officially launched in October 2015.

## SUBSCRIBE

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### DESIGN

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