

**Empowerment of women: the global perspective  
Presentation by Carolyn Hannan**

**At the international conference:  
“Empowering Professional Women in the Ma  
An International Conference organized by the World Maritime University  
Malmo, Sweden, 2-4 April 2008**

I congratulate the World Maritime University on its 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee and also commend the university for commemorating this important anniversary by focusing on the empowerment of professional women in the maritime sector.

personally had very little contact with the maritime sector. Listening to the discussions yesterday, however, I understand that many of the issues in this sector are similar to those in other sectors. I thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation on some aspects of the global work of the United Nations on empowerment of women which I hope will be useful for the discussion on empowerment of women in this specific sector.

Global achievements on the empowerment of women

Empowerment of women is critical for the achievement of all the goals related to equality, human rights, development and peace and security established by the United Nations over the past six decades. At the World Summit in 2005, Heads of State and Government stated that “progress for women is progress for all”. One of the eight Millennium Development Goals established in 2000 is focused on gender equality and empowerment of women, with targets on education, employment and political decision-making. Gender equality is, however, also important for the achievement of all other Millennium Development Goals.

Since the establishment of the United Nations in 1946 there have been many significant on gender equality and empowerment of women. The Decade for Women (1976-1985) and four world conferences on women organized by the United Nations, between 1975 and 1995, contributed significantly to raising awareness and commitment to gender equality.

A clear global policy framework is in place – the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action  
-rights tr  
gender equality – the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
(CEDAW) - has been ratified by 115 states in 25 years.

ed Nations.



The empowerment of women requires opportunities for leadership and decision-making. This is one of the areas where very little progress has been made over the past decades, despite much rhetoric. Figures recently released in a "Map of Women in Politics 2008", published jointly by my Division and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), reveal that women make up only 17.9 per cent of parliamentarians world-wide (as of 1 January 2008) and the target of 30 per cent set for 1995 has been met by only 20 countries. Women make up 16.1 per cent of women holding Ministerial posts world-wide. There are no reliable statistics for women's participation in any other area of decision-making, including in the maritime sector. The evidence that is available, however, indicates a similarly poor situation for women in leadership and decision-making positions in economic institutions, academia, media, trade unions and many other important institutions.

Ensuring security and safety for women and girls is critical for their empowerment. This requires urgent attention to violence against women







The value of female role models and mentoring programmes for ensuring women's active participation in sectors traditionally dominated by men has been increasingly recognized. This has also been mentioned at this conference as an important strategy. The WMU could develop a strong network among its women graduates which can document their progress, provide support as needed, and encourage them to become mentors and role models for other young women in the maritime sector.

Finally, let me commend WMU on the format of the conference, which allows us to hear the The