

Women and Ocean: gender dimension in the marine science and practice

Background

The WIOMSA Scientific Symposium, the largest open scientific conference in the region on marine and coastal issues, is a biennial event that has established itself as an intellectual and knowledge marketplace that offers a unique regionwide platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity building, strategic action and cooperation. WIOMSA uses the symposium as a platform to showcase innovative solutions for addressing the challenges facing coastal communities, policy makers, management authorities and the private sector in the Western Indian Ocean. It is expected that the Eleventh Symposium that will be held in Mauritius from 1 to 6 July 2019, whose theme is "*People, Coasts and Oceans: Opportunities for a changing future*", will bring together 400-500 leading researchers, academics, scientists, policy makers, practitioners and students to present the latest research findings in all aspects of coastal and marine science.

In March 2017, the WIOMSA Board of Trustees approved the WIOMSA Gender Policy and in November of the same year, the Network for Women in Marine Science (WiMS) was launched during the Tenth WIOMSA Symposium that was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The purpose of the network WiMS is to address the gender equality issues facing women marine scientists in the Western Indian Ocean region providing them with a platform to learn, support each other, share experiences, challenges and solutions, celebrate their achievements, and promote their visibility within and outside the WIO region.

WiMS is intending to use the Eleventh WIOMSA Symposium to enhance the network, show research work of its members and team up with male colleagues to mainstream gender in marine science and practice by stimulating new perspectives and uptake avenues, recruiting new members and providing a platform for sharing information and experience.

It is in this regard, the Network, in collaboration with the Symposium organizers and *Mundus maris*, is offering a series of activities related to gender dimension in marine sciences and practice.

Objectives

The series of activities related to gender dimension in the marine sciences and practice aims to inform the symposium participants about the WiMS network and its activities, sensitize them about the gender equality issues in the Western Indian Ocean region and identify opportunities for scientists and practitioners to improve policies, regional strategies and site-based actions together, thus promoting gender **equity** (the absence of discrimination in opportunities, the allocation of resources and benefits, or access to services on the basis of a person's sex).

Women and Ocean Workshop: Implementation of the SSF Guidelines and their gender dimension

The workshop will bring together scientists and practitioners, to explore new levers for the implementation of the small-scale fisheries (SSF) Guidelines as part of the SDG 14 that blend the insights from different scientific disciplines, including the social sciences, with the experience of practitioner in search of new room for manoeuvre. The workshop will be held on 30 June 2019.

The planned workshop will encompass a highly interactive approach and will aim to:

- explore the social roles of women and men in fisheries and natural resources use and conservation;
- involve participants in identifying ways and means to support the implementation of SDG 14 through the best available science;
- share the experience gained at the national, regional and international level in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines as part of the SDG 14;
- identify the most promising levers on which scientists and practitioners can work together in implementing the SSF Guidelines in the Western Indian Ocean.

Expected Results

The organizers expect that the workshop and the associated events will achieve the following:

- Satisfaction of participants in the workshop and accompanying events through joint exploration and learning that pave the way to exploring new research questions and practice after the WIOMSA Conference;
- Participants are well informed about the WiMS network and its activities and particularly female participants demonstrate interest to engage with the network;
- Gender equality and equity issues in the Western Indian Ocean region and opportunities for joint work of scientists and practitioners are identified to improve policies, regional strategies and site-based actions promoting gender justice are mapped.
- Members of WiMS improved their knowledge and skill to consider gender dimensions in marine sciences and practices (gender mainstreaming).
- WiMS network is strengthened and has a clear strategy and work plan for the forthcoming year.

Outputs

- A workshop report that will include a description of the issues discussed, recommendations and the way forward available to all WIOMSA Conference participants;
- New WiMS members.

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