



#OceanAction15467

ENHANCING THE ROLE AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DEEP-SEA RESEARCH

Project Information Brief - April 2021

Investment in science, technology and innovation is essential to address global challenges such as poverty eradication, economic and social development and the protection of the environment. Science, technology and innovation can also contribute to the implementation of international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through which developing countries can benefit fully from the promises of sustainable and inclusive ocean economies.

WOMEN IN DEEP-SEA RESEARCH (WIDSR) PROJECT

Despite numerous initiatives being adopted and implemented at global, regional and national levels to create new opportunities for women in non-traditional as well as emerging sectors, the participation of women scientists from developing countries in deep-sea research (DSR) and deep-sea related science still remains low (IOC-UNESCO, Global Ocean Science Report, 2017). This is notably the case because of a general lack of financial resources to access the deep-sea, insufficient academic training in deep-sea related disciplines etc. Therefore, more efforts are needed globally to achieve gender equity in ocean science, and particularly in least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

Cognizant of these challenges, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) is committed to contribute to women empowerment and leadership through the enhancement of their role and participation in DSR.

Together with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS) and other partners, ISA will implement the WIDSR project. This project is being designed to address specifically the critical challenges faced by women scientists from developing States, particularly from the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in accessing opportunities for careers and leadership roles in DSR with a view to contributing to strengthening the resource base of such countries in highly technical and emerging areas of knowledge.

Building on the priorities identified in the [Strategic Plan](#) and the [High-Level Action Plan](#) of ISA for 2019-2023, the actions areas identified in the [UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action](#) and more recently in the [ISA Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#), this project aims at creating the enabling conditions to create synergies for tangible outcomes.



Launch of the WIDSR project

The WIDSR project was formally launched on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March 2021, through a high-level webinar jointly organized by ISA and UN-OHRLLS.

The webinar brought together senior government officials, leaders and heads of international organizations who collectively emphasized the importance of ensuring that women scientists from developing States, and especially those from the most vulnerable ones, such as the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, can fully engage in DSR and can reach high- level, leadership positions. Barriers faced by women from developing States and solutions to systematically remove them were discussed by the panelists.

Project framework

The WIDSR project is currently under development. Project activities and outcomes are being discussed and refined through consultations held with all relevant and interested stakeholders.

The main beneficiaries of the project will be women from developing States willing to engage in highly technical and emerging career paths such as DSR. Developing States, particularly the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, will also benefit from increased national assets of human resources in science and technology through increased number of women scientists.

The project activities will be implemented under four key areas:

- Policy development & advocacy
- Capacity development
- Sustainable partnerships
- Communication and outreach

By working with political and industry leaders as well as the scientific community, academia, and relevant international and regional organizations, this initiative will increase availability of data and information to better understand gender specific barriers and devise ways to systematically remove them. Strategic alliances and partnerships will be fostered under the project focusing on communities of practice, twinning of institutions, mentorship and leadership programmes, etc. Outreach and awareness activities on challenges faced by women scientists involved in DSR, in particular those from developing States, will be carried out as part of the project. Visibility of women scientists in DSR from developing States as agents of change and key assets to achieving sustainable ocean development at national and regional levels will also be highlighted.

WEBINAR 8 March 8:30-10:30am (GMT-5)

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Panel 1 8:50-9:15am Enabling empowerment and leadership of women in deep-sea research for transformative actions

H.E. Mr. Perks Master Ligoya Permanent Representative of Malawi to the UN and Chair of the Group of LDCs

Mr. Jens Frolich Holte State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

H.E. Ms. Mariangela Zappia Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN

Mr. Sturla Henriksen Special Advisor, Ocean, UN Global Compact

Panel 2 9:15-9:40am Empowering women scientists through tailored capacity-building/development initiatives

H.E. Mr. Magzhan Ilyassov Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN, Chair of the Group of LLDCs

Mr. Song Sang Keun Director General Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Korea

H.E. Ms. Margo Deive Permanent Representative of Nauru to the UN

Panel 3 9:40-10:05am Fostering strategic partnerships for transformative actions

H.E. Mr. Walton Alfonso Webson Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN and Chair of OASIS

Ms. Maria Francesca Spatolisano Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

H.E. Ms. Vanessa Frazier Permanent Representative of Malta to ISA and the UN

H.E. Gatot Hari Gunawan Acting Secretary-General, Indian Ocean Rim Association

Partnerships

Establishment of partnerships for the implementation of the WIDSR project is still under development across all sectors. As of today, several actors have already confirmed their support and contribution to the project.



The duration of the project is expected to be for a period of two years starting 2021.

For further information, please contact eosg@isa.org.jm
International Seabed Authority
14-20 Port Royal Street Kingston,
Jamaica | isa.org.jm

