



Seychelles Ports Authority
Public Relations and Communications: Content for Publication

Event: International Day for Women in Maritime
Date: Saturday 18th May 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Celebrating the Women in the Maritime Sector

On the 18th May of each year, the world commemorates the International Day for Women in Maritime. The female figure is no doubt becoming more apparent in this very important field which has always been regarded as a male dominated sector. This is not an exception in Seychelles.

This year's Women in Maritime's Day is being commemorated under the theme "Safe Horizons: Women in Shaping the Future of Maritime Safety". Today, we will take a look at the career path of one of the leading women at the Seychelles Ports Authority (SPA), Ms Philippa Samson. Ms Samson took the post of Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) of the SPA on 01st March 2024 as the first woman to occupy such a position within the authority.

Prior to her appointment, she was serving as the Deputy Director for Project Management, leading the biggest project at the port widely known as the Port Victoria Rehabilitation & Extension Project (PVREP). The project aims to extend, rehabilitate and modernize our commercial port at Mahe Quay, commonly known as New Port. This project remains under her portfolio in her current responsibilities as the DCEO.

Ms Samson joined SPA on Monday 3rd June 2019. Coming from a banking background, her forte is project management. It was when serving as a Director on the Board of SEYPEC in 2017 that she became aware of the port expansion project. "I immediately became interested in it. I realized the great significance of a modern port for ensuring a prosperous economic future for the Seychelles and wanted to play a role in making it happen," she shared.

As the Project Manager of this project that is currently in the planning and procurement phase, Ms Samson is the main point of contact for the project financiers and consultants. It is her responsibility to ensure that the project, despite the many challenges, moves towards completion. "We've had to review and revise the project scope a few times since 2019 due to many constraints and challenges, but we never gave up and kept moving forward," pointed out Ms Samson optimistically.

When she talks about what attracted her in the maritime field, Ms Samson said, "I cannot pinpoint what interests me in the maritime sector. What I can say is that I love the sea, although I am simultaneously

scared of it! I also love boats, particularly big ships. However, what interests me in ports is how complex and interlinked their operations are and how crucial they are to trade and economic development.”

As the first female DCEO at SPA, Ms Samson highlighted that she didn't see the significance of her appointment in that role initially. “I thought to myself, ‘We now see many women holding a lot of important positions; decision-makers, leaders, justice upholders, lawmakers, etc.’ However, I then realized that women are increasingly occupying roles that they have not before, in sectors that have been male dominated since time immemorial. And, I am a woman! So this is important. Symbolic even - signaling a step towards greater gender inclusivity that tells little girls and young women that someone has walked this path, so they too can walk the same path or even dare to carve another where no woman has walked before,” expressed Ms Samson.

In conclusion, Ms Samson has the following advice to the women, “As women, we have allowed society to impose beliefs that we are not made for certain roles and certain sectors to limit us. The ocean is calling to us. The ships are calling to us. The ports are calling to us. The maritime sector needs our knowledge, our skills and the valuable contributions that we can make in its development.”