

GWA at the UN World Oceans Day 2019

World Oceans Day (WOD) is celebrated worldwide on 8 June every year by thousands of organisations to educate and raise awareness about the ocean, its importance in our lives, and how each of us can protect it, no matter where we live. The concept of a World Ocean Day was originally proposed by the Government of Canada, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and two decades it has become an important global water-related event that is acknowledged and celebrated by thousands of civil society, educational, and development organizations the world over, including the United Nations (since 2008). See <https://www.worldoceansday.org/> for more information on WOD.



Participants of the 2019 UN World Oceans Day event 'Gender and Oceans'; photo: Oceanic

The UN celebration of the 2019 World Ocean Day focused on the theme of 'Gender and Oceans' to increase visibility and recognition for the important contributions made by women in fisheries, aquaculture, coastal and marine conservation and management. GWA Adviser and member Anamika Amani was invited to participate as speaker in a panel of experts, as part of the WOD celebration event hosted by the UN with their non-profit partner [Oceanic Global](#) on 7 June at the UN headquarters in New York. Together with the UN and a group of over 150 organizations collectively forming the "Friends of World Oceans Day", the event raised awareness and advocated for gender parity in all ocean-related sectors. It shed light on the realities of women and men in the ocean and told the untold stories of forced sea labourers, scientists, women in shipping, fisheries workers, economists, and more.

The programme began with opening remarks by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Mr. Joao Miguel de Serpa Soares; followed by the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Asa Regner; and Judith Swan, the initiator of World Oceans Day. The morning session had women and men from a variety of ocean-related industries such as shipping, fisheries, marine conservation and exploration telling stories about their work and why they were in it. The storytellers and topics included the below:

- **Kudzi Victorino Guicome (Ocean Revolution & Bitonga Divers):** *Entrepreneurship, Conservation, and Ocean Exploration*

- **Jorge Manuel Gómez Poot (Capacitacion y Gestion Ambiental Elementum) & Anne de Carbuccia (One Planet One Future):** *Gender, Conservation and Youth*
- **Tun Lin and Patima Tungpuchayakul (Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation) and Shannon Service (Filmmaker):** *Forced Labour at Sea*
- **Angelique Pouponneau (Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust):** *Youth Engagement, Sustainable Ocean-based Economies*

The afternoon programme featured a moderated discussion with a panel of women experts, each of who spoke about how their work was making a positive difference to both ocean and sea sustainability and gender equality. The afternoon panel was moderated by **Natasha Berg** of Oceanic Global, and panellists included:



- **Anamika Amani** (Adviser capacity building, **Gender and Water Alliance**)
- **Kendall Barbery** (Sustainable ocean farmer, **GreenWave**)
- **Amanda Hastings** (Lawyer, **Human Rights at Sea**)
- **Francesca Santoro** (Marine biologist, **UNESCO**)
- **Lynn Zebeda** (Social entrepreneur, **WeOcean**)
- **Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli** (Director, **UN DOALOS**)
- **Paige Alms** (Professional surfer, **World Surf League**)

Earlier this year a GWA-UN Environment case study report '['Gender Mainstreaming in the Management of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems'](#)' was published which underlined the need for empowerment of women and marginal communities so they can equally participate, plan and benefit from marine and coastal projects, policies and interventions. Anamika highlighted the main findings from this report, and spoke briefly about GWA's work in building capacity of various stakeholders in the water sector, including those working in WASH, food security and climate change in coastal regions.

The panel discussion concluded with experts answering some questions from the audience, and comments from **Dr. Irini Papanicolopulu** (professor International Law and editor of the book "['Gender and the Law of the Sea'](#)").

The honour of closing the 2019 UN WOD event was given to world-renowned oceanographer and explorer, **Dr. Sylvia Earle** (Founder [Mission Blue](#)).