

BANGLADESH CELEBRATES

World Maritime Day 2006

19 December 2006

The theme of the Day -

"Technical Co-operation: IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit"

Organized by: Department of Shipping
Ministry of Shipping, Dhaka



রত্নপতি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
ঢাকা।
০৫ পৌষ ১৪১৩
১৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০০৬

বাণী



এম. আজিজুল হক
উপদেষ্টা
নৌ-পরিবহন মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়
ঢাকা

বাণী

বিশ্বমিলাহির রাহমানির রাহিম।



Secretary
Ministry of Shipping
Government of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh
5 Paus 1413
19 December 2006

MESSAGE

ইন্টারন্যাশনাল মেরিটাইম অর্গানাইজেশনের উদ্যোগে এবারও বিশ্বের অন্যান্য দেশের সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশেও বিশ্ব নৌ-দিবস পালিত হচ্ছে যেনে আমি আনন্দিত। এ উপলক্ষে আমি নৌ সেক্টরের সাথে সম্পৃক্ত সকলকে জানাই আমার আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন।

আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়ন ও দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনের জন্য বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশ ও সংস্থার মধ্যে পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। বাংলাদেশ জাতিসংঘসহ বিভিন্ন আঞ্চলিক সংস্থার সদস্য হিসেবে জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক বিভিন্ন ইস্যুতে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রেখে আসছে। সমুদ্র, আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য, প্রযুক্তি, পরিবেশ, নিরাপত্তা ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলো নৌ-পরিবহনের সাথে সম্পৃক্ত। বাংলাদেশ নদীমাতৃক ও উপকূলীয় দেশ হিসেবে জাতীয় অর্থনীতিতে নৌ-পরিবহনের ভূমিকা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতা এবং কারিগরি ও প্রযুক্তিগত জ্ঞানের প্রসার ঘটিয়ে আমরা আন্তর্জাতিক নৌ-পরিবহন ব্যবস্থাকে আরো সমৃদ্ধ করতে পারি।

আমি বিশ্ব নৌ-দিবসের সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

আন্তাহ হাফেজ, বাংলাদেশ জিল্দাবাদ।

একেশ্বর ড. ইমাজউদ্দিন আহমেদ

এম. আজিজুল হক

Sheikh Enayetullah

Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector in Bangladesh



Capt. A.K.M. Shafiqullah
Director General
Department of Shipping

The Merchant Navy has for long been an all-male occupation. There is an old saying that women are bad luck at sea. An interesting myth, sort of like the myth that you will fall off the edge of the earth if you sail too far from port. But this is the 21st century, we know the earth is round and that superstitions have very little or no role in the modern way of life. Now the world maritime community pursues a modern social agenda, with a strong gender component. Though in Bangladesh we are yet to overcome the social barriers to send our women beyond the horizon.

Advantages of having women aboard ships?

A great advantage is that it creates a more normal social environment. This is particularly important because the nature of seafaring life has changed in recent years. There is less time to go ashore and there are less people on board. Having women as part of the crew can reduce the sense of isolation felt by many seafarers. Furthermore, recent labour surveys of the shipping sector have indicated an existing - and growing - shortfall of certain categories of seafarers, particularly officers. Women are an under utilised source of maritime talent which we need to draw upon to make up this shortfall.

Initiatives of International

Maritime Organization to Integrate Women in Seafaring

The 2005 world summit endorsed and re-affirmed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that were enshrined in the original millennium Declaration. In support of that declaration IMO has decided to achieve that goal through its technical co-operation. Thus the theme of the world maritime day 2006 is 'Technical Co-operation: IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit'. The Millennium Development Goal includes a gender equality to eliminate disparity in primary and secondary education. Through its technical co-operation IMO is taking initiative to help improve developing countries' human capital through vocational training and education in the maritime sector. IMO's initiative for integration of women in the Maritime sector will continue and Bangladesh as a developing country can be enormously benefited from this program by allowing Bangladeshi women to seafaring.

Women Participation in the Maritime Sector in Bangladesh

In spite of limited women participation at various levels in the government and in the various industries in Bangladesh the maritime sector is yet to see women integration with it. Social barrier and the lack of government initiative in this respect is the root cause of this disintegration. In a country where women are participating in the Army, Navy, Air-force, Police and other services requiring physical fitness, our women should not be deprived from their rights of going to sea. This will not only open a new avenue for our human resource but will also help to overcome some social problems in seafaring, like 'desertion' in foreign ports.

Women participation in the development of Bangladesh

Bangladeshi women contribute substantially to their households and to the country's economy. The majority of women workers are primarily involved in the informal sector of the economy. Within the formal sector, a large number of women work in export-oriented industries e.g., garments.

Government Policy Towards Advancement of Women in Bangladesh

After the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975, Bangladesh was one of the first developing countries to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1978, three years after the Conference. The Government has already prepared a National Policy for Advancement of Women and made some noteworthy progress in implementing the National Action Plan. In spite of these achievements, the majority of women in Bangladesh have yet to be empowered to participate actively in the social, cultural, economic, and political activities of the country. Gender discrimination is widespread in all spheres and at all levels.

Legal Rights of Women in Bangladesh

The Constitution of Bangladesh grants equal rights to women and men in all spheres of public life. However, due to a variety of cultural factors as well as the misinterpretation of religion, women's human rights are often violated but a changing trend is visible at present.

Some Positive Developments in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women with reservations to Articles 2, 13 9(a), and 16.1 (9c) and 16.1(f). Recently, the Government withdrew the reservations on Articles 13(a) and 16.1(f). The remaining reservations are under review.

Gender Asymmetry in Education in Bangladesh

Although noteworthy achievements have been made in female enrollment at the primary level, progress has been very slow in secondary level education. Lower access to technical education and higher secondary education, gender-biased curriculum, and curriculum without job prospects are critical concerns for women's education that must be addressed through coordinated efforts.

Women's Employment Status in Bangladesh

Women's participation in economic activities shows great variations by gender, by nature of activity, and place of residence. A quota system was recently introduced for female recruitment in the public sector. Ten and fifteen percent quotas were reserved for women for gazetted and non-gazetted posts, respectively. This is one of the major contributing factors for increasing female participation, although quota fulfillment is far short of the target. Now women are found in the administrative, managerial, professional, and technical services of the government.

Women's Participation in Decision Making at National Level in Bangladesh

In spite of the religious and social barriers of purdah women have become more politically visible in the last two decades. A quota has ensured women's presence in the local government and National Parliament. The Constitution reserved 30 seats for women, through indirect election by other members, in addition to 300 elected seats in the National Parliament.

Women's Participation at the Local Level

The Union Parishad Election of 1997 is a milestone in the history of political empowerment of women in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh enacted a law for direct elections to reserve seats for women in local level elections.

Women's Participation in Cabinet and Public Services in Bangladesh

Although two women Prime Ministers have headed the Government during the last ten years and the leaders of the opposition in Parliament were also women, this does not reflect the gender composition of participation and decision making at the highest policy level. At the ministerial level, women's representation has never risen above 3 percent. Before 1996, women were never given full responsibility over any important ministry.

Suitability of women for sea

First, as concerns getting the training to go to sea, there does not appear to be a great problem overall. In fact, many maritime

women at sea come from OECD countries, 23.6% from Eastern Europe, 9.8% from Latin America and Africa, 13.7% from the Far East, and 1.7% from south Asia and the Middle East.



Challenges for the women at sea

The entrance of women into the seafaring trade is a small, but growing phenomenon. In the past few decades women have come to be employed in steadily increasing numbers aboard the world's merchant ships and cruise liners. Women work their way into the world's great ships. Women seafarers face not only the general challenges of weather, hard work and rough seas, but also inordinate amounts of discrimination, sexual harassment and parental disapproval. Salt and the sea are only part of the challenges theyface. A recent study on this issue points out, discrimination, sexual harassment and deep skepticism over their strengths and capabilities can be equally challenging.

Conclusion

While Bangladeshi women are taking part almost in every development activities in the country, the government, the society and those of us related with seafaring and maritime industry, should seriously consider the issue of our women participation in the maritime industry before it is too late. The sooner we realize it the better it is for the nation.

Number of women employed aboard ships around the world

Women represent only 1-2% of the world's 1.25 million seafarers. However, in the cruise line sector, they represent 17-18% of the workforce. Ninety-four per cent of women are employed on passenger ships and 6% are employed on cargo vessels (i.e., container ships, oil tankers, etc.). As for jobs, there are women shipmasters and chief engineers, as well as other officers. However, generally, women are working as hotel staff on passenger ships. Of this latter group, 51.2% of