

# Reflections of women in the IOPC Funds 2022

The IOPC Funds are proud to have women in a variety of key roles across the organisation and continue to encourage Member States to increase female representation within their delegations to IOPC Funds meetings. This not only ensures that a wider variety of perspectives are taken into account during the discussions of the governing bodies, but also provides a more diverse choice of candidates for positions within the organisation, including Chairs of the various governing bodies.

We asked a number of women who are either currently holding, or have recently held some of those key positions, to reflect on their experience working with the IOPC Funds and in the wider maritime community.



**MEMBER STATE:**  
**LUISA BURGESS**  
REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR AND FORMER VICE-CHAIR OF THE 1992 FUND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**MEMBER STATE:**  
**GILLIAN GRANT**  
FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA AND CHAIR OF THE 1992 FUND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**OVERSIGHT BODY:**  
**BEATE GROSSKURTH**  
MEMBER OF THE INVESTMENT ADVISORY BODY



**SECRETARIAT:**  
**LILIANA MONSALVE**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF CLAIMS



**OVERSIGHT BODY:**  
**BIRGIT SØLLING OLSEN**  
CHAIR OF THE AUDIT BODY, FORMER REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK, VICE-CHAIR OF SUPPLEMENTARY FUND ASSEMBLY AND CHAIR OF TWO 1992 FUND INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

01

What has your involvement with the IOPC Funds meant to you?

As a member of the delegation of Ecuador since 2013, I have learnt to recognise the importance of the Funds - particularly as an organisation that provides financial compensation for persistent oil pollution spills that occurs in Member States. As Vice Chair of 1992 Fund Executive Committee during 2022, I took great pride in being guided by the women and men of the IOPC Funds in order to fulfil my role with humble satisfaction.

The IOPC Funds was my first exposure to international diplomacy, and for this reason it holds a special place in my heart. I particularly appreciate the constructive atmosphere at Fund meetings where delegates and the Secretariat work together to ensure that the compensation system protects victims and empowers government and industry to respond to oil spills in the most sensible and expeditious way possible. I also like learning about different parts of the world through delving into the circumstances of each incident and how they are resolved and through meeting representatives from IOPC Funds Member States.

Coming from a banking and capital markets background, it has given me the opportunity to gain insight into the IGO/NGO world, its challenges, and the worthwhile and dedicated work being done. For me, this has been a new and very welcome dimension.

A commitment to the international community and all parties involved in the compensation regime to be the best professional I can in my dual roles as Head of Claims and Deputy Director. The organisation is an example to follow of international cooperation that gives us hope in all other areas where that collaboration is terribly needed at present.

I have participated in the IOPC Funds since 1996. I led the drafting of the Supplementary Fund Protocol and the work to get it accepted. I have chaired 2 working groups. It was an eye opener to see how States, through international cooperation, secured an efficient and fair compensation system for the victims.

02

What is the most important lesson your career has taught you?

Be resilient! The maritime industry is an ever-changing field, and you cannot give up. There are times when balancing family and professional life has been challenging; however, if we want to have a solid and sustainable future for generations to come, we must ensure that our work continues in a prosperous and tangible manner.

That to succeed you may first have to fail. Taking on new challenges is hard and often scary, but by accepting that it's OK to make mistakes (since you inevitably WILL) you give yourself space to learn from them, gain confidence and grow.

Don't fear change. Look at the positives. Make it work!

That the darkest point comes just before dawn, to trust life and never give up on your dreams.

Getting good international results calls for cooperation, dedication and hard work by interested parties. Even small States like Denmark can gain influence, if the representatives are competent and committed to a good cause, are active and willing to listen to and respect the views of others.

03

What words of wisdom could you give to young people starting work in the maritime world?

Sail steady and communicate. No matter how busy you are, remember to communicate, talk, discuss, and laugh. Most of all, remember you have a voice.

Never hesitate to ask questions. The maritime world is technical and complex. But, maritime people - from seafarers, to insurers, naval architects to marine inspectors and every profession in between - are happy to share their knowledge. If you show interest you will be welcomed with open arms and you will become an expert sooner than you think.

Be proud to be in an exciting place, where you can have a global impact. Use it.

Choose the ethical path. Work hard and do no harm.

You have a sea of opportunity, just learn how to navigate. Be active and willing to learn, listen, and cooperate. Try to understand others. Not only one State, but a vast group of States need to support the results. The best, most viable results are reached by cooperation.