

# Carla Monrabal

Since 2020, Carla Monrabal has been the president of Argentine Puerto Dock Sud Management Consortium. Time to catch up on her efforts around decarbonization, digitalization, and diversity

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**T**here is more than one reason to be excited about Argentina's future. The World Bank estimates it could increase its GDP by 2.7% for 2030 by shifting to a low-carbon economy, and with an abundance of wind energy, Argentina is being mooted as one of the big winners in the oncoming global green energy gold rush — a prospect that has not been passed by Carla Monrabal, president of Puerto Dock Sud Management Consortium (CGPDS).

"We recognize the potential that this transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy can achieve and the need for us to take full advantage of it." Monrabal explained how the port is doing this. "We have joined the Global Ports Hydrogen Coalition, an activity developed by the Clean Energy Ministerial Hydrogen Initiative. This membership gives us the opportunity to share knowledge and collaborate with more than 40 ports and organizations internationally, with the goal of promoting the use of green hydrogen as a zero-emission alternative energy source in our port facilities and operations." In addition, the port is "part of the Consortium for the Development of the Hydrogen Economy in Argentina promoted by YPF Technology, which aims to promote collaborative work between companies, organizations and key players in the country for the national development of this energy vector."

#### Getting certified

While the perception of ports, particularly those handling oil and gas vessels, has not been as bastions of green thinking, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are front-and-center in Puerto Dock Sud as the only certified port in the region. Is this a tough sell? "I wish to change the widespread perception that ports are not sustainable, which, I understand, is due to the commonly established association between these activities and negative environmental impacts," Monrabal responded. "In this sense, one of the recent actions we carried out within the administration and operations of CGPDS was the audit for the verification of the carbon footprint,

in which it was verified that the tasks performed by the CGPDS were carried out in accordance with the standards of ISO 14064." The president added, "The Port of Dock Sud, for the first time in its history, adopted a responsible and sustainable approach in its operation."

Properly quantified, the port will set about cutting down its emissions — something for which there had been no particular drive in the years before Monrabal's tenure in 2020 began. "Verifying our carbon footprint as port authority gives us a clear picture of our greenhouse gas emissions and motivates us to implement additional measures to reduce them."

#### Digital and agile

Another measure has been to incorporate the port in the Single Window for Foreign Trade in Argentina (VUCE), intended to streamline processes, speed up response times and eliminate paperwork. "I am sure that its implementation will be very beneficial for the Port of Dock Sud because it will allow us to improve our competitiveness," said Monrabal.

"We already collaborate in the exchange of information for the development of our own systems such as, for example, the vessel turning request system called Nereo, in the case of the port, and, in the case of VUCE, in the contribution of digital infrastructure such as monitors for the modernization and expansion of the central monitoring center, the installation of the first fiber optic ring in the port area, CCTV infrastructure — intelligent cameras and domes and scales for weighing trucks transiting through the port area," she explained.

#### Contributing to societal development

And to prove the worth of its certification for UN SDG 5, gender equality, the port is working on diversifying its workforce and

interaction with the local community. Monrabal illustrates the necessary business of changing company culture to create environments where women actively seek to work. "Since my arrival at the Port of Dock Sud, I knew that one of the main objectives of my administration would be the gender issue because I understood that, as the first woman to preside a port in the province of Buenos Aires, I had to fulfill a double responsibility, to manage the port well and to do it with equity," Monrabal told *P&H*.

Prior to 2020, Puerto Dock Sud had been content to fulfill its operational brief, lacking action plans for improving efficiency and competitiveness, as well as any policies for inclusion or care for the environment. "Nor were there any links with the local community, which made the Port of Dock Sud at that time seem disconnected from its surroundings," Monrabal added.

"After taking office, together with my team, we focused on five key areas: community, infrastructure, sustainability, gender and security. Since then, we have implemented measures to improve port infrastructure, promote greater equity, adopt sustainable practices, strengthen port security and establish a closer connection with the local community."

In one example, the training to work program operates within the municipality of Avellaneda, province of Buenos Aires, and

the Río Santiago Shipyard, with courses aimed at reducing the gap between women and men within the port — including for hands-on manual labor even today is widely thought of as men's work. Sure enough, engaging with the local community to communicate this, has had results.

But the changes have hardly been limited to the boardroom.

"Thanks to this program, one of the first graduates managed to join the construction company specialized in horizontal drilling, Mar Profundo," said Monrabal.

"Despite the fact that historically, ports have been a male-exclusive sector, the reality is that women play an irreplaceable role in societal development," she reminds readers and looks forward to guiding the port into a sustainable future. ■

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