



Network

The UN Women's Newsletter, Volume No. 9, Issue 1 • January, February and March 2008



INTERVIEW WITH LAMIA WALKER

Lamia is Associate Director at the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School

Lamia is Associate Director at the Centre for Women in Business with Professor Lynda Gratton at the London Business School, and runs the Centre's outreach programme. In November 2007, after the launch of the Centre's second major study on the "Innovative Potential: Men and Women in Teams", Lamia and her colleague Dr. Elisabeth Kelan were invited to participate in the UN Focal Point for Women's Expert Group Meeting on Measures to Accelerate the Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System. Lamia was elected Chairwoman for the session held in November 2007, as part of the UN Task Force for the Advancement of Women in the United Nations.



Prior to joining the London Business School, her most recent role was at KPMG where she ran marketing projects across 25 country groups in the European, Middle Eastern and African region. She has also worked for Staples International as a marketing professional driving new business through European direct marketing and catalogue programmes in three countries.

Earning a Post Graduate Degree in Publishing, from the University of Denver, Colorado, in the United States, and her Bachelor's Degree in Humanities and History from the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University in Minnesota, United States, Lamia moved to the United Kingdom and obtained a Diploma in Communications, Advertising and Marketing from the London School of Printing and Distributive Trades before beginning her marketing career. Originally born in the Sudan, of a Sudanese-Syrian family, Lamia accompanied her family around the world as a child spending her formative years in the Middle East and the United States. Eventually, Lamia settled in the United Kingdom where she now has a family of her own with two children, 14 and 8 years old.

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Letter from the Focal Point of Women

Dear friends,

This publication of Network, the first in 2008, is dedicated to all women who are striving to empower and improve themselves and others, and to all United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations, women's networks, government officials and members of civil society who invest in women's empowerment.

In this context, we draw your attention to coverage in Network on:

- An interview with Ms. Lamia Walker, Associate Director at the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School. Ms. Walker was elected the Chairperson of the Expert Group Meeting on Measures to Accelerate the Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System organized by our office in November 2007. She shares a wealth of experience, knowledge, insights and recommendations about the value and achievements of a diverse and gender-balanced workforce.
- The 52nd session of the Commission of the Status of Women dedicated to the priority theme of "Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women". Consequently, on International Day 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon similarly focused his 2008 message noting that "Investing in women is not only the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do". Panel discussions were also held during the 52nd session of the Commission on the issues of violence against women and the impact of guns on women as well as the importance of gender-responsive budgeting.
- A featured article on a Filipina mother, Mrs. Socorro Arevalo, who has gone out of her way to train mothers to volunteer and teach children in the depressed communities of Manila. Through her inspiration and selfless efforts, she has given hope to many women and children.
- A summary of an article "How star women build portable skills". The write-up reveals the unique ways and skills used by outstanding women to maintain their star qualities as they switch from one organization to another.

We hope you find this issue interesting and informative.

In solidarity,



Aparna Mehrotra

INTERVIEW WITH LAMIA WALKER

(continued from p. 1)

1. Please share with us your education, background and work experience.

My education and work experience to date formally began with an undergraduate education in the humanities at a liberal arts college in the United States. This then led to a number of roles in industry, including consulting, publishing and now research and education. The connecting thread between my choices in career roles is that I have always been cognizant that the project at hand should affect positive change through positive and ethical communications. The work I have done to date has always appealed to my passion for communicating concepts and products that have made sense to me personally and could make a broad impact. So, for example, my degree was in humanities and history which appealed to me for the study of ideas as they first occurred in their historical context. From this I gained an understanding of the revolution unleashed with the first printing press and the ensuing circulation of ideas through the printed word. Latterly, I have used my experience in outreach and broadcast gained through industry to deliver impact for new ideas generated through world-class research.

While working at KPMG in 2006, I was actively managing marketing projects related to the services in support of financial services legislation such as Sarbanes Oxley as well as Basle 1 and 2, and communicating the best practice Corporate and Social Responsibility activities from across the European, Middle Eastern and African region of 25 countries. I was also involved in the promotion of the internal women's network activities and initiatives. It was during this time that I was asked by Professor Laura Tyson and Professor Lynda Gratton to undertake the project of launching the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School (formerly known as the Lehman Brothers Centre). Both have been involved in securing sponsorship and establishing the Centre, working in the belief that there is a requirement in Europe for groundbreaking academic research to bridge the worlds of academia and organizations. I was on the team invited to join them to drive the research programme, introduce new concepts based on robust research and communicate the findings to a broader audience. In this way we planned to raise awareness of the benefits of gender diversity in organizations.

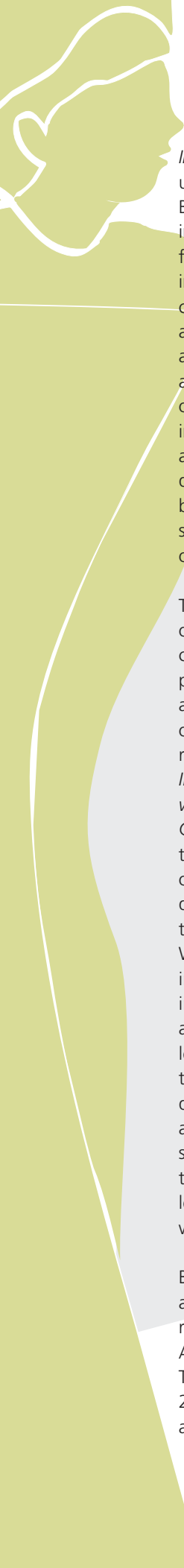
As Dean of the London Business School, Professor Tyson had published *The Tyson Report on the Recruitment and Development of Non-Executive Directors (June 2003)* (<http://facultyresearch.london.edu/docs/TysonReport.pdf>). It was in this report she first described the advantages of boards and non-executive boards exhibiting diversity of background and experience. In this way she planted the seeds of an idea preparing the ground for the Centre to emerge in the years to follow. Professor Tyson's active involvement in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report and Diversity Council demonstrates her ongoing support for further exploration of these issues. Professor Lynda Gratton is a global authority on the people implications of strategy, Professor of Management Practice at the London Business School and Director of the Executive Programme Human Resource Strategy in Transforming Organizations. She was selected to be academic lead for the Centre's work in research and outreach and has actively directed the Centre's research agenda since its launch in 2006.

My function in the Centre has been to work with these eminent academic stars and the outputs of their research to ensure we communicate the latest findings to appropriate audiences in a way to affect change for the good in organizations.

2. What has been your pathway to your current projects?

My current focus and core project is the Centre for Research on Women in Business. The academic research we conduct at the Centre addresses a number of themes including the under-optimization of organizational performance through the imbalance of gender diversity.

As Co-Director of the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School, I am inspired by the work of Professor Lynda Gratton and other world-class faculty at this School. Dr. Gratton's research work on teams and innovation has led us to understand better that professional teams can only achieve their innovative potential if they are constructed with a gender balance of 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women. The study, *Innovative Potential: Men and Women in Teams* (<http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/Word/>



Innovative_Potential_NOV_2007.pdf) was conducted under the sponsorship of the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School. I was actively involved in building the data set on which these findings are based. Subsequently, I have been actively involved in communicating the findings to a broad community of stakeholders. Through my writing and speaking, through published articles in the press and media and at conferences, I work to make the academic research accessible. I reach out to individual organizations to identify and explore examples of innovation and brave experiments in human resources and gender that have genuinely made a measurable difference to that organization. Concurrently, I have been involved in identifying and writing a number of short cases on examples of best practice identified in organizations.

The first major study we undertook was related to our search for best practices in organizations. We collated a significant data set surveying all of the practices and processes that touch the lives of men and women throughout their employment in 62 organizations from 12 countries in the European region. The findings published in the report entitled *Inspiring Women: Corporate Best Practice* (http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/PDF/May_2007_Corporate_Best_Practice_Report.pdf) showed us that best practices did not unequivocally reside in one place. And although very few organizations had developed good practice in all areas of their operations, there are examples of good practice everywhere. When comparing the treatment of men and women in the same organizations we did identify one point in which there was a significant discrepancy. There are few companies that offer women the equivalent leadership development opportunities, whether they are stretch assignments or external leadership development courses and programmes at leading academic institutions. However, we concluded in this study that our role and next step would be to ensure the good examples we identified are shared and their lessons communicated in order to accelerate change wherever possible.

Based on the strength of these two studies we were able to launch a research consortium with eight corporate partners to explore our current project—The Career Aspirations of Young Professionals and Generation Y. The early findings of this study will be published in June 2009. Directed by Dr. Elisabeth Kelan, this qualitative academic study using ethnographic methodologies will

study the emerging trends in recruitment and retention among Generation Y (anyone under 30 years of age) professionals. The study is investigating motivations and drivers of young professionals in this generation.

In our published reports, the ideas and practical frameworks are all based on academic research designed to help solve genuine business problems and to help organizations optimize performance maximizing use of resource and talent. As a professional working woman managing a career and juggling a family alongside various eldercare commitments, this research is undoubtedly central to many aspects of my life. By communicating these ideas and human resource frameworks, I believe we can help to affect change. In this way, I hope to make a contribution to the excellent continuum of ideas generated by our academics.

3. How best do you think an organization can communicate the value of a diverse and gender-balanced workforce to all staff, both male and female? Can you suggest some recommendations to achieve gender balance in a multicultural organization like the United Nations?

Today, the lightening speed of online access and our hand-held connection to the internet and to each other throughout the globe has vastly accelerated our sharing and adoption of ideas in circulation wherever network access is available. This can be a huge advantage in a complex global organization. New concepts can have an efficient and immediate impact. Moreover, technological enablement often drives an individual's appetite to seek out new information, concepts and research especially among the younger generations from across the globe. Therefore many of the recommendations I can offer will certainly benefit from regular communications, especially those online.

Although the United Nations is probably among the most complex and multicultural of organizations, it will need to adopt some central best practice ideas and then adapt and present them to suit local culture wherever possible. All the ideas offered below have been selected from a variety of organizations working in many regions of the world. Most could be adapted and adopted in a variety of cultures:

- Regular communications on the subject will help to sensitize key and influential executives. Communications about the value of a gender-balanced workforce should focus content on and draw from the best of human resource practices

and sound academic research. Effective ways to communicate could include: small workshops with key players; public presentations and debate of research and practice; role models presented within the organization whether male or female; mentoring schemes which can encourage the development and education of both junior and senior high potentials; content driven online communications citing relevant examples throughout the organization.

- Senior leaders, as influential spokespeople for the message, should demonstrate practical examples of the theory in action and support these examples with timely cross-cultural communications.
- Best practice examples from within the organization could be presented and shared among participating groups to encourage a cross-pollination of learning and development while managing similar internal complex structures. The more senior the presenter, the better to demonstrate senior sponsorship and endorsement.
- Learning and development should include appropriate structured content for all management, both junior and senior, with suggested goals. Some organizations even choose to introduce inspirational targets or suggested quotas with a timeline in order that they can be achieved over a set period of time. There are some excellent examples in industry of how targets can be introduced using external resource agencies to identify the appropriate talent in order to build a gender balanced team.
- The pipeline of talent in the organizations should be nurtured and monitored for gender diversity. High potentials can be identified in sister organizations; exchange sabbaticals with accompanying stretch assignments foster and cross-pollinate talent with developmental experiences. All this naturally needs to be conducted through the cooperation of the human resource departments across the international organizations.

4. Do you have examples of good practice to increase the number of women in senior positions?

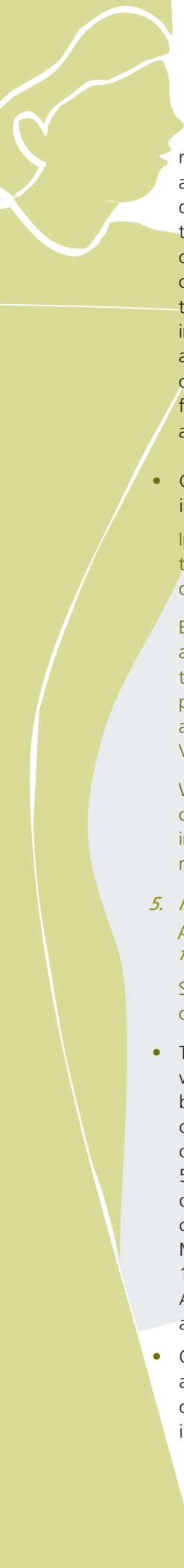
At the Centre we have taken time to seek out examples of organizations that have achieved a significant number of senior women and asked the question—how did they achieve this?

Baxter International—under the senior sponsorship of a new CEO within the Asia Pacific region, a global

pharmaceutical introduced some targeted interventions to redress the significant gender imbalance within the management team of this particular region. Four years ago, women represented less than 10 per cent of the management team in this region compared to approximately 30 per cent in other regions within the firm. Now the transformation of the top team means that they are much more gender balanced with women representing 45 per cent of the board. How did they do this, and what are the advantages for Baxter International? There were four key interventions that have been itemized as drivers:

- Practicing affirmative search in broadening the search for new talent—by challenging the external search agencies with the task of identifying gender-balanced lists of new talent for every appointment, regardless of the country for that appointment. This proved hardest in more traditional professional cultures such as Japan and India for certain appointments. However, they focused on the goal and eventually achieved the appropriate lists of candidates. This initiative had the added advantage of taking the politics of top talent search out of the boardroom, and focused all parties on leveraging the benefits of a broader diverse talent pool.
- Training and development of the high potential talent pool by creating senior leadership development programmes for women as well as men—encouraging the women to take part as well as the men.
- Managing flexible options for women, during pregnancy, maternity and post maternity—there have been several very senior women who have retained their senior positions and visibly prospered during and after their maternity. Flexible working options, including remote and flexible working hours, have helped to retain talent at this time. More junior high potential talent has been offered stretch assignments to shadow and support these women during this critical time.
- The gender balance achieved on the executive and operating boards of the region are widely communicated in the marketing for recruitment. In China specifically, this has had a significant impact, e.g. high potential recruits (young men and women) are choosing this company—they say because of the progressive policies they perceive in the marketing materials and in assessing membership of the executive board.

Volvo Cars—We have found that often successful gender-diversity initiatives have developed organically from within the organizations to answer an inherent need, to serve a client base or to improve use of existing resources. For example, the CEO of Volvo Cars



responded to a request from the ranks and gave his approval for a brave experiment. An all-women car design and engineering team was formed in response to market research presentations indicating that women consumers were looking for more tailored features in car design. The team formally proposed the project to the CEO and Board believing that they could bring new insights to design and build a concept car that would appeal to all people. The result was the YCC concept car. It was the first time that an all-women team was formed in the automotive industry to design and build a concept car.

- Communications were a key factor in the success of this intervention:

Internally, the project received senior sponsorship from the CEO which facilitated internal recognition and delivery of this pioneer project.

Externally, the communications around the project itself as well as the innovations in the concept car caught the public imagination internationally. The car was presented at the Geneva motor show and the media attention alone created significant media interest in the Volvo Car brand.

Without ever putting the car into production, the company benefited from a halo effect of increased sales in three European countries simply because of the public relations and messaging to customers.

5. Is there any communality in the type of problems that women in different regions face for career progression to leadership positions?

Stereotypes are commonly quoted as barriers to women's career progression through leadership positions.

- The more commonly perceived stereotype of the working woman and mother—too distracted with her double burden to invest time fully in her career—is often a key obstacle to promotion and career progression. However, our in-depth study of professional teams revealed that 52 per cent of the women project leaders in our collected data set actually do not have children. And yet they still complained of a lack of progression and mentoring. Moreover, they stated that they received on average a 17 per cent lower salary than men in equivalent roles. All these issues have been highlighted in subsequent and parallel studies.
- Our research at the Centre has also confirmed that another more fundamental stereotype sits at the base of this complex issue reinforcing the “glass ceiling” cited in media articles. This stereotype, well documented by

gender theorists and academics, shows how women are perceived as “potential mothers” whether or not they have or want to have children. Men, on the other hand, are perceived as “potential managers” and are often afforded opportunities such as senior executive leadership training and stretch assignments more readily than their female equivalents.

Mentoring—much needed between senior and junior executives as part of the learning and development process. However, this is often perceived as difficult between junior women and senior men—and as senior men are key in making up the significant portion of the senior executive, this can create a hidden obstacle for women. Formal mentoring schemes can be very successful in helping to overcome and address these shortcomings. Creating a formal and open platform for such mentoring activities to take place legitimizes the mentoring process. Such a process can also draw high potential women into focus, raising awareness of the whole talent pool among senior executives. This mentoring process also offers young high potentials new senior contacts and exposure to a broader range of experiences and executives.

6. Taking into consideration the global competition for talent, what are your suggestions in being able to attract and retain the most talented women in an organization, i.e. the United Nations?

Attracting and retaining talent in any organization, whatever the focus of activity or service, is as much to do with adopting the latest human resource frameworks and examples of best practice as it is to do with enabling employees to deliver their jobs and projects in the most efficient and flexible way possible. This means that most employers are now adopting many different forms of “work distribution” in order to ensure that they are able to flex operations wherever possible to the needs of the recruited talent. Often these examples are managed with output-based performance reviews. Some of the suggestions include:

- Job sharing;
- Flexible working;
- Accumulated hours contracts;
- Managed fixed-term contracts;
- Part-time work agreements; and
- Technology enabled remote working on an agreed/contractual basis.

We hear from partner companies and through research with young professionals that a key decision-making factor in selecting their new employer is how an employer allows them to integrate their professional and private lives. Such is the war for talent that companies are adopting many of the following measures in order to make the modern workplace attractive especially to young high potentials:

- Demonstration of the equal opportunities for men and women;
- Transparency on promotion and pay reviews;
- Access to senior executives/managers in the organization;
- Enabling remote working through technology;
- 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access to the building or place of work;
- Around-the-clock remote access to online systems; and
- Open access to social networks even during the working day.

7. *What are your recommendations in being able to develop a gender-sensitive organizational culture in the UN?*

An opportunity exists for the United Nations to adopt gender-diversity initiatives and interventions that have already been tested and refined successfully within other international organizations. There are also some best practice examples that could seriously be considered from external industry alliances. Suggestions might include:

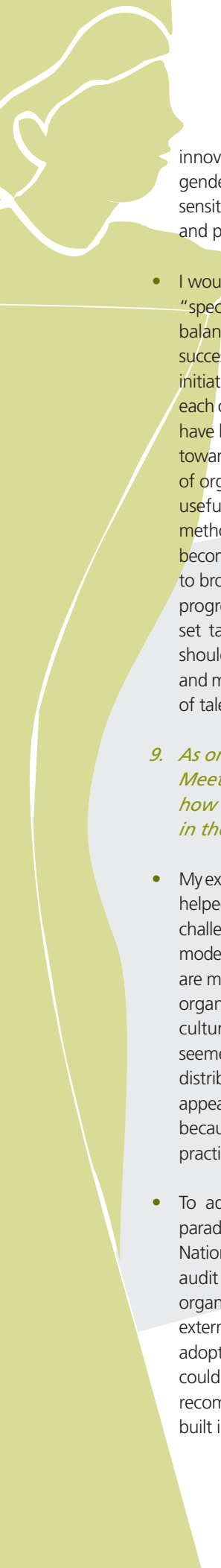
- Forming a Diversity Board composed of representatives from various supportive and informative stakeholder groups.
- The Board should be chaired by a senior representative of the United Nations to ensure alignment with strategy and senior mentorship for ongoing academic and industry alliances.
- Board representatives would provide an ongoing connection to the development of new initiatives and will help to ensure that the UN is able to stay gender sensitive and in step with the latest talent and human resource frameworks.
- Senior management of the United Nations would need to make a commitment to adopt and promote the proposals presented by the Board as key strategic initiatives. These senior management representatives

would also become champions within their own section of the UN.

- A selection of the ideas discussed at the Diversity Board could be tried, the impact measured over a period of time and adopted after a review.
- 8. *As one of the experts who participated in the Expert Group Meeting organized by the Office of the Focal Point for Women on measures to accelerate the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system, which took place on 14-16 November 2007, can you share with Network some of the lessons learned from the conference and the most important recommendations concerning women's issues?***

Some of the major discussion points during the Expert Group Meeting revolved around addressing upcoming issues, such as:

- Strategic positioning—Retaining and leveraging the status of the UN as an international moral authority. Moreover the impact could be felt if the internal delivery was visibly aligned and in step with this perception through an active communications programme. The expert group began by examining the complex context within which their proposals had to be set. Not only do UN organizations have to be “good employers”, but they also have a key role to play in advancing the status of the world's women by setting an example. The moral authority of UN system organizations will be quite weak if they are perceived to be communicating the message: “Do as I say, but not as I do.”
- Changing demographics—most organizations, with the UN being no exception, are about to feel the impact of seismic shifts in demographics as the population of baby boomers prepares to retire. The war for talent is fiercer than ever, and the changing recruitment patterns and new drivers in selecting and retaining the upcoming Generation Y recruits are expected to pose significant challenges for many organizations, if they are not already. National and international organizations alike will be required to manage their recruitment populations and talent pipeline carefully, minimizing or eliminating fall out and retaining as many of their high potential staff as possible. The situation presents an opportunity for women and minorities to be both retained and recruited.
- The UN needs to focus on the key benefits of developing and retaining a gender-balanced and highly professional contemporary workforce. We know through research that the responsibilities and goals of achieving productivity,



innovation and efficiency can only be achieved with gender-balanced teams. The organization needs to stay sensitive to this fact and align human resource activities and practices accordingly.

- I would also recommend a review of the application of “special measures” and targets as an aide for gender-balanced recruitment. Reviewing the experience of successful companies like Baxter International and the initiatives of entire countries like Norway and Spain, in each of these examples, inspirational targets and quotas have been set either as legislation or guidelines to work towards achieving gender balance in senior management of organizations. A review of such examples will create useful and contemporary external references. The methods used to build and retain a rich talent pool have become highly innovative, with greater investment made to broaden the search for talent. Regular monitoring of progress supports the acceleration of any project and set tasks. If special measures are reconsidered, they should be adopted with a full complement of search and monitoring techniques to identify the best selection of talent.

9. As one of the Experts in the Expert Group Meeting held in New York last November 2007, how would you describe the work-life paradigm in the UN?

- My experience of the UN during the Expert Group Meeting helped me understand some of the not inconsiderable challenges such an international organization faces as a modern day employer. The work-life paradigm challenges are made all the more complex because the network of organizations within its structure must straddle many cultures and legislative contexts. For example there seemed to be a limitation in flexibility in terms of work distribution options—this unfortunately can limit the appeal to women and a younger generation of recruits because it shows an inflexible work-life paradigm in practice within the organization.
- To address the challenges in the current work-life paradigm I witnessed during my short time at the United Nations properly, I would recommend a full review and audit of contemporary working practices within the organization. This should then be followed by a list of external resources and references for ideas that might be adopted and adapted to the organization. Differences could then be highlighted and a list of practices formally recommended for adoption could be prioritized and built into future plans.

10. One of the reports of The Centre for Women in Business found that a number of big organizations in Europe offer job-sharing, but few were using it. What is your view on this, and why do you think this is happening? Could you offer some advice for organizations who would like to implement job-sharing?

- Job-sharing has been adopted successfully by a number of leading organizations, surprisingly even at a senior level. Increasingly, as men and women in dual career partnerships achieve senior positions, they find they need to ask employers to help with flexibility. The complications of child and elder care arrangements can force a professional working couple to drive the work distribution and management solutions within organizations. It is often in such circumstances that ideas and examples such as “job share” become feasible and workable solutions for particular roles. We are seeing an increasing number of men and women in partner companies requesting job-share as a solution—often this is worked out between two senior or mid-level management executives who know they are able to work together and usually in similar roles.
- It is still an unusual solution, however, and our suspicion is that it is only supported by senior executives if they can be convinced that the two players are capable of working closely as a team, and are able to cover the range of work in an efficient way without risk or increasing costs to the organization. Successful job-sharing takes careful planning and execution. There are examples in industry, even in very traditional masculine organizations, so a wider adoption of this method at the UN may simply be down to a matter of acceptance and time.

11. In a study undertaken by The Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School, it has been found that “the proportion of women and men in a team impacts the team performance”. Could you elaborate on this finding?

We undertook a detailed study of professional teams in 21 international companies. In this study we were looking for the tipping point at which gender balance or near gender balance in a team would minimize or eliminate minority behaviour and maximize innovative potential for that team. We analysed data collected from over 100 teams of knowledge-based workers—teams that were composed of 100 per cent men, and an equal number composed of 100 per cent women, then some

of 25 per cent men and 75 per cent women and vice versa, and a proportion of the teams made up of 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women. What we actually found was that according to the drivers of innovation recognized by the Academy of Management—which include experimentation, task performance, knowledge transfer and efficiency—optimal innovative potential was achieved only when the teams were composed of 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women. This means that if professional teams of knowledge-based workers are not gender balanced, they are not performing to their innovative potential.

12. Can you share with Network the personal philosophy which has most contributed to your career and guided you personally in difficult moments?

Throughout my career and whatever the challenge I have encountered, I have always tried to focus on the positive aspects of where I can make a difference for the good. I truly believe in the remarkable power of discretionary effort. In my case, I find I can tap into an extra source of energy by simply adopting a positive outlook with a plan that accommodates hope. It is a simple approach to life; yet using such a framework has helped me get through both the lean and the generous stages life has to offer. ■

the most recent one as UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director in New York. She holds a doctorate in cultural anthropology from the State University of New York.

Ms. Liz Ahua (Nigeria) who assumed her new post as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Representative to Kenya on 19 February 2008. She spent the past two and a half years as head of the agency's Field Safety Section. ■

AROUND THE UN ...

- From 6 to 8 February 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General/Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, chaired a three-day High-Level Policy Dialogue on the national implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Ms. Mayanja said in an interview with the Economic Commission for Africa that conflict affects women "both as victims and as bearers of responsibility and sustainability of their communities". Consequently, **women need to be involved in peace negotiations and reconstruction processes with gender issues and gender equality taken into account.**


Ms. Rachel Mayanja said that rape and sexual assault have been used widely as weaponry in Africa. She hoped that the High-Level Policy Dialogue would encourage Member States to help empower women and enable them to be part of the rebuilding of their countries. She also gave a few reasons why resolution 1325 has not yet been well implemented. She said that many people cannot read the languages in which the resolution is published. Further, neither enough funding nor enough resources are allocated to programmes; many African Governments do not give sufficient priority to gender equality. Ms. Mayanja also emphasized the need for accountability at all levels. While warring parties and Governments need to be held responsible, the private sector, which profits from the conflicts, also shares in this responsibility because of its supply of weapons to the warring parties.

- A **new CD-ROM** issued by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women provides easy access to **25 years of work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Ms. Susan Malcorra (Argentina) who has been appointed as Head of the Department of Field Support. On 14 March 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Ms. Malcorra as Head of the Department of Field Support wherein she will be responsible for the worldwide peace missions of the United Nations and will head the Headquarters staff supporting 32 field operations. During the Tsunami Emergency in December 2004, Ms. Malcorra spearheaded the operational response as Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme. She has diversified managerial experience in the fields of human resources, budget, finance, information, technology, telecommunications, administration and security.

Ms. Rima Salah (Jordan) was appointment on 14 March 2008 to the post of Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Ms. Salah has held senior positions in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for 20 years, with



French and Spanish language versions of the CD-ROM are forthcoming. To order a CD-ROM, please contact: Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2 UN Plaza, 12th floor, New York, NY 10017, fax: 1 212 963 3463, e-mail: daw@un.org.

- **International Women's Day**, normally celebrated on 8 March each year in accordance with the General Assembly resolution in 1977 providing a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace, was observed this year in New York on **6 March 2008**. The theme of the celebration, "**Investing in Women and Girls**", stressed the need for increased financing for the development and empowerment of women. At the United Nations Headquarters, the day began with a panel discussion. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, in his opening statement, emphasized the significance of investing in women. He said it was essential for the United Nations and the international community to identify sources for funding for women and that there was still much work to be done by the Organization in this area. Women lack financial opportunities due to their limited access to decision-making. He concluded by stating that "one dynamic and strengthened gender entity, consolidating resources currently scattered among several structures, would attract better funding from the donor community. By mobilizing forces of change at the global level and inspiring enhanced results at the country level, such an entity would better advance our cause to empower women and realize gender equality worldwide". With him were **Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Minister of Public Service and Administration, Republic of South Africa, and **Mr. Lloyd Blankfein**, Chairman and CEO, Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., who spoke of their experiences investing in women. **Mrs. Rhonda Schaffler**, anchor of "Open Exchange", Bloomberg Television, moderated the panel. The high-level panelists included: **Ms. Sabine de Bethune**, Senator, Belgian Parliament, Chairwoman of the Flemish Christian Democrat Party (CD&V) in the Senate, **Ms. Muriel Siebert**, Founder, Chairwoman and CEO, Muriel Siebert & Co., Inc., **Ms. Zara Khatib**, Technology Marketing Manager, Shell International, United Arab Emirates, and **Ms. Inez Murray**, Vice President for Technical Assistance and Programs, Women's World Bank.

In the afternoon, a panel discussion, **Investing in Women: What is being done**, was held in the United Nations Headquarters. The **Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues**

and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) organized the event. **Ms. Aparna Mehrotra**, the Focal Point for Women, Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), moderated the discussion. The Panellists included: **Mr. Douglas Freeman**, Founder of the World Diversity Leadership Summit and CEO, VirtCom Consulting, **Ms. Maie Ayoub von Kohl**, Acting Special Adviser on Gender & Diversity, UNICEF, **Ms. Soknan Han Jung**, Head of Gender Equality and Diversity Unit, UNDP, and **Ms. Maria Hutchinson**, Chief of Learning Section, United Nations.

In addition to the events at Headquarters, other UN offices around the world organized activities in observance of the International Women's Day—from UNESCO's art exhibition of 1,000 women who have been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace prize to the creation of the Women and Development Division in ECLAC, Santiago, to Peru's UN Information Centre's media launch of a press contest named "Investing in Women is investing in Development".

- **The 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** convened from 25 February to 7 March 2008 in New York. Representatives of various UN entities, members of worldwide non-governmental organizations and representatives of Member States attended. The representatives discussed the following themes:

—The priority theme: **Financing For Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.**

—The emerging issue: **Gender Perspectives on Climate Change.**

—The review theme: **Women's Equal Participation in Conflict Prevention, Management and Conflict Resolution and in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding.**

Violence Against Women also constituted an area of emphasis. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a campaign to combat violence against women on the opening day of the CSW.

A variety of events were held and organized by the Permanent Missions and United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Division of the Advancement of Women.

During the 52nd session, besides the discussion of the priority theme, a round table for high-level participants

on good practices and the lessons learned took place. A panel of technical experts pointed out key policy initiatives, and capacity-building on challenges of mainstreaming of financing for gender equality and empowerment of women.

The following challenges were noted:

- Human and financial resources for the development of women;
- Expertise to implement gender-responsive reforms;
- Networks of gender focal points to support gender-responsive budgeting;
- Insufficient sex-disaggregated data; and
- Awareness among women's networks and organizations on the budget processes and their effect on the daily lives of people.

Governments made commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. They also noted that financial and human resources were necessary to help women enjoy their rights and national action plans and strong legislations are critical to promote gender equality and meet Millennium Development Goals. In addition, Governments noted that gender-responsive budgeting which needed to be strengthened and gender mainstreaming required capacity-building across all sectors. Improvement of women's health and consideration of the issue of climate change and natural disasters which directly impact the economic status of poor women were also mentioned.

The Commission on the Status of Women completed its 52nd session by adopting wide-ranging agreed conclusions on its priority theme.

It reaffirmed the need for Governments, UN funds and programmes, and specialized agencies, as well as international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to increase and extend human and financial resources for the empowerment of women. The Commission stressed the importance of scaling up resources for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, with an assured budget for gender equality in the national plans and implementation. It recognized that:

- Gender mainstreaming constituted an important tool to achieve gender equality.

- The promotion and protection of women's human rights needs to be mainstreamed into programmes to end poverty.
- Each person is entitled to participate in economic, social, cultural and political development.
- Women's economic empowerment is vital to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Resources and access to HIV/AIDS and maternal care need to be improved.
- To strengthen the goal of financing for gender equality and empowerment of women, the Commission asked Member States to include gender perspectives in the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in 2008.

The complete report of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Woman (E/CN.6/2008/11) can be accessed at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/290/62/PDF/N0829062.pdf?OpenElement>

- **Women make the news 2008: UNESCO's global action to promote gender equality in the media**

On International Women's Day on 8 March 2008, UNESCO launched the eighth year of its global effort to promote gender equality in the media in its campaign called **Women Make the News**. The organization selected **Women's Untold Stories as the theme for its 2008 campaign**. By inviting women to produce news stories and articles to highlight their success, achievements and talents, media managers will recognize the professional abilities of women working in the media. This will, most importantly, also bring forth the significance of gender equality and parity in society. ■

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- **Impact of guns on women's lives**

On 3 March 2008, the Office of Disarmament Affairs and the Women's Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) organized a seminar to discuss the impact of guns on women's lives. The panelists included Ms. Binalaksmi Neptram (Control Arms Foundation of India), Ms. Marie-Claire Ruhamy (Solidarity of Women of Burhale), Ms. Maria Pia Devoto



(Asociación para Políticas Publicas de Argentina) and Ms. Widad Akrwai (Defend International).

The discussion revolved around the existence of gun violence in countries like India, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Argentina and the Sudan, and how women are participating to halt the violence. The political, economic and social conditions, as well as the lack of development and opportunities, add to the violent situations.

Ms. Neptram from India gave insight into the situation in her country, the second most heavily armed nation in the world. She also talked about how the Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) was formed to address the small arms issue. Likewise, women in India have set up a network to extend assistance to women survivors of gun violence. Commenting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Ruhmya noted that small weapons have been used in the long years of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a profitable small arms industry has been created. Meanwhile, in Argentina, Ms. Devoto informed the panel that about 70,000 weapons have been seized since July 2007. Some women handed over the arms and ammunitions. She emphasized that women are actively working to control the problem. They are part of the solution because they know where these weapons are hidden. Lastly, the representative from Defend International, Ms. Akwari, talked about the link between guns as symbols of manhood and authority and the devastating consequences of this situation on women.

The panel suggested that the United Nations and international donors recognize the causes and consequences of the arms trade. They also stated **that it would be useful to identify groups involved in the arms trade and punish the rebel groups, assist women during the peace process, extend assistance to women who have survived gun violence, and build solidarity among organizations which help women in society.** ■

AROUND THE WORLD

- Fahmida Mirza was the **first woman to be elected as Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly** this past March 2008. Ms. Mirza is a representative of the Pakistan People's Party, and a key loyalist to the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

- Sharla Musabih, a 47-year-old woman advocate from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, has **battled amazingly to protect women victims of domestic violence and of human trafficking.** She has become a bearer of hope by providing these trafficked women shelter and by insisting that authorities be tougher on husbands who abuse their wives. She opened her home in Dubai to abused women and called it the "City of Hope". Despite the tough opposition she faced from the Government, she stated that she has repatriated 400 victims of human trafficking. Ms. Musabih was born and raised in Washington, United States, but has lived in the Emirates for 24 years, and has converted to Islam. In 2007, the Government opened a new State-sanctioned women's shelter, the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, hoping to replace the City of Hope. Some women from the City of Hope were transferred to the foundation, however Musabih later discovered that the new shelter was inadequate. She therefore continued to operate the City of Hope. Ms. Musabih has stated that she is battling the attitudes that cause domestic violence and is not fighting the Arab traditions (*The New York Times*, 23 March 2008).

- The plans of the Government of Turkey to draft a new constitution in 2008 which includes an article stating "that women, along with the elderly, children and the handicapped, constitute a group in need of special protection", has generated large opposition from Turkish women, as well as men. Considering that the country has female political leaders, writers, business entrepreneurs and women advocates, women emphasized that they are equal and should therefore be represented as equal, as stipulated in the current constitution. They also commented that "the Government does not promote professional women as role models". A woman political leader stressed that **gender equality in Turkey has to be maintained as in previous constitutions. It should go forward in terms of equal rights, and not backwards** (*Financial Times*, 8 January 2008). ■

IN YOUR INTEREST...

- On 4 March 2008, UNIFEM hosted the **screening of three short films on gender-responsive budgeting initiatives in Morocco, India and Bolivia.** The short films previewed how the governments of

these countries and women's movements have worked on budgets responding to women needs. Ms. Nisreen Alami, Programme Manager, UNIFEM Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme, and Ms. Elisa Fernandez, Program Specialist, UNIFEM LAC (Latin and Caribbean) Section, also constituted a panel on the subject.

In Morocco, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) has been used as a tool to identify the needs of women, and to build processes according to those needs. The panel mentioned the importance of determining whether the funds are being allocated to benefit men or women. The short film on India documented how the Government is able to correct the inequalities between men and women through gender-responsive budgeting, ensuring also that women participate in the process. Similarly, the short film on Bolivia showed that women are demanding higher municipal budgets. Women believe that more money for education will be key to a continuing improvement of their situation.

All three examples of GRB initiatives in these countries testify to the fact that **governments are gradually taking women's rights and gender equality into consideration in the budgeting process and that women are demanding this change in ways that are increasingly difficult to ignore.**

- On 3 March 2008, the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) co-hosted a panel discussion on **Facilitating Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting using Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS)** at the 52nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The meeting was moderated by Maureen O'Neil, the President of IDRC. The panel members were: Ms. Celia Reyes, Co-director of Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) and CBMS Network Leader, the Honourable Celia Flor, City Councilor of Bacolod/the Philippines and also Executive Director of the DAWN Foundation (Development through Active Women Networking), and Mr. Godofredo Reteracion, City Planning and Development Coordinator, Escalante City, the Philippines. The closing remarks were made by Ms. Gail Bradshaw, Director General, Status of Women Canada.

Dr. Cecilia M. Reyes, the Project Director of CBMS Philippines, explained that the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) is an organized system to collect, process and integrate data at the local level to aid in the implementation of programmes and monitoring. It is intended to improve governance and bring greater transparency and accountability to resource allocation.¹

CBMS can be used to help the problem of a lack of sex-disaggregated data, which continues to pose a challenge in connection with gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). Also, during the panel discussion, Mr. Reteracion presented one of the CBMS pilot projects, the "Escalante Experience". Escalante is a city in the south of the Philippines on the Negro Island with a population of 79,098 people in 16,610 households.² He related that the key challenges encountered were the poverty incidence in the city and lack of knowledge of the situation of men and women, and of boys and girls. He noted that with IDRC support, the CBMS tool was used to engage local government in planning and budgeting, based on the needs of both men and women.

With respect to the findings of the project "Escalante Experience", the following salient trends emerged:

- Higher child mortality among girls;
- Higher incidence of malnutrition among girls;
- Small representation of women in the labour force;
- Prevalence of spousal abuse and rape;
- Underrepresentation of women participating in the community and in politics.

Mr. Reteracion, therefore, stressed the importance of analysing the public budgets to ensure that they address the concerns of both men and women.

Celia Flor, City Councilor of Bacolod/the Philippines, also Executive Director of the DAWN Foundation (Development through Active Women Networking), another speaker of the meeting, focused on gender mainstreaming, the aim of which is gender-responsive budgeting. She said that the challenges for the DAWN Foundation lie in the lack of gender-disaggregated data, the local government's lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming and a continued misconception of gender and development (GAD) budget policy.

¹ http://econdb.pids.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25&Itemid=40

² <http://www.insidenegros.com/negros-occidental/escalante-city/>

With the lessons learned from the “Escalante Experience” the panel members showed how **CBMS can expedite gender-responsive budgeting by providing the necessary data and by asking local governments to plan and to budget based on the realistic needs of both men and women in the community.** ■

OTHERS

- A summary of an article by Boris Groysberg “**How star women build portable skills**” from the *Harvard Business Review*, February 2008.

Groysberg and his colleagues from the Harvard Business School researched the successes of 1,000 star stock analysts. As star performers move from one company to another, will they continue to shine? When star performers switch firms, everyone loses, according to Boris Groysberg. Their performance deteriorates, the market value of the new company plunges, and new star employees do not stay long in the new organization. All of this seems to occur, except when the stars are women. Groysberg offers two explanations: One, **women, unlike men, build their success on external relationships or with outside contacts rather than on internal networks**; second, **when women consider a job change, they analyse and weigh a greater variety of factors than men**. The author also noted that women “look for a firm that will welcome them as individuals, with distinctive style, personalities and methods of distinguishing their franchises”. Women check the culture, the values and the managerial style of a company”. In so doing, these strategies enable outstanding female performers to be more successful in their transition to new companies. The writer said that the creative strategists used by these female Wall Street stars could also be used by other employees, both male and female. On the other hand, employers could enhance the portability of their staff. The author concluded that “the goal is developing stars who shine brighter, and longer, wherever they are”.

- **A mother’s passion to empower other women**

This article is based on a written interview with Mrs. Socorro Arevalo, Programme Director of A Home for the Angels Child Caring Foundation, Inc., Manila, the Philippines.



Mrs. Socorro Arevalo is in the front right of the picture, attending UNIFEM's Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow in New York, March 2008.

Mrs. Socorro Arevalo is the Programme Director of A Home for the Angels Child Caring Foundation, Inc., located in Manila, the Philippines. She helps women in the deprived areas of Manila. Married at a very young age, Socorro chose to stay home to raise her three children rather than finishing her studies or joining the workforce. She used the “school of trial and error” in raising her children and in taking care of her family. At the age of 50, when her children had completed their graduate studies, Socorro completed her Bachelor’s in Public Administration at the University of the City of Manila. Throughout, her children had been her best mentors, teaching her communication, technological skills and how to do research.

After 17 years as a housewife, Arevalo decided to do what she loved most—to care for children and to empower women. Arevalo ventured into the poor communities of Manila to teach women parental skills and responsible parenthood through fertility awareness. She also counselled women who were in crisis. A Home for the Angels Child Caring Foundation became an offshoot of her volunteer work. It was founded by the Philippines Environment Secretary and his wife in 1996. It serves as a residential facility and a crisis centre for abandoned babies waiting for legal adoption. Socorro is in charge of carrying out the facility’s goals and programmes.

An outreach of this foundation is the Learn and Play House Programme in late 2003, a **programme which has been recognized by UNICEF as a model of best practices in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)**. Socorro tells us that “the mothers are trained through the Life Enrichment and Awareness Programme (LEAP), a value formation process which they undergo together with practical teaching skills”. It caters to out-of-school children younger than six years old. Mothers of these children are trained to teach, to provide guidance and to play with children.

The Programme also imparts basic values, such as love of family, good manners and conduct, basic health education and hygiene. Arevalo **initially trained Mother-Teacher Volunteers (MTVs), and the number of MTVs grew in the other depressed communities of Manila.** Arevalo claims that the “youth today are not our future, they are our PRESENT and whatever we do for them today will spell our future”.

According to an article in the *Manila Times* on 16 March 2008, the women who have been trained by Arevalo have become productive and gainfully employed as day-care teachers. They have become more mature physically, emotionally and intellectually by joining the volunteer programme. It has also proved to be contagious as a lot of mothers are encouraged to switch to being mother-teacher volunteers in addition to running their households.³

For all the initiatives Arevalo has taken for women, Avon granted her the Hello Tomorrow Fund Award which aims to empower women worldwide. **The funds from the Avon award and other resources were used to train mothers for the Learn and Play Home-Based Day-Care Services,** and to purchase toys and educational materials and to provide food for families.



Mrs. Arevalo teaching Mother-Teacher Volunteers of the community.

As Programme Director of A Home for the Angels Child Caring Foundation, Socorro, passionate about

her work, says that she is not afraid to initiate new projects and sees failure as a challenge to try again. Nor does she fear working without funding which she deems important, confident that other resources will appear. She fully recognizes her own limitations and accepts the support of other people to achieve the success of a project. Her desire to reach out to others seems to come naturally, and she takes an experiential approach to life, one step at a time and one person at a time, patiently helping to discover their worth and to use their talents. She reveals that her “greatest consolation is making people, mothers in particular, realize that motherhood and bringing up

good children in difficult situations is possible no matter to what economic strata or environment one belongs. . . . What better instrument of positive change than for an empowered mother to change the world”. Evolving from a housewife, to volunteer, to trainer for mothers and women, **Arevalo has brought visible changes to the homes of many mothers who volunteered and trained for the programme.** ■


SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETINS

ST/SGB/2008/5 of 11 February 2008 (**Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority**). This bulletin seeks to ensure that Secretariat staff are treated with dignity and respect and that staff members are aware of their responsibility to create a workplace free from any form of discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority. The terms discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are defined in the bulletin. To ensure a harmonious organizational culture, preventive measures, such as regular and mandatory training for all Secretariat staff to raise awareness of the zero tolerance of prohibited conduct, are to be undertaken. Formal and informal means are also emphasized to assist in resolving matters involving prohibited conduct. The Department of Management is expected to submit an annual report to the Secretary-General on the cases received and the action taken. ■

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- The 25th session of the European Environment and Health Committee discussed “Gender inequities in environmental health”. Health practitioners stressed that men and women have different health risks, needs and requirements. **Women do not get enough information about health services and care to protect themselves,** while men, according to gender norms, are exposed to work-related physical risks. The meeting addressed gender as a cross-cutting issue as recommended by the European Environment and Health Committee. They noted that this required use of sex-disaggregated data, and analysis of the differences from a gender perspective. This is congruent with the World Health Organization’s goal of including gender analysis in all its agenda to ensure that gender

³ <http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/mar/16/yehey/weekend/20080316week1.html>



equality is mainstreamed into health policies and programmes. Countries need to integrate gender with socio-economic determinants of health, health policies, representation of women in decision-making processes and the environment because the differences between men and women and their different roles and responsibilities result in behaviours which affect their health risk factors, their access to health services, the responses they get from the system and their ability to protect themselves.

- The team at the National Research Centre for the Working Environment in Copenhagen conducted a study on the health risks of shift workers and noted differences in the health issues between men and women. Shift workers are those who regularly changed or who worked fixed evening and night shifts. **Shift-working women were more likely than men to claim an early pension or disability pension due to poor health** largely due to stress, and lack of sleep, in addition to domestic responsibilities of women (BBC News, 18 January 2008). ■

WORK/LIFE

- An article in *The New York Times* on 15 January 2008 noted that according to several recent studies **women have been hard hit by the rising number of home foreclosures in the United States**. Single women have been especially affected because they are among the fastest growing groups of homeowners, according to the National Association of Realtors. In addition, a disproportionate number of them have financed their home purchases with high-cost sub-prime mortgages.

Problems in the sub-prime market have been driving up the foreclosure rate in the United States. A National Community Reinvestment Coalition study found that women received 37 per cent of high-cost home loans in 2005 while the Consumer Federation of America, in research it conducted, found that among women and men with equal credit scores, women were 32 per cent more likely to receive sub-prime loans than men. The **Consumers Union found that because women tend to have less wealth than men, the likelihood that they would get sub-prime loans increased, making it more difficult for women to build wealth by paying off their mortgages.** ■

RECOMMENDED READING

- **The New Politics of Gender Equality** by Judith Squires. The author explains the focus of gender quotas, women's policy agencies and gender mainstreaming. She evaluates arguments about the emergence and impact of these initiatives.
- **30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women's Political Participation in Latin America**, Beatriz Llanos and Kristen Sample, contributors. The report, available in English and Spanish, addresses the issue of women's progress in their participation in public and party decision-making in the three decades since the beginning of the third wave of democracy in Latin America. The report gathers data from 18 Latin American countries. ■

INFO

You can find a monthly list of senior vacancy announcements (P-5 and above) at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>

You can read Network online at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/Network>

To receive hard copies of Network, please send an e-mail request to network-newsletter@un.org

08-67613—July 2009—2M
Printed at the United Nations, New York

NETWORK—The UN Women's Newsletter

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