



Network

The UN Women's Newsletter, Volume No. 9, Issue 3 • July, August, September 2008

Letter from the Focal Point for Women

Dear Colleagues,

As part of our efforts to advocate for gender-related issues, we draw your attention to the summary of the Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in its 63rd session on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the United Nations which has been central to the work of the office during the summer. This summary, comprised of 32 entities, highlights the key findings, good practices, statistics, obstacles and recommendations for the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system. The increase in the representation of women in the Organization has been less than one would have hoped, yet we are hopeful that, with continued strength and perseverance, the goal of gender equality can be attained sooner rather than later. Every little step in the right direction is a victory, moving us forward with hope and resolve. In fact, if gender parity is to become a reality in the near future, it is the only way to proceed in order to reach our goals.

Together with other gender news and issues, we also highlight the key responsibilities of the departmental focal points for women. They are reflected in the Secretary-General's Bulletin on department focal points for women in the Secretariat. Coordinated by the Focal Point for Women, the Departmental Focal Points are to inform and assist the Heads of Departments to improve the status of women in their departments or offices. Through their committed efforts, we hope to highlight consistently the imperative to support women and gender issues in the Organization.

In solidarity,

Aparna Mehrotra

Contents

Letter from the Focal Point of Women	p. 1	Around the world	p. 3
Congratulations to ...	p. 2	In your interest	p. 4
Around the UN ...	p. 2	Secretary-General's bulletin	p. 10
Did you know ...	p. 2	Women's health	p. 11
Violence against women	p. 2	Recommended reading	p. 11
Around the world	p. 3	Websites	p. 11

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Judge Navanethem Pillay, who on 28 July was appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights. She will replace Ms Louise Arbour, who had been in this post for the past four years. Ms. Pillay's four-year term will start on 1 September 2008. Ms. Pillay, with her outstanding background in human rights and justice, held various senior positions in international courts. She has fought for apartheid, was elected judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and worked in the International Criminal Court in The Hague. She has written about and practiced international criminal law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In addition, Ms. Pillay was the first black woman to work in the High Court in her home country, South Africa. She is also an active supporter of women's rights.

Ms. Patricia O'Brien of Ireland, who was appointed on 6 August 2008 by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel. Ms. O'Brien is the first female legal chief in the history of the UN. She replaces Mr. Nicolas Michel of Switzerland. Her background consists of experience both in legal and international affairs in Ireland and in the European Union.

Ms Leila Zerrougui of Algeria for her appointment in August 2008 as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of Congo. She has had an outstanding career in developing the rule of law through the administration of justice and in human rights, publishing articles on these subject matters. She was appointed to serve the Supreme Court in Algeria, was a legal advisor at the Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice and was also "Chargé de mission" in the Presidency of Algeria.

AROUND THE UN

During World Population Day, which is observed annually on 11 July, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid mentioned that the 5th Millennium Development Goal (improvement of maternal health) has achieved the least progress out of all of the Millennium Development Goals. The mortality rates for women during child birth are exceedingly high worldwide due to the fact that women have limited access to health services. Medical assistance and facilities, and family planning

are essential for the maternal health of women, according to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General requested that Government leaders adhere to their commitments and responsibilities expressed in the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in which nations agreed that all individuals and couples have the basic human right not only to decide freely and responsibly how many children they have, (including the spacing of their children), but also to have access to information, education and means in order to do so. Ms. Obaid stressed **that a woman who knows how to plan for the family will also be adept in planning her own life ... family planning empowers a woman.**

DID YOU KNOW ...

Why gender balance is important in the UN?

- As an organization involved in setting norms, the UN has a particular responsibility to lead by example in achieving gender parity in its own house.
- Gender parity is an essential element in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- The General Assembly specifically mandated that gender parity was to be reached by the year 2000 for women at the professional levels and by the year 2015 for women for Secretary-General appointed special representatives and special envoys levels.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Many female migrant domestic workers are faced with abuse from their employers. Asian countries contributing significantly to domestic workers abroad, suffer from unpaid wages and physical abuse. If sexually assaulted, these workers are expected to prove the offence is rape in order to be successful in a legal claim. Otherwise, the female victim will be prosecuted. Whereas, domestic employers, who in the majority of cases are males, will go unpunished for the abuse they inflict. Human Rights Watch requests that governments: take action to protect domestic workers; revise visa sponsorship systems accordingly; and collaborate more effectively with the countries of origin in monitoring their recruitment services, as potential solutions to combat the problem.

- In July 2008, the Government of Yemen launched a national action plan to reduce female genital mutilation (FGM) in their country by 30 per cent by 2012. FGM is an international violation of human rights which could lead to death in many cases. FGM is a product of cultural, religious and social factors existing in families and societies.

With respect to FGM, the World Health Organization has made the following observations:

- FGM includes procedures that intentionally change or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons;
- Approximately 3 million girls are at risk of FGM each year;
- About 100 million to 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently experiencing the consequences of FGM which include severe bleeding, urinary tract infections, infertility and the possibility for complications during childbirth and death of newborn babies.¹

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS FLASH

- The East African Business Week reported that in order to contribute to the empowerment of women, the financial institution, Goldman Sachs, announced that it will provide **educational opportunities to 10,000 women in developing and emerging markets. Fifteen Rwandan women²** have already qualified for the Goldman Sachs scholarships to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (BBA) in the Rwanda School of Finance and Banking (SFB).
- Forbes named the **top 10 most powerful women for 2008**. The rankings measure power as a combination of public profile and "financial heft", according to Forbes, determined by the number of press mentions and the amount of money the woman controls.³

2008 (top 10 selection)

1. **Angela Merkel**, the first female Chancellor of Germany,

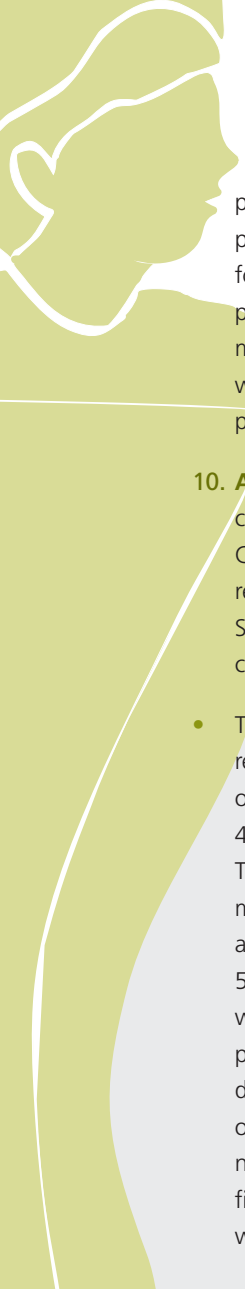
1 <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/media-center/world-gender-news/yemen-works-to-curb-female-genital-mutil-3.html>.

2 <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809011526.html>

3 http://www.forbes.com/2008/08/27/most-powerful-women-biz-powerwomen08-cz_me_cs_0827women_land.html

is considered by Forbes magazine as the "most powerful woman in the world at the present time". She was the second woman to chair the G8, after Margaret Thatcher. This year she received the Charlemagne Prize, which is a citizens' prize for providing outstanding service on behalf of European unification. Ms. Merkel actively dedicated herself towards deepening the integration of Europe. She has also pushed through a later retirement age, putting more women in senior government posts and raising payments to new parents.

2. **Sheila C. Bair** is the 19th Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).
3. **Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi** is the chairwoman and chief executive officer of PepsiCo, the world's fourth-largest food and beverage company. She has created new products for the company which has grown into a \$39 billion food and beverage corporation.
4. **Angela Braley** is president and chief executive officer for Wellpoint, Inc., and a member of the company's board of directors after performing several high-profile roles for the company. WellPoint, Inc. is a large United States-based health insurance company and the largest member of the BlueCross BlueShield Association.
5. **Cynthia Carroll**, an American businesswoman, is the chief executive officer of Anglo American PLC, a London mining company.
6. **Irene Rosenfeld** is the chairman and CEO of Kraft Foods, Inc., and has been a long-time veteran in the food and beverage industry.
7. **Condoleezza Rice** is the 66th United States Secretary of State and the second person in the administration of President George W. Bush to hold that office. Rice is the first black woman, the second African American (after her predecessor Colin Powell, who served from 2001 to 2005), and the second woman (after Madeleine Albright, who served from 1997 to 2001 in the Clinton Administration) to serve as Secretary of State.
8. **Ho Ching** is the chief executive officer of Temasek Holdings, an investment company owned by the Government of Singapore, which manages a portfolio of about \$185 billion, based primarily in Asia.
9. **Anne Lauvergeon** is a French businesswoman and



president of Areva. AREVA (Euronext: CEI) is a French public multinational industrial conglomerate known for nuclear power; it also has interests in other energy projects. In 2008, Ms. Lauvergeon was ranked by the magazine as the ninth most powerful woman in the world, third most powerful woman in Europe and most powerful woman in France.

10. **Anne M. Mulcahy** is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Xerox Corporation, Stamford, Connecticut. She began her career as a field sales representative in Xerox and rose through the ranks. She was named CEO of Xerox on 1 August 2001, and chairman on 1 January 2002.

- The September 2008 legislative elections in Rwanda resulted in it becoming the first country to have a majority of women voted in as Members of the Parliament—with 45 of 80 seats in the assembly awarded to women. The Rwandan Constitution provides for a 30 per cent minimum quota for women in the Parliament, or 24 seats, and, in this historic election, Rwandan women obtained 56 per cent of the Parliamentary seats.⁴ The elections were the second of the country's peaceful legislative polls since the genocide of 1994 when 800,000 people died within 100 days. The elections made Rwanda the only country in the world where women surpassed the number of men in the Parliament. Furthermore, as the first woman to occupy this post, Ms. Rose Mukantabana won the Speakership in Rwanda.

IN YOUR INTEREST

SUMMARY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT (A/63/364) ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

By Jenny Ringarp, OFPW Intern

In resolution 62/137 (14 February 2008), the General Assembly expressed serious concern that the priority goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations, especially at senior and policymaking levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, had not been

⁴ http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID-736

met and that the representation of women in the United Nations system had remained almost static.

In response to this resolution, the Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/364) provides information on the status of women in the United Nations system and the Secretariat, including up-to-date statistics, information on progress made, obstacles encountered in achieving gender balance and recommendations for accelerating progress. It includes information on the representation of women in organizations and agencies of the United Nations system from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2007, and in the United Nations Secretariat from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008.

Findings:

UN system

- Representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the entities of the United Nations system increased from 36.9 to 38.4 per cent—an annual average increase of 0.5 per cent.
- Of the 31 United Nations entities, only two⁵ achieved overall gender balance among Professional and higher categories staff in 2007, while seven⁶ entities had less than 30 per cent women on their staff in 2007.
- Regarding the goal of gender parity in promotions, it was only met at the P-2 and P-3 levels in the 29 United Nations entities that provided data for the three-year period 2005-2007.⁷
- 50/50 gender balance in appointments (external recruitment) has been achieved only at the P-2 level.
- Women accounted for 40 per cent of all separations in the 29 United Nations entities that provided data for the three-year period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2007. One of the major causes for the separation of women was appointment expiration (1,702 out of 3,969).
- With respect to resignations, women represented 43 per cent of those who resigned during the

⁵ UNFPA and UNITAR.

⁶ FAO, IAEA, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNU, UNWTO and WFP.

⁷ Out of 31 entities, the following submitted this data: FAO, IAEA, ICAO, ITC-ILO, ICJ, IFAD, ILO, IMO, ITC, ITU, PAHO, UN, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO and WMO.

reporting period. Women constituted 19.8 per cent of resignations at the D-1 level and above (20 out of 101), and 45.1 per cent of those at the professional level (514 out of 1,140).

UN Secretariat

- In the Secretariat, the percentage of female staff in the Professional and higher categories showed a negligible improvement during the two-year period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008, increasing from 37.4 to 37.6 per cent.
- Over the two-year reporting period, the representation of women at the D-1 level and above as of 30 June 2008 showed a slight increase from 25.3 to 26.3, an average of 0.5 per cent per year.
- The representation of women in the Professional category remained almost stagnant during the reporting period. It increased only 0.1 per cent from 38.6 to 38.7 per cent between 30 June 2006 and 30 June 2008.
- The goal of gender parity in promotions was only met at the P-2 and P-3 levels, and almost met at the P-4 level.
- Gender parity in appointments was only met at the P-2 level, and almost met at the P-3 level. Women accounted for 38.6 per cent of all separations, compared to 36.6 per cent in the previous period.

Impediments and recommendations in achieving gender balance:

1. Inadequate accountability, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms:
 - Set realistic annual gender goals for organizations and conduct annual reviews to assess progress towards those goals.
 - Institute a gender scorecard for each department and organization.
 - Hold managers accountable through their annual performance appraisal for achieving established gender goals.
2. Lack of special measures for gender equality
 - Adopt binding special measures to select an equally or better qualified female candidate until the 50/50 representation target is attained and sustained.
3. Designate a senior-level champion for gender issues to provide leadership in formulating appropriate plans and strategies for achieving gender balance.
3. The absence of or weak integration of focal point systems
 - Implement new and strengthened terms of reference for departmental focal points for women.
4. Weak implementation of flexible work arrangements
 - Promote results-based management practices.
 - Raise awareness of telecommuting and encourage all staff members to use it.
 - The Capital Master Plan (CMP) and related high costs of relocation and rental of office space provide an incentive to encourage alternative workplace arrangements.
5. Insufficient outreach
 - Circulate forthcoming vacancies to national machineries for women, national women's organizations, women's professional associations and universities.
 - Increase gender diverse informal networking opportunities to address women's exclusion from formal and informal networks.
6. Low numbers of qualified women applicants
 - Strongly encourage Member States to identify and regularly submit more women candidates for appointment to positions in the UN system, especially at more senior and policymaking levels.
 - Establish an inter-agency roster of qualified women to be available to organizations of the United Nations common system.
7. Lack of adequate data on the causes of high attrition rates for women
 - Institute systematic mandatory exit interviews in all organizations.
 - Incorporate gender-related indicators on separation/retention, work/life fit and managerial issues into these interviews.

Examples of good practice in the United Nations

ILO

Action Plan for Gender Equality using a results-based management approach

UN Secretariat

New and strengthened terms of reference for departmental focal points

UNDP

Gender and Diversity Scorecard

Leadership Development Programme for entry level staff where women's representation is 53 per cent

UNESCO

Action plan focusing on recruitment, training, mentoring and work/life balance

Development of a specific programme for P-4 and P-5 female staff and supporting informal self-managed networks of senior female staff

Introduction course for new staff on work/life and gender related issues

UNHCR

Special Constraints Panel helpful to staff members juggling family responsibilities with career choices, equally approached by men and women

The World Bank

Corporate action plans with quantitative targets, reinforced by unit-level plans

Mentoring programmes for key groups such as women from developing countries

Solid foundation of research and data to identify gaps and barriers

WHO

Improving outreach through targeting professional organizations which have a large female membership

Strengthened policies in relation to work/life balance, particularly on leave and flexible work arrangement

Recommendations

The previous reports (A/59/357 and A/61/318) suggested measures for both the Secretariat and the United Nations system. In addition, the recommendations emanating from the Expert Group Meeting in 2007,⁸ in large measure are currently being adopted for implementation.

In his report (A/63/364) the Secretary-General pointed in particular to:

Monitoring and accountability

The Secretary-General stressed the responsibility of senior managers, especially heads of departments and offices, to ensure greater implementation of existing policies. Consequently, a system of reporting and accountability involving monitoring by DM, OHRM and OSAGI is under progress.

The organizational culture

The Secretary-General noted that further efforts must be made to overcome those aspects of the organizational culture which constrain the recruitment, retention and advancement of women staff. He pointed in particular to the need to strengthen implementation of flexible work arrangements to ensure a healthy, more productive and efficient work environment which enable women and men to perform their duties with flexibility. Further, the Secretary-General noted that the Capital Master Plan and related high costs of relocation and rental of office space provide an opportunity and an incentive to encourage alternative workplace arrangements. Official calculations of the Capital Master Plan, for example, indicate that if 20 staff would share 10 desks by use of telecommuting, the Organization would save over \$1 million (approximately \$105,000 per person). Some 3,000 staff is expected to be relocated; yielding cost savings of \$10 million if only 200 staff (less than 10 per cent) were to telecommute on a regular basis. No new policies would be required—only implementation of existing ones.

Upcoming opportunity to accelerate progress

The Secretary-General noted that given current demographic norms, almost all organizations face significant numbers of retirements in the near future. These create opportunities to accelerate progress toward gender parity by increasing both the number of promotions and recruitment of suitably

⁸ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpegr.htm>

qualified women. Also, indicated by several studies, it would appear that there is a growing realization that more rigorous implementations of both temporary special measures (wherein equally or better qualified women candidates must be selected) and flexible work methods constitute a necessary, although not sufficient, condition to accelerate progress towards gender parity, increase productivity and enhance work satisfaction. Strong and consistent messages to this effect from top senior management would be required. The trend in several entities indicates that women, even when at decision-making levels, remain clustered more in support rather than line functions.

The need for urgent action reaching gender parity

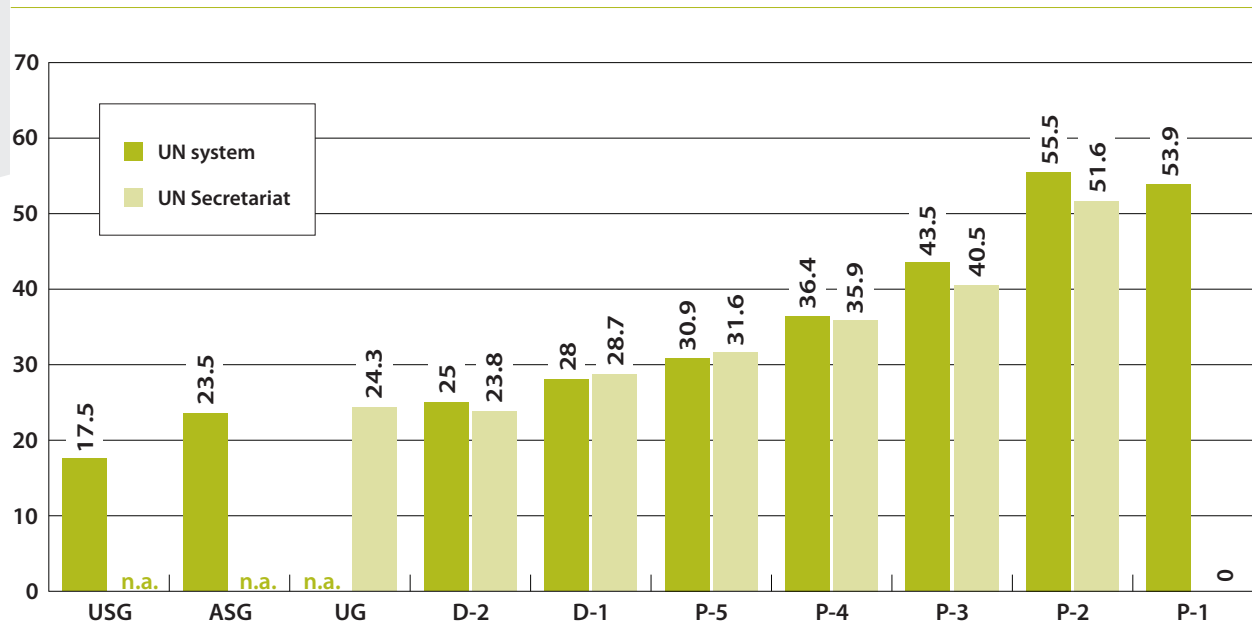
Finally, although there is heightened awareness of the imperative for gender balance, reversal of the slow trend and pace towards gender parity requires urgent and intensified action.

Please see the full report:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpdocumentation.htm>

The status of women in the United Nations system (from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2007) and in the Secretariat (from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008)

Figure 1
Gender distribution of staff in the Professional and higher categories



*UG stands for "Ungraded", e.g., Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, Deputy Director-General, Assistant Director-General, Director-General and Secretary-General.

Prepared by the Office of the Focal Point for Women 10/08. See Report on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the United Nations system (A/63/364).

WOMEN IN THE UN SYSTEM

As of 31 December 2007, women in the UN system constituted:

- 38.4 per cent (9,417 out of 24,553) of all staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more;
- 27 per cent (677 out of 2,507) of all staff at the D-1 level and above;
- 39.6 per cent (8,740 out of 22,046) of all staff at the P level.

Gender balance has only been achieved at the P-1 (53.9 per cent) and P-2 (55.5 per cent) levels.

Largest increase: D-1 (from 24.3 per cent in December 2004 to 28 per cent in December 2007); Smallest increase: P-3 (from 42.9 per cent in 2004 to 43.5 per cent in 2007).

WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT

As of 30 June 2008, women in the UN Secretariat constituted:

- 37.6 per cent (2,741 out of 7,288) of all staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more;
- 26.3 per cent (165 out of 627) of all staff at the D-1 level and above;
- 38.7 per cent (2,576 out of 6,661) of all staff at the P level.

Gender balance has only been achieved at the P-2 level (51.6 per cent).

Largest increase: D-1 (25.3 per cent in June 2006 to 28.7 per cent in June 2008); Largest decrease: D-2 (from 30.4 per cent in 2006 to 23.8 per cent in 2008).

No progress: P-4 (stagnant at 35.9 per cent in both 2006 and 2008).

Trends in the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories

During the 10-year period 1997-2007 in the UN system, the overall growth of women in appointments of one year or more was 7.5 percentage points, an increase from 30.9 per cent (5,716 out of 18,486) in 1997 to 38.4 per cent (9,417 out of 24,553) in 2007.

Level	Percentage of women as of 31 December 1997	Percentage of women as of 31 December 2007	Cumulative change of women (1997-2007)
UG	13.1	24.3	11.2
D-2	14.5	25.0	10.5
D-1	15.6	28.0	12.4
P-5	19.6	30.9	11.3
P-4	28.7	36.4	7.7
P-3	39.5	43.5	4.0
P-2	51.5	55.5	4.0
P-1	57.8	53.9	-3.9

During the 10-year period 1998-2008 in the UN Secretariat, the overall growth of women in appointments of one year or more was 3 pp, an increase from 34.6% (1,141 out of 4,164) in 1998 to 37.6% (2,641 out of 7,288) in 2008.

Level	Percentage of women as of 30 June 1998	Percentage of women as of 30 June 2008	Cumulative change of women (1998-2008)
USG	11.1	17.5	6.4
ASG	13.0	23.5	10.5
D-2	18.8	23.8	5
D-1	23.7	28.7	5
P-5	29.3	31.6	2.3
P-4	32.3	35.9	3.6
P-3	39.4	40.5	1.1
P-2	45.4	51.6	6.2

Promotions, appointments and separations in the Professional and higher categories	
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT
<p>PROMOTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2005-2007, women accounted for 44.8 per cent (2,051 out of 4,583) of all promotions to the P-2 to the D-1 levels, 33.6 per cent (153 out of 455) of promotions to the D-1 level, and 46 per cent (1,898 out of 4,128) of promotions to the P-2 to the P-5 levels. Gender parity in promotions was only met at the P-2 (62.8 per cent) and P-3 (52.7 per cent) levels. <p>Lowest proportion: D-1 level with 33.6 per cent (153 out of 455).</p>	<p>PROMOTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2006-2008, women accounted for 48.4 per cent (399 out of 825) of all promotions to the P-2 to the D-1 levels, 37.3 per cent (31 out of 83) of promotions to the D-1 level, and 49.6 per cent (368 out of 742) of promotions to the P-2 to the P-5 levels. Gender parity in promotions was only met at the P-2 (69.7 per cent) and P-3 (58.2 per cent) levels, and almost met at the P-4 level (48.4 per cent). <p>Lowest proportion: D-1 level with 37.3 per cent (31 out of 83)</p>
<p>APPOINTMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2005-2007, women represented 40.8 per cent (2,245 out of 5,501) of all appointments from the P-2 to the ungraded levels, 31.2 per cent (177 out of 568) of appointments at the D-1 level and above, and 41.9 per cent (2,068 out of 4,933) of appointments at the P-2 to P-5 levels. Gender parity in appointments was only met at the P-2 level (57.8 per cent). Lowest proportion: Ungraded with 25 per cent (28 out of 112) 	<p>APPOINTMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2006-2008, women represented 42.7 per cent (404 out of 946) of all appointments from the P-2 to the USG levels, 26.4 per cent (24 out of 91) at the D-1 level and above, and 44.4 per cent (380 out of 855) of external recruitments at the P-2 to P-5 levels. Gender parity in appointments was only met at the P-2 level (60 per cent), and almost met at the P-3 level (48.3 per cent). <p>Lowest proportion: USG level with 23.1 per cent (3 out of 13)</p>
<p>SEPARATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2005-2007, 7,443 staff in the Professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more separated out of a total of 24,553 staff. Women constituted 40 per cent (2,975 out of 7,443) of all separations, 23.6 per cent (179 out of 757) of separations at the D-1 level and above, and 41.8 per cent (2,796 out of 6,686) of separations at the P level. Major causes of separation: Women constituted 42.9 per cent (1,702 out of 3,969) of appointments expirations, 43 per cent (534 out of 1,241) of resignations, and 28.5 per cent (382 out of 1,339) of retirements. 	<p>SEPARATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the period 2006-2008, 697 staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more separated out of a total of 7,288 staff. Women constituted 38.6 per cent (269 out of 697) of all separations, 28.9 per cent (44 out of 152) of separations at the D-1 level and above, and 41.3 per cent (225 out of 545) of separations at the P level. Major causes of separation: Women constituted 39.8 per cent (106 out of 266) of retirements, 33.3 per cent (67 out of 201) of appointments expirations, and 43.7 per cent (52 out of 119) of resignations.

Source: CEB, 1997 and 2004; information provided by UN entities, 2007.

Source: OHRM, 1998 and 2006, IMIS, 2008.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

The Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2008/12 of 1 August 2008 on the **departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat** outlines the functions of the departmental focal points for women (DFPW) pursuant to the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/282 of 5 January 1996, "Policies to achieve gender equality in the United Nations". Focal points for women shall be appointed by all heads of departments, offices, regional commissions and missions for the purpose of supporting the heads' efforts to achieve gender equality in their section. These focal points will be responsible for advising department heads concerning gender issues and will assist with workforce planning. Departmental focal points will be coordinated by and report to the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

They must have access to all necessary documents, such as gender statistics of their respective office, in order to carry out four main functions:

Support for the head of department/ office/mission:

DFPW provide support for the head of the department/office/mission in promoting awareness of gender issues by ensuring the gender equality in the workplace.

- Promote awareness of gender issues;
- Provide advocacy and counselling to women in the office;
- Monitor progress towards reaching the gender targets;
- Contribute to the achievement of gender targets as reflected in the human resources action plans;
- Extend advice in the staff selection process to make certain that gender balance is considered in the process.

Participation in the staff selection process:

DFPW actively support the staff selection process by contributing to the evaluation of candidates under the staff selection process in departments/offices/missions and ensuring the gender perspective in staff selection.

- Review the applications of women candidates and rosters of female candidates to make certain that women are considered in the staff selection process;
- Review the list of recommended candidates before submission to the central review bodies and assist programme managers in promoting gender balance on the interview panels by providing them the necessary feedback on the interviews;
- Ensure that gender balance is promoted on the interview panels;
- Observe, whenever possible, during interviews of candidates and provide necessary feedback;
- Give comments through the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in cases where female candidates are not included on the list of recommended candidates for vacancies;
- Serve as ex officio advisers on the local central review bodies at departments/offices/missions away from Headquarters where there is no representation of OSAGI on the local central review bodies.

Advocacy and counselling:

DFPW counsel women within their departments/offices/missions regarding their concerns and career opportunities.

- Counsel women on matters regarding career development and suggest ways to resolve issues involving harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination and abuse;
- Recommend training initiatives in their workplace on gender sensitivity, career progress strategies and work/life balance;
- Encourage women to increase participation in training programmes as part of their career development.

Monitoring:

DFPW assist in regularly monitoring the achievement of gender targets and meeting with the Office of Human Resources Management or local administrative offices to assess the progress of the gender equality.

- Assist the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to monitor efforts in: achieving gender balance and in the developing policies and programmes towards achieving gender equality

through their comments, experiences and assessments which involve the status of women; evaluating ways towards the development of a gender-sensitive workplace; and promote training/career opportunities for women;

- Promote the implementation of work/life balance policies.

The bulletin also mentions the procedure and requirements in the selection of the departmental focal points for women. In addition to having a strong commitment to gender equality, it is essential that DFPW maintain confidentiality and carry out their functions efficiently and competently.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- During the International AIDS Conference held in Mexico City from 3-8 August 2008, Oxfam International (a confederation of 14 like-minded organizations working together with partners and allies around the world to bring about lasting change in the world such as the promotion of good health),⁹ reported that female condoms have not been advocated sufficiently and not enough research has been conducted on their use and effectiveness. Consequently, women have been more vulnerable to AIDS and sex-related diseases. The obstacles in using the female condom include costs (female condoms are more expensive than male condoms), lack of knowledge in using them, religious oppositions to birth control and unavailability in many countries. Oxfam mentioned in its joint report with the World Population Foundation that, "the female condom is the only method that women have to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. [The female condom] has been embraced in many countries and cultures, [it has been proven that] it works and it is cost-effective". Therefore, governments and international agencies should be educated on the need to include the female condom as part of family-planning programmes and as a method to prevent AIDS in affected countries. Political leaders are encouraged to unite and to increase the budget towards this goal.

RECOMMENDED READING

Will Work from Home, written by Tory Johnson (CEO/founder of Women for Hire) and Robyn Freedman Spizman

⁹ <http://www.oxfam.org/en/about>

(a renowned consumer advocate), instructs and gives steps and tips to help start a business in a field which a person is passionate about and can be achieved from home, and/or alternatively find a company which has policies that allow a person to work from home. The authors encourage the readers to be able to balance work, home, family and other commitments.

WEBSITES

<http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Current-Women-Leaders.htm>

This informative website lists and gives a brief background of the female heads of states and government worldwide currently in office, including leaders of self-governing external territories.

<http://www.iwpr.org/index.cfm>

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) investigates and distributes results regarding the needs of women. It encourages public dialogue and discussion, and provides support to families and communities. With the help of policymakers, scholars and public interest groups, IWPR discusses issues like poverty, work and family, and women's civic and political participation.

<http://www.icrw.org>

This is the official website of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) whose function is to research women and girls in developing countries. ICRW focuses primarily on child marriage, gender and AIDS, and the third millennium goal which aims to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

You can find a monthly list of senior vacancy announcements (P-5 and above) at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpcareer2.htm>



You can read
online at

Network

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/
osagi/fpnetworks.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpnetworks.htm)

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

INFO

NETWORK—The UN Women's Newsletter

Editor-in-Chief: Aparna Mehrotra,
Focal Point for Women,
OSAGI/DESA

Production: Cynthia C. Gale, OSAGI/DESA

Design and layout: Outreach Division, DPI

Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

United Nations
Two UN Plaza, DC2-1290
New York, NY 10017

Tel.: 1 212 963 6828; fax: 1 212 963 9545

E-mail: network-newsletter@un.org