

Network

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Letter from the Focal Point for Women

Dear Friends,

This issue of NETWORK recalls notable events germane to gender equality and women's empowerment in different regions of the world. We welcome the first and youngest ever appointments of women as Prime Minister in Thailand and Foreign Minister in Pakistan, breaking gender and age barriers in these countries.

Continuing our monitoring of trends in the representation of women in the UN system, this issue features an overview of the statistics at all levels (P2-USG), comparing changes over a ten year period between December 2000 to December 2010 in the representation of women, distilling some aspects of particular interest.. For instance, the percentage of women's representation increased with professional level, with the highest increase of 13.5% at the USG level and a minimal increase of 2.8% at the P2 level.

This issue also looks at the "Development of an Action Plan for a UN System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women", and the launch of the UN Women's First Flagship Report "Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice". The latter finds that despite many gains in women's legal entitlements over the past several decades, what is prescribed by the law does not always translate into equality and justice in women's daily lives.

We also carry news on work life balance issues from the Kilden Information Research Centre for Gender Research in Norway. Its report "A Successful Work-Life Balance" concludes that gender inequality in the workplace still prevails, as demonstrated by wages, work conditions, positions and power. This issue also contains information on the 2011 Women's World Congress,, which gathered 2000 practitioners and activists from 92 countries worldwide in Ottawa, Canada.

We hope you will find this issue of Network of interest, and that it helps to maintain your commitment to advancing the cause of gender equality.

In solidarity,

Aparna Mehrotra
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Coordination Division
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Contents

Letter from the Focal Point for Women	p. 1	Recommended reading	p. 10
Congratulations to ...	p. 2	Recommended websites	p. 10
Around the UN ...	p. 3	Status of Women in the United Nations	
Around the world ...	p. 8	System and Secretariat	p. 11
Work/life balance	p. 9		

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

[Hina Rabbani Khar](#) on her appointment as Foreign Minister of Pakistan. Ms. Khar, the youngest person and first ever woman to serve in the post, assumed office on 19 July 2011. She was elected to the National Assembly in both 2002 and 2008 and was Minister of State for Finance and Economic Affairs between 2008 and 2011. On 13 June 2009, she became the first woman in Pakistan to present the budget speech in the National Assembly. Ms. Khar graduated with a BSc in Economics from the Lahore University of Management Sciences in 1999 and received her MSc in Hospitality Management from the University of Massachusetts in 2001.

[Yingluck Shinawatra](#) on her appointment as Prime Minister of Thailand. Thailand's first female Prime Minister and the youngest Prime Minister of Thailand in more than 60 years, Ms. Shinawatra assumed office on 5 August 2011. She has a bachelor's degree from Chiang Mai University and a master's degree from Kentucky State University, both in public administration. Before entering politics, she held senior positions in the private sector.

[Juliet Bynoe-Sutherland](#) on her appointment as Director of the Secretariat of the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP). A national of Barbados and an attorney-at-law by profession, Ms. Bynoe-Sutherland brings to the post a background in law, political science, health policy and planning. She has more than 16 years of regional and international experience in public health, having worked in Barbados, the United Kingdom, and the USA in key areas relevant to HIV and AIDS, specifically health system reform, tertiary care, palliative care and national AIDS programme planning.

AROUND THE UN ...

Action plan for a United Nations system-wide policy for gender equality and the empowerment of women

During its 2010 annual session, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) agreed on consultations to finalize a System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) to support the development and implementation of a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Consultations with entities based in New York

and Geneva and with Regional Commissions and Offices will take place between July and October 2011.

The consultations between July and October will help define and validate the draft SWAP, including setting out indicators to be tracked across the United Nations system; defining roles and responsibilities; and creating a strategy and roadmap for implementation of the policy.

The Chief Executives Board for Coordination had given their support in October 2006 to the idea of a SWAP as a means of accelerating the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women within the policies and programmes of the UN system.

The Chief Executives Board statement noted: "A United Nations system-wide action plan that includes indicators and timetables, allocation of responsibilities and accountability mechanisms and resources is essential to make the strategy of gender mainstreaming operational."

The SWAP will act as a vehicle for the implementation of conclusions 1997/2 agreed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It will also support further implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, by promoting a harmonized and streamlined approach.

It will aim to establish the following: feasibility mechanisms, including an accountability framework, to ensure that adequate promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women takes place system wide; an assessment system to determine if these mechanisms are leading to the level of gender equality and the empowerment of women required; and methods by which assessment feeds back into planning on an ongoing basis.

The SWAP will have six main focus areas:

- Strengthening accountability for gender equality results among staff at all levels in order to close implementation gaps both in the policy areas and in the field;
- Enhancing results-based management for gender equality by utilizing common-system indicators and measurement protocols;
- Establishing oversight through monitoring, evaluation and reporting by utilizing processes such as peer reviews, gender audits and the collection of sex-disaggregated data;
- Allocating sufficient human and financial resources including better use of current resources, joint planning, allocation of additional resources where required, alignment of resources with expected outcomes, and tracking the use of resources;
- Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender mainstreaming by adopting both common-system and individual organizations' capacity development approaches;
- Ensuring coherence, coordination, and knowledge and information management at the global, regional and national levels.

The SWAP will be submitted for endorsement to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2012.

For questions about the SWAP, please contact Aparna Mehrotra at aparna.mehrotra@unwomen.org

UN Women's releases first flagship report

On 6 July 2011, UN Women launched its first flagship report, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice*.

The report recognizes the many gains made in recent decades regarding women's legal entitlements. However, it also details how legislation does not always translate into equality and justice in women's day-to-day lives. For example, 139 countries and territories now guarantee gender equality in their constitutions. However, all too often, women continue to experience injustice as a result of inadequate laws, loopholes in

legislative frameworks, poor enforcement and vast implementation gaps.

Domestic violence is now outlawed in 125 countries, but 127 states do not explicitly criminalize rape within marriage. That means that globally, 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime and more than 2.6 billion live in countries where marital rape is not a criminal offence. In addition, the report finds that women are still paid up to 30 percent less than men in some countries, and some 600 million women are employed in sectors where they lack the protection of labour laws.

During a news conference held at UN Headquarters, Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, stated that the report “aims to inspire bold action by governments and civil society to meet their commitments and also accelerate the achievement of women’s rights worldwide.” She added: “Full equality demands that women become men’s true equals in the eyes of the law – in their home and working lives, and in the public sphere.”

The report draws attention to the practical barriers that women continue to face when seeking redress, particularly those living in the poorest and most excluded communities. High legal fees and the difficulty of traveling to distant courts are just two of the obstacles cited in the report as hampering women’s ability to pursue cases. In addition, many women do not report crimes because of the social stigma attached to doing so and lack of confidence in weak justice systems.

In addition to such revealing statistics and studies, the report includes 10 groundbreaking cases that have in some way created positive change for women’s access to justice. They have done so by advancing the legal understanding of women’s human rights under international law; clarifying how existing laws can be interpreted; challenging laws that need to be repealed; or by creating new laws. The report concludes with 10

recommendations to enhance women’s access to justice:

1. Support women’s legal organizations;
2. Support one-stop shops and specialized services to reduce attrition in the justice chain;
3. Implement gender-sensitive law reform;
4. Use quotas to boost the number of women legislators;
5. Put women on the front line of law enforcement;
6. Train judges and monitor decisions;
7. Increase women’s access to courts and truth commissions in conflict and post-conflict contexts;
8. Implement gender-responsive reparations programmes;
9. Invest in women’s access to justice;
10. Put gender equality at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals.

Progress of the World’s Women is UN Women’s biennial investigation of progress made towards a world where women live free from violence, poverty and inequality. This series is the product of long-term processes that bring together leading practitioners and academics to undertake thorough research and in-depth analyses.

The report is available at <http://progress.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/EN-Summary-Progress-of-the-Worlds-Women1.pdf>

2011 UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AIDS

More than 3,000 people came together in New York for the 2011 UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on AIDS, held between 8 and 10 June 2011.

Together, they took stock of progress and challenges over the past 30 years and attempted to shape the future course of the global response to AIDS. The meeting marked the 30th year since the start of the AIDS pandemic and the 10th anniversary of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of 2001.

The meeting, which included official plenary and five panel sessions as well as 40 individual side events, was attended more than 30 Heads of State, Heads of Government and Vice-Presidents. UN Women participated in a number of events that focused on women's engagement and participation in the AIDS/HIV response.

The meeting drew attention to the gendered impact of AIDS and the continuing challenges faced by women and girls, in spite of global commitments. On the eve of the meeting, a special event was held to highlight priority actions for the AIDS response put forward by women around the world. In her opening address for the event, entitled: "HIV Priorities for Positive Change: In Women's Words", UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet highlighted some sobering facts:

- In 1997, 41 percent of adults living with HIV were women. This increased to 49 percent in 2001 and now stands at 52 percent.

- In low and middle-income countries, HIV is a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age.

- 74 percent of young men know that condoms are effective in preventing HIV infection, compared to just 49 percent of young women.

- Globally, 26 percent of all new infections are among young women aged between 15 and 24; most do not know their HIV status.

- Young women make up more than 60 percent of all young people living with HIV. In sub-Saharan Africa, this rises to a staggering 72 percent

Ms. Bachelet emphasized that: "Empowering women and guaranteeing their rights – so that they can protect themselves from infection, overcome stigma, and gain greater access to treatment and care – is one of UN Women's key strategies in dealing with the epidemic."

On 8 June 2011, a policy forum entitled "Prevention and Protection Save Lives: Girls,

Women, and HIV," took place. The forum aimed to identify and strengthen the response to HIV and raise awareness about the links between women's health issues and the broader development agenda.¹ It was hosted by the International Peace Institute, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations, Women Deliver, and Family Care International.

The panel brought together Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director, UN Women; Purnima Mane, Deputy Executive Director (Programmes), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Carmen Barroso, Regional Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region; Jan Beagle Deputy Executive Director, Management and External Relations, UNAIDS; and Lindsay Menard-Freeman, Programme Officer at the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS to discuss lessons learned, current challenges and next steps.

During the discussion, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador Annie Lennox drew attention to the contradictions between quick responses to epidemics in the developed world and the ongoing AIDS epidemic which primarily affects women in developing countries. Ms. Lennox urged world leaders gathered at the meeting to take action on women and girls.

Ms. Bachelet also called for leadership on the issue, stating that: "With political will we can create the fiscal space to make women and girls a priority."

Lindsay Menard-Freeman of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, drew attention to the need to prioritize young people in the global response to HIV/AIDS. She emphasized that focusing on young women is especially important as young women are at the greatest risk of contracting HIV. Their input is

¹ Source:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2011/june/20110608cwomenandgirls/>

therefore crucial in the development of policies and programmes to serve them.

A panel discussion on 9 June 2011, chaired by Hanno Pevkur, Estonian Minister of Social Affairs, entitled “Women, Girls and HIV”, focused on the disproportionate burden of HIV on women and girls and the need to ensure that their specific needs are adequately addressed. The discussion highlighted the progress, challenges and opportunities in addressing the social determinants of the risks of HIV infection faced by women and girls, as well as links between violence against women and girls and HIV.

“In 30 years of dealing with HIV,” reported Hanno Pevkur, “we have learned that it is as much a social as a medical problem; and the lack of quality of sexual reproductive health and rights services, violence, harmful cultural practices, are fuelling the epidemic.” UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin also spoke of the need to change harmful gender norms and practices and to integrate the prevention of gender-based violence into HIV interventions.

The discussion was moderated by Stephanie Nolen of *The Globe and Mail* and members of the panel included Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, South African Minister of Health, and Siphwe Hlophe, co-founder of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Swaziland for Positive Living.

The discussion highlighted the need for investment in ways of enabling women and girls to take on leadership roles. Siphwe Hlophe clearly summed this up when she stated: “We will not attain a sustainable response if we do not invest in women with education and economic empowerment.”

On the final day of the meeting, Member States of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration to guide country responses to HIV over the next five years. The declaration contains clear,

measurable targets, including to halve sexual transmission of HIV by 2015; to reduce HIV transmission among people who inject drugs by 50 percent by 2015; to ensure that by 2015 no child will be born with HIV; to increase universal access to antiretroviral therapy and get 15 million people onto life-saving treatment by 2015; and to halve the number of deaths due to tuberculosis in people living with HIV by 50 percent by 2015.

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples

The 17th International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was marked on Tuesday, 9 August 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The event was organized by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSPD/DESA); the United Nations Department of Public Information; and the NGO Committee on the Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. This year the theme was “Indigenous designs: celebrating stories and cultures, crafting our own future.”

There are over 370 million indigenous people in at least 90 countries around the world. Many are threatened with extinction and assimilation. Indigenous communities are often subjected to systemic discrimination, exploitation, political and economic marginalization, exclusion from political and economic power, poverty, illiteracy, displacement due to wars and environmental disasters, dispossession of ancestral lands, deprivation of resources for physical and cultural survival, and seizure of their basic human rights.

The United Nations International Day of the World's Indigenous People aims to promote and protect the rights of the world’s indigenous people and to recognize their

achievements and contributions on a range of global issues.

To mark the occasion, UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet released a statement drawing attention to the marginalization of women in indigenous communities. She stated that, indigenous women “often lack access to education, health care and land, and are subjected to violence, including in the contexts of trafficking and armed conflict.”

However, she went on to highlight the fact that indigenous women are often agents of change in their communities, noting: “Indigenous women have worked relentlessly to mobilize and push international actors to recognize the challenges they face, and to guarantee their individual and collective rights and sustainable development for their communities.”

For more information, see http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/news_internationalday2011.html

International Widows’ Day

The first International Widows’ Day was observed on 23 June 2011. The event provided an opportunity to give special attention to the situation of widows and their children in order to highlight the need to protect their human rights and alleviate poverty through empowerment.

In December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared 23 June International Widows’ Day (A/RES/65/189). It called on Member States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations to pay particular attention to the situation of widows and their children.

The date was chosen in honour of Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba, who inspired the founding of the Loomba Foundation. On 23 June 1954, she became a widow at the age

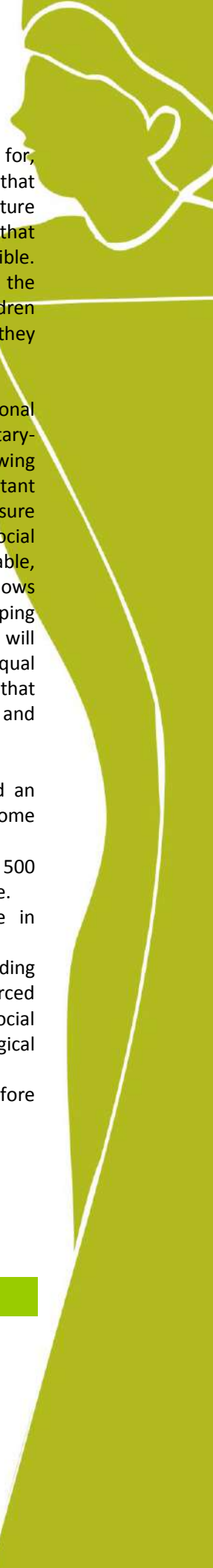
of 37. With seven young children to care for, Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba recognized that education was the key to her children’s future success and dedicated herself to ensuring that they received the best schooling possible. First established in 1997, the mission of the Loomba Foundation is to educate the children of impoverished widows in India so that they can have a better future.

On the occasion of the first International Widows’ Day, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following message: “We must recognize the important contribution of widows, and we must ensure that they enjoy the rights and social protections they deserve. Death is inevitable, but we can reduce the suffering that widows endure by raising their status and helping them in their hour of need. This will contribute to promoting the full and equal participation of all women in society. And that will bring us closer to ending poverty and promoting peace around the world.”

International Widows’ Day also provided an opportunity to raise public awareness of some startling statistics.

- More than 245 million widows and 500 million children suffer in silence worldwide.
- More than 100 million widows live in poverty, struggling to survive.
- Widows are targeted for abuses including murder, rape, forced prostitution, forced marriage, property theft, eviction, social isolation, and physical and psychological violence.
- 1.5 million widows’ children die before their fifth birthday.

For more information, see <http://www.un.org/en/events/widowsday/> and <http://www.theloombafoundation.org/>



AROUND THE WORLD ...

2011 Women's Worlds congress

The 2011 Women's Worlds congress took place between 3 and 7 July 2011 in Ottawa, Canada. Nearly 2,000 people from 92 countries took part, the largest ever gathering of women from around the world in Canada.

The event focused on issues such as cultural and sexual identities, political spaces and the empowerment of girls and women. In addition to participating in sessions, congress delegates marched on Parliament Hill in solidarity with the Native Women's Association of Canada and local activists. The march was part of a continuing campaign to highlight the alarmingly high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls in Canada.

Dramatic increase in sex selection in India

Approximately 50 million women are "missing" from the Indian population. Prenatal sex determination and the dramatic increase in selective abortion of female foetuses are creating a sharp change in the ratio of men and women in the country. Estimates of the number of female foetuses being aborted every year in India vary from two million to five million. To make matters worse, this imbalance has been exacerbated by higher mortality rates among girls due to the fact that boys receive better care.

A new article from the Centre for Market and Public Organisation at Bristol University in the United Kingdom has begun to shed some light on the causes of sex selection in India.

Although son preference is an old tradition in India and other parts of Asia, the article finds that the widespread availability of ultrasound scans in India has led to abortion of female foetuses on an unprecedented scale.

The authors of the report analysed the data of half a million births in India over more than three decades. They noted that the dramatic decrease in the ratio of girls to boys after the introduction of ultrasound machines is only evident for second or subsequent children. They found that Indian parents conduct prenatal sex selection even after they have a son and conclude that many Indian parents seem to want two boys and one girl.

The authors also highlight the fact that the practice of aborting female foetuses is more strongly established in the better off areas of India than in poorer rural areas, a significant finding as it challenges previous assumptions that the practice is driven by traditional customs.

Addressing the increasing problem of gender-biased sex selection in many Asian countries, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and the World Health Organization released a joint statement on 14 June 2011 on the issue.

The statement stresses that, while the widespread availability of technologies such as ultrasound has facilitated an increase in sex selection, it is by no means the root cause of the problem. The agencies call attention to the fact that "sex selection in favour of boys is a symptom of pervasive social, cultural, political and economic injustices against women, and a manifest violation of women's human rights." They further caution that "restrictive laws and policies implemented in isolation from efforts to change social norms and structures can have unintended harsh consequences, and may violate the human rights of women."

The statement proposes concrete steps to tackle the problem, including the collection of more reliable data on the extent of the problem and the factors driving it; guidelines on the use of technology for health professionals; supportive measures for girls and women, such as incentives for families

with only daughters; and other legal and awareness-raising actions.

Where have all the young girls gone? Identification of sex selection in India, by Sonia Bhalotra and Tom Cochrane, CMPO Working Paper No. 10/254, is available at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/papers/2010/wp254.pdf>

See also, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789241501460_eng.pdf

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

“A Successful Work-Life Balance” from Kilden, Information Research Centre for Gender Research in Norway

Summarized by: Cynthia C. Gale

Researcher Margunn Bjørnholt interviewed 14 of the original 16 couples involved in sociologist Erik Grønseth’s research project in Norway 30 years ago. This had sought to promote gender equality and ensure more equal decision-making in marriages. Margunn Bjørnholt’s article, “A Successful Work-Life Balance”, summarizes her findings.

Erik Grønseth’s study, called “Norwegian Work-Sharing Couples,” ran from 1969 to 1975. The work-sharing experiment was based on couples working part-time and sharing childcare and housework. The effects of the project on family life and gender equality were documented by questionnaires and diaries.

Deemed a “radical” project at the time, one of the main objectives of Erik Grønseth’s study was to get more women into the workplace. Having men contribute more at home was seen as a way of providing balance or compensation to the women.

Most of the 14 couples interviewed by Margunn Bjørnholt said that the experiment had had positive effects on their relationships and family, particularly in lowering stress

levels. “None of these men were ‘punished’ for working part-time,” Margunn Bjørnholt said. “Even though they held part-time positions early in their careers, they had good career development.” Today, half of the men hold full-time managerial positions.

Interestingly, many of the men – and some of the women – continued to work part time after the study was concluded. Nine of the 14 couples interviewed continued to work part time and share the responsibilities at home for more than six years.

Of particular interest to Margunn Bjørnholt was the fact that it was usually the men who had made the decision to participate in the study. Most of the men had done housework as children and had mothers who worked outside the home. “They viewed women as equal and strong. Many of them gave this as the reason why they decided to take part in the work-sharing arrangement,” she said.

According to Margunn Bjørnholt, the political preference in Norway today is for both men and women who have small children to work full time. In reality, however, these families are still the minority, as women usually work part-time during this period. She concludes that gender inequality in the workplace still prevails and this is reflected in wage levels, working conditions, the posts held and power.

RECOMMENDED READING

The 2020 Workplace

Authors Jeanne C. Meister and Kane Willyerd explore how the workplace of the future is being shaped today by Web 2.0 (a collection of breakthrough social media technologies) and by the Millennial Generation (people born between 1977 and 1997). These

emerging workplace trends have created a generation of hyper-connected workers and increased pressure on employers to overhaul their approach to talent management.

The authors surveyed 2,200 professionals and 300 employers, and developed 50 case studies. Using real data and valuable business examples to reinforce their case, they provide plans for companies' needs, plus key insights on how to manage tomorrow's workforce by focusing on recruitment, motivation, learning, and leadership. The book also looks at best practices and suggests approaches for companies and leaders to consider.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

<http://whenworkworks.org/>

When Work Works is a nationwide US initiative on workplace effectiveness, flexibility in community and business practices.

The initiative is a project of the Families and Work Institute in partnership with the US Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce and the Twiga Foundation. The website shares research and employer best practices on workplace effectiveness and flexibility; recognizes outstanding employers through the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility; and inspires positive change to encourage more employers to examine the advantages of flexibility.



STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE UN SYSTEM AT A GLANCE 31 DECEMBER 2000 – 31 DECEMBER 2010

Source: CEB - Table 11

Prepared by the Focal Point for Women, February 2011.

Representation of women (Percentage)														
	P2		P3		P4		P5		D1		D2		UG	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Total %	54.5	57.3	41.4	45.1	31.0	38.4	23.5	31.7	21.4	30.2	18.2	25.7	17.4	30.9
Total change %	2.8		3.7		7.4		8.2		8.8		7.4		13.5	

Average annual increment (Percentage)							
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	UG
Dec. 2000 - Dec. 2010	0.6	0.2	0.5	-0.1	-0.3	0.6	1.3

Year at which gender parity will be reached							
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	UG
At Dec.2000 - Dec 2010 average annual increment	Reached	2037	2035	Never	Never	2049	2024

By meeting 2% annual increase target in the HRAPs							
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	UG
Reached	2012	2016	2019	2020	2022	2020	

Required average annual increase to achieve 50% gender balance in all categories by 2015 (percentage)							
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	UG
Reached		1.0	2.3	3.7	4	4.9	3.8



Employment opportunities

You can find a monthly list of vacancy announcements at <http://www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment>

You can read *Network* online at <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

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