



System-wide Strategy on  
**Gender Parity**



**UN Women  
Implementation Plan**



December 2017



# Table of Contents

## I. Introduction

## II. Secretary-General's UN Women specific recommendations of the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity

1. Good practices guidelines for an enabling and inclusive organizational culture
2. Work with civil society partners to encourage shadow reporting on the overall strategy
3. Dedicated strategy to significantly increase the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions
4. New public information, social and digital media campaign promoting women in UN field missions
5. Database of women National Officers
6. Communications strategy, including internal and external messaging

## III. Other recommendations of the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity

## IV. Summary and Looking Ahead

Annex I: List of UN Women specific recommendations with responsible divisions

# Introduction



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United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres launched his Strategy on Gender Parity on 13 September 2017, to operationalize system-wide efforts to advance this priority at the United Nations. The strategy was developed by the Task Force on Gender Parity and Equality in the United Nations System, comprising more than 30 United Nations entities. UN Women has been actively involved from the beginning of the process, based on its unique mandate to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to advance the full realization of women's rights and opportunities.

The following key areas have been addressed in the recommended actions to guide the system-wide progress: setting targets and monitoring progress, importance of leadership and accountability, special measures and recruitment issues, field and mission settings, senior appointments and creating an enabling environment. The strategy provides recommended actions to reach gender parity across the system by 2028.

Achieving gender parity is an urgent priority not only as a basic human right, but also as it is essential to the UN's efficiency, impact and credibility. It is important to create a working environment, at all levels and wherever the UN operates, that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all staff, so that we can truly lead by example and leave no one behind.

Furthermore, United Nations has a pivotal role in supporting the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Implementation of this strategy should also further geographic diversity, particularly from underrepresented groups, and the twin goals of parity and diversity should be mutually reinforcing rather than exclusive.

The strategy includes six UN Women specific recommendations. UN Women is also committed to other and more general recommendations of the gender parity strategy. Furthermore, UN Women will assist and offer its expertise for the UN entities to the maximum extent possible. Inter- and intra-departmental collaboration is necessary for the joint efforts to reach parity across the board.

This implementation plan will guide UN Women to move forward with the recommended actions based on its mandate. It includes concrete plans and action subject to adequate resources. Implementation, follow-up and monitoring the progress of the key recommendations will be critical to ensuring that the current momentum is sustained and the strategy is successfully rolled-out.

Through determined and joint efforts, change is possible. It is imperative to move forward and implement the recommended actions, as requested by the Secretary-General. In order to succeed collectively, we need everyone's valuable support. Let us make gender parity a reality at the United Nations!

## Secretary-General's UN Women specific recommendations of the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity

The Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity includes six UN Women specific recommendations. They refer to creating guidelines on enabling working environment, working with civil society representatives to encourage shadow reporting on the implementation of the strategy, measures and communications strategy to increase the number of women in peace operations, creating a database for women national officers and developing a communications strategy to strengthen the messaging and implementation of the system-wide gender parity strategy.



## Recommendation: Good practices guidelines for an enabling and inclusive organizational culture



*“Good practices guidelines for an enabling and inclusive organizational culture are developed by CEB HR Network, OHRM and UN Women and shared with each entity to incorporate into existing policies, monitoring and implementation.”*

The UN Women Coordination Division prepares biennially the Report of the Secretary-General on “[Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system](#)”, most recently in 2017 (A/72/220), which not only includes data on the representation of women, but also recommendations to reach parity, including creating an enabling environment.

In order to build an enabling environment, it is recommended that the UN System clearly defines a set of “good practices guidelines”. These will be measures that all UN entities are expected to adopt and implement fully. They should include measures that are foundational to an inclusive organizational culture in which all staff members contribute equally and in full to the work and development of the organization.

Guidelines will include elements of family-friendly policies, flexible working arrangements, as well as standards of conduct. They will also reflect

the discussions and conclusions of a system-wide workshop on promoting an enabling environment, organized by the Focal Point for Women in the UN System in November 2017, attended by more than 45 UN entities.

Moreover, as the recommendation is closely linked to the goal of increasing the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions, it is critical to provide guidelines for mission settings as well. UN Women will also cooperate with UN system in efforts to develop, standardize and offer a system-wide training program on unconscious bias to transform institutional culture so that UN’s full potential can be accessed and capitalized upon.

Furthermore, particular attention should be paid to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the guidelines. Cultivation of a work culture where all people can work irrespective of their age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any other status is of fundamental importance.

For instance, to ensure the inclusion of women with disabilities, disability-related information should be collected in surveys through the use of questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Internally, UN Women has recently launched a survey on inclusion of personnel with disabilities and is committed to developing a policy on inclusion of people with disabilities in 2018.

UN Women will produce the system-wide guidelines in conjunction with the Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations and Chief Executives Board for Coordination’s Human Resources Network. Finalized guidelines are intended to be ready in the spring of 2018. They will also need to be communicated, implemented and monitored in each entity of the UN system, subject to adequate additional resources. The role of Gender Focal Points and Focal Points for Women will be of utmost importance in this regard.

## Action Steps



## Recommendation: Work with civil society partners to encourage shadow reporting on the overall strategy



*“To ensure the UN is modelling transparency, UN Women to work with civil society partners to encourage shadow reporting on the overall strategy.”*

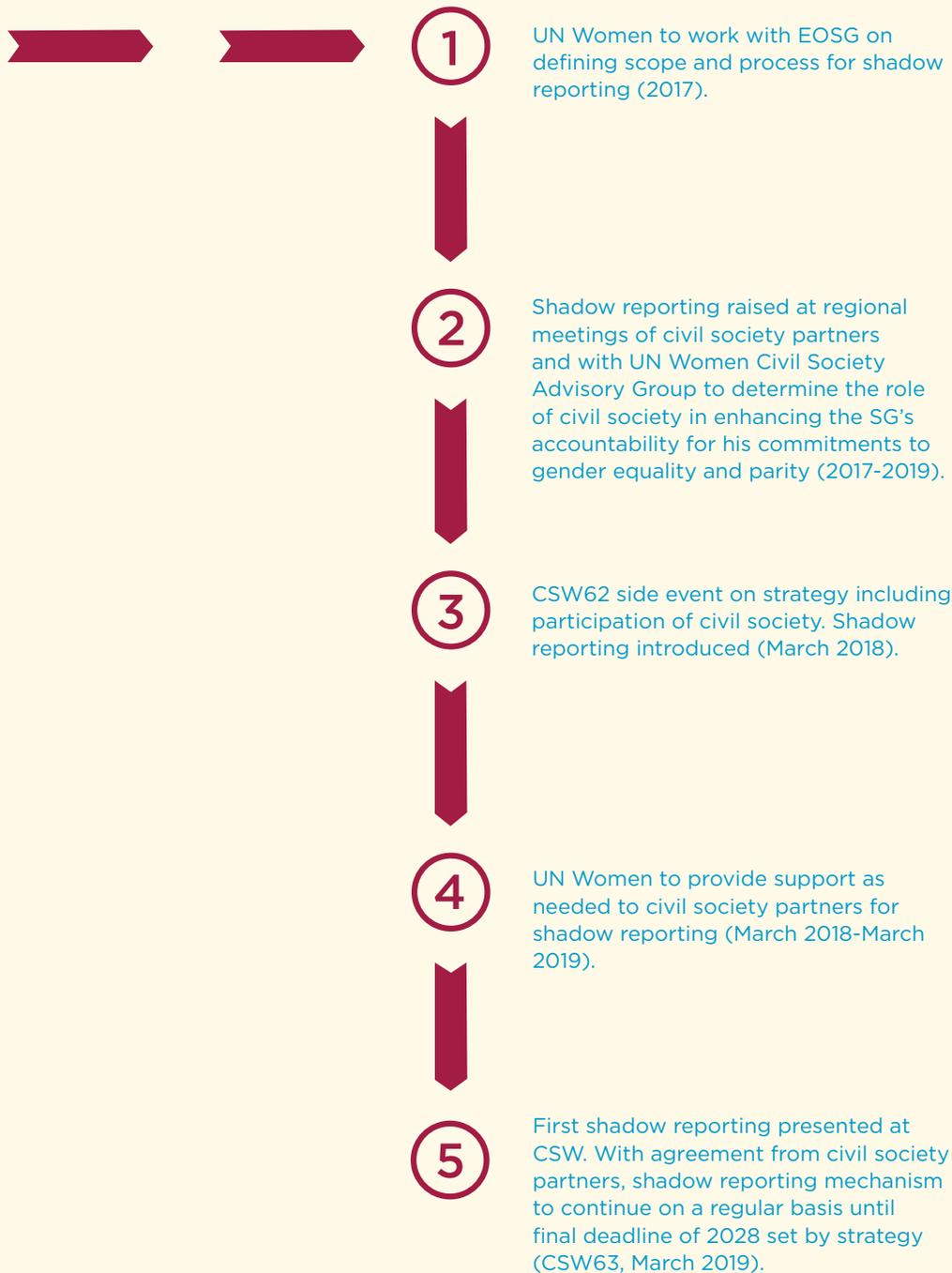
For UN Women, the cooperation with civil society partners is of utmost importance. In addition to system-wide monitoring and reporting, shadow reporting by civil society bodies has been identified as one of the significant elements to increase transparency and accountability in the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

In 2018, a number of regional meetings will be convened jointly by civil society representatives and UN Women, in the lead up to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where civil society views on how to monitor the implementation will be sought. Furthermore, it would be important to organize a side event in the context of the CSW62 in 2018, where the concept of shadow reporting can be introduced.

Subject to the adequate financial resources, UN Women would provide

ongoing support between the time period of March 2018 and March 2019, as needed, to civil society partners for shadow reporting. It would be expected that in the end of 2018 to the beginning of 2019, the shadow report would be prepared for presentation at CSW63. With agreement from civil society partners, shadow reporting mechanism would continue on a regular basis until final deadline of 2028, set by the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

## Action Steps



## Recommendation: Dedicated strategy to significantly increase the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions



*“DPKO/DFS with support from UN Women and EOSG to develop a dedicated strategy in consultation with Troop Contributing Countries to significantly increase the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions.”*

Peacekeeping is the most visible face of the United Nations in countries where the Organization is most needed. The fact that only 3% of UN peacekeepers and 10% of police are women hampers the protection reach, as well as operational effectiveness, and does not present an inclusive image about who the UN serves and represents.

Eight Security Council Resolutions, including the milestone 1325, recognized that sustainable peace can only be achieved with the equal participation of women in peace operations. In 2009, the United Nations launched a Global Effort initiative to increase the participation of female police officers in peace operations to 20 per cent. This goal was reaffirmed by Member States through Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) that requested the Secretariat to double the number of female police officers within five years. In addition, DPKO has established a goal of a minimum of 15% women military observers and staff

officers to be deployed in the missions by 2017.

There are a number of structural and systemic challenges that female police officers and peacekeepers often face. These include: access to information about the opportunity to serve in a peace operation is kept within a privileged group; discriminatory recruitment criteria and procedures against women for nominations; negative social and cultural norms about women seeking to serve in peace operations; lack of up-to-date skills in the basic requirements for deployment, such as proficiency in English or French language, driving and/or the use of firearms; lack of appropriate women role models; negative media reports on the challenges of and conditions within peace operations; and lack of family-friendly policies and incentives.

Achieving gender parity in field mission settings will require extensive consultations with UN Member States,

led by DPKO/DFS, on how to attract women into peacekeeping from all over the world. Amongst others, Police Division intends to build a leadership pipeline with women candidates for command positions.

UN Women is committed to the goal of increasing women in peacekeeping. Therefore, UN Women will continue to provide training (Female Military Officers Course), aimed at encouraging the preparation of, and consideration by, female military officers for UN peacekeeping operations; increasing the pool of female military officers that could be made available for deployment to a UN mission as UN Military Observers or Military Liaison Officers as well as to UN headquarters; engaging with Troop Contributing Countries to incentivize the nomination of women for international peacekeeping deployments and encourage them to take concrete action; create peer-to-peer networks among female military officers



Photo: Maria Thundu



Photo: Albert González Farran, UNAMID

that could provide support during deployments; and support the strategic objective of the Office of Military Affairs (DPKO) to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in missions.

UN Women will also continue to assist in building up and implementing national action plans (NAP) on women, peace and security. In particular, UN Women will provide technical assistance and support at country level for national gender-sensitive security sector reform. This can include assistance with developing and implementing NAP, conducting gender impact assessments, developing gender equality strategies, advising on sexual and gender-based violence prevention strategies and training, and supporting development of gender advisers.

Furthermore, as of September 2017, UN Women collaborates with DPKO to address the structural and systemic

challenges that prevent uniformed women officers from getting nominated during pre-selection phase in police contributing countries. Moreover, the guidelines on promoting an enabling environment will also touch upon the field conditions.

UN Women can also contribute to the advocacy and outreach efforts and communications platforms, as well as guidance in the form of templates and repository of UN system gender policies. Additionally, UN Women has offered to attend joint missions and other efforts to advocate for women's increased representation in peacekeeping.

The collaboration with DPKO and DFS continues to develop a dedicated strategy to increase the numbers of women peacekeepers.

## Action Steps



1

UN Women continues to keep the participation of women in peacekeeping operations high on its agenda, including through advocacy, and work collaboratively with DPKO and DFS on this issue.

2

UN Women continues to assist in reforming national institutions, as requested, to increase the number of women in service. Furthermore, UN Women assists in building up and implementing national action plans on Women, Peace and Security, as requested, including increasing the number of women, and organizing preparatory courses for future female peacekeepers.

3

UN Women collaborates with DPKO to address the structural and systemic challenges that prevent uniformed women officers from getting nominated during pre-selection phase in police contributing countries (September 2017 onwards).

4

The collaboration with DPKO, DFS and UN Women continues in order to develop a dedicated strategy to increase the numbers of women peacekeepers (2017 onwards).

5

The guidelines on promoting an enabling environment will include recommendations regarding the field conditions in order to facilitate the increase of numbers of women in peacekeeping (Q1 2018).

6

UN Women and DPKO/DFS to engage in joint missions to promote increased representation of women in peacekeeping (TBD 2018).

## Recommendation: New public information, social and digital media campaign promoting women in UN field missions



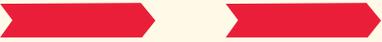
*“DPI and DFS, with support from UN Women, to launch a new public information, social and digital media campaign promoting women in UN field missions – both peace operations and UNCT. “*

The percentage of women among all international staff in peace operations stands at a mere 28.3%. Based on the current annual rate of progress made in recruitment and retention of international female staff to UN Peace Operations (2005-2015 data), it would take 24 years to reach parity at the P3 level and 703 years to achieve gender parity at the D2 level.

The UN Department of Field Support, the UN Department of Public Information and UN Women have pursued an integrated public information effort to support recruitment of more women by showcasing UN civilian female staff working in crisis countries, who live and work in an environment where they feel protected and supported by the organization along with a sense

that they are contributing to peace, security, and humanitarian response. The goal of this initiative is to increase the number of qualified applicants to UN field mission positions. While the UN Department of Public Information is in the lead of the campaign, UN Women has offered advocacy and outreach assistance through its communications platforms, as well as guidance in the form of templates and repository of UN system gender policies.

## Action Steps

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1 UN Women to continue to promote key messages to enhance women's participation in the field and peacekeeping, and advocate for improved working conditions and policies to facilitate the participation.
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2 Under the leadership of DPI and DFS, UN Women to support efforts in launching a new public information campaign. UN Women continues to provide substantive guidance as needed (as of 2017).
  - 3 UN Women to cross promote DFS call for applications and recruitment video on its website and social media platforms (as of 2018).

## Recommendation: Database of women National Officers

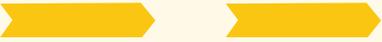


*“UN Women in conjunction with Resident Coordinators’ Office and UNCTs, as well as peace operations where relevant, to develop a database of women national officers and their skills and expertise to create a pool from which the System can do dedicated outreach for international positions.”*

As there are more than 4,000 women National Officers within the UN System, the implementation of this recommendation will demand both adequate time and resources. It is also important to make sure that once gathered, the information be used and maintained accordingly. Currently, UN Women is in the process of piloting its own e-recruitment Taleo system. For the National Officers’ database, UN Women would explore the feasibility to expand on the capability of the Taleo system, namely the roster functionality, to customize it and adjust based on the new requirements to capture National Officer candidates’ data, their CVs, skills and career aspirations, including

targeted outreach and on-demand reporting options. This solution can be also leveraged for the use of Senior Women database. The implementation of this recommendation is contingent on receipt of adequate funding.

## Action Steps



1

An initial study to assess the interest of female National Officers in applying for international positions will gauge the scope of candidates. A feasibility study with the Technical Taleo support team will determine how to best integrate these efforts into the current recruitment platform. Functional and technical specification requirements, including reporting needs, will be consolidated and communicated to developers.

2

Taleo recruitment platform will be developed/customized to accommodate the roster for National Officers. UN Women will pilot the platform in-house, and prepare the training/support documentation.

3

The recruitment platform will be prepared for global roll out, and a roster opened for applications. Candidates will be screened and confirmed for the roster. These efforts will be coupled with outreach for specific job opportunities.

4

Regular screening and outreach to applicants will be needed to ensure the database is current and provides a sustainable pool of candidates. Ongoing applications received from National Officer applicants will require regular database management and outreach efforts.

## Recommendation: Communications strategy, including internal and external messaging



*“DM, EOSG, UN Women and DPI to develop a communications strategy which will include both internal and external messaging. Internally, this will provide content for discussions on the necessity of gender parity, highlighting the negative effects of gender discrimination and the positive impacts of diversity, as well as providing suggested messaging for senior leaders on specific issues such as flexible work arrangements, family related leave, and the goals of parity generally.”*

A UN Secretariat website on Parity and Equality was launched at the end of October 2017 (United for Gender Parity), and includes information about the parity strategy and its recommended actions. UN Women has provided information on the UN General Assembly resolutions supporting parity as well as administrative instructions in this regard, sex-disaggregated data as well as links to learning tools, including UN Women’s I Know Gender and a video message from the UN Women’s Executive Director.

Gender parity has been specifically featured at the UN Women public website ([www.UNWomen.org](http://www.UNWomen.org)) as of November 2017. In the future, UN Women intends to present positive examples of UN entities, which have reached gender parity. Furthermore,

UN Women can present examples and measures on how to reach parity. Subject to additional resources, it would also be important to engage the Gender Focal Points and Focal Points for Women in the process through establishing a dedicated website in this regard. Background information and messaging to focal points would enhance the implementation of recommended actions included in the SG’s gender parity strategy. The website would also serve a function as sharing best practices across the board.

Once the guidelines on promoting an enabling environment are in place, the joint communications strategy, including both internal and external messaging on parity, can be finalized, subject to adequate funding.

## Action Steps

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-  1 UN Women continues to develop advocacy materials enhancing gender parity.
  -  2 OHRM launches a UN Secretariat website on parity and equality, for which UN Women has provided information on parity, learning tools, and video message by the Executive Director of UN Women (October 2017).
  -  3 UN Women to develop external and internal messaging for Gender Focal Points on specific issues, such as flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies and the goals of parity (2018).
  -  4 Subject to available resources, UN Women will develop a specific, new website for Gender Focal Points and larger audiences to support the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity and provide substantive guidance.



## Other recommended actions emanating from the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity

### On leadership and accountability:

- Reporting on targets on parity within UN Women will be done biannually, as requested in the SG's Strategy on Gender Parity.
- “Workplans to include a SMART goal related to contributing to gender equality and parity and performance appraisal”: UN Women’s core mandate is gender equality and therefore this fundamental principle is built into workplans and performance assessments.
- “All senior managers are encouraged to follow the Secretary-General's example and join the International Gender Champions, and make specific, concrete and ambitious commitments to enhance gender equality and parity within their organizations”: this initiative will be rolled out in 2018 from the Executive Director of UN Women to all senior managers.

### Recruitment:

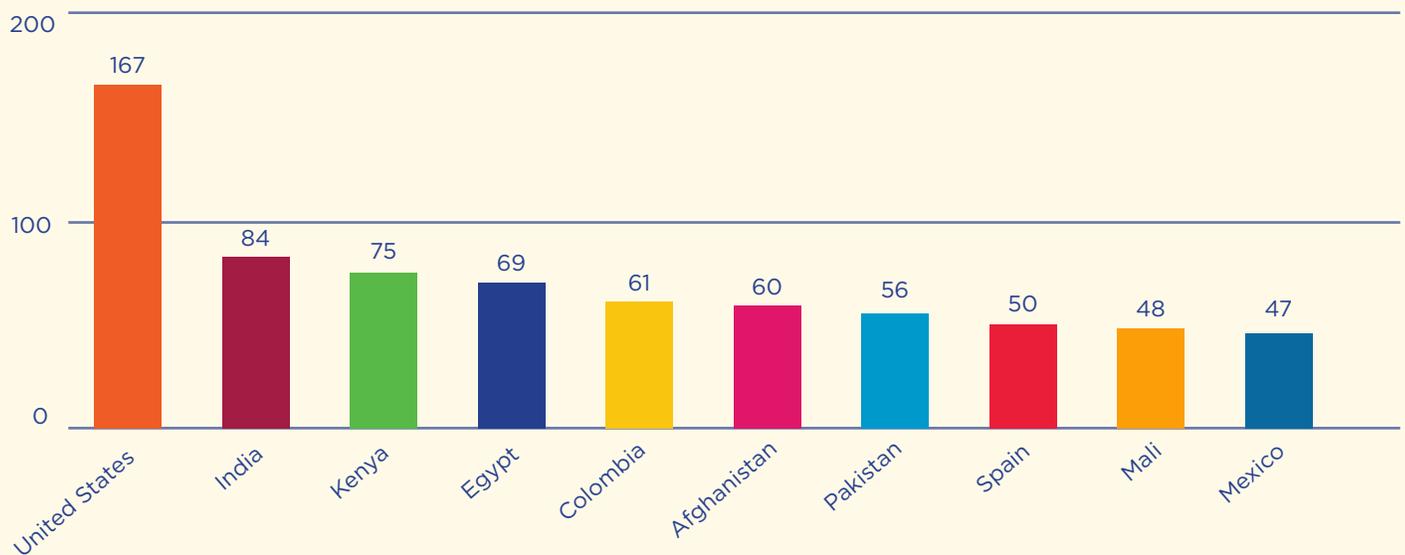
- The majority of UN Women’s applicants are female. In the recruitment process, panel members need to justify, if no male candidates are shortlisted. UN Women recognizes that it needs to go further and must make active efforts to attract and retain men. UN Women is in the final stages of developing a new recruitment policy that will include language reflecting this and hopes to develop a new outreach approach directed at men as well.
- Staff engagement surveys and exit questionnaires and/or interviews are used, regardless of category or level. Responses protect the anonymity of respondents, and whenever possible should be administered by a third party as well as be transparently shared across the entity and inform policy development.

- Hiring managers are trained on eliminating unconscious bias in the workplace in general, subject to adequate resources.
- UN Women celebrates and promotes diversity amongst its workforce reflected by 151 nationalities. Total workforce of UN Women is 2,386.

## Top 10 Nationalities

As of December 2017

## All Personnel



## Senior appointments:

- UN Women plans to introduce additional assessment/psychometric tools as part of the 2018 Human Resources Annual Working Plan. UN Women is also exploring ways in which to report on this in an automated way, and to demonstrate increased success. This should be possible through its new e-recruit system which will be rolled out in 2018.
- UN Women does not necessarily follow the Secretariat's definition of senior appointments because of its relatively small size and more importantly because the majority of its Country Offices are headed by Representatives at the P5 level. If P5s are excluded, there are only 28 Senior Appointments in UN Women, including those who are seconded out of UN Women at this stage. If on the other hand, P5s are included, this number would rise significantly to 138 Senior Appointments.
- UN Women is undertaking a large amount of work to support the EOSG in the identification of strong female candidates for SG's senior appointments, which is a significant contribution by UN Women to enhance gender parity system-wide.



## Enabling environment:

- There are number of initiatives that are focused on creating an enabling environment, among them is UN Women's approach to Flexible Working Arrangements. UN Women will reissue internal communication stipulating that the response to requests for flexible work arrangement should as a default be positive, bearing in mind the functions of the job, onsite work arrangements, and the prerogative of a manager to ensure coordination across team members' schedules. UN Women vacancy announcements will refer to the required office presence time and provision for flexible working arrangements.
- Where visa and other logistical considerations permit, UN Women has made provision for part-time work arrangements.
- UN Women will look into the possibility for one parental leave policy.
- UN Women will ensure that all policies and measures are applied equally to opposite and same-sex spouses/partners including their recognition as beneficiaries of staff members by the UNJSPF.
- UN Women has a robust Legal Framework on non-compliance with UN standards of conduct and related training and policies on workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, as well as ethics and integrity. Staff receive in-person training on standards of conduct and are expected to familiarize themselves with the various policies and to adhere to them.
- UN Women encourages professional development for its staff, such as through the recently-launched Job Swap Initiative, Rotation Exercise and Detail Assignments, which allow staff to take advantage of new opportunities at the same level but in a different substantive area and/or a different duty station.
- UN Women's formal mentoring programme offers opportunities for learning and development for both women and men. The UNFPA-led Emerging Leaders Programme which UN Women personnel are able to take advantage of, is open to personnel up to the P4 level.
- The well-being of UN Women's personnel is addressed in a number of ways, such as through the Rewards and Recognition programme. There is also a post dedicated to Workplace Wellness and Relations in Human Resources.



UN Women's Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG), 2017-2019 term  
Photo: Ryan Brown

- With respect to knowledge sharing, UN Women has established Human Resources Communities of Practice and dashboards that include gender-related data to support management in workforce planning and decision-making.
- Externally, UN Women Human Resources is supporting the Human Resources Chief Executives Board for Coordination, and advocates with the International Civil Service Commission in championing best practices adoption.
- UN Women prohibits sexual exploitation and abuse in accordance with Staff Rule 1.2 (e) and ST/SGB/2003/13 and is committed to ensuring that reported allegations are acknowledged, assessed and, where warranted, investigated fully. UN Women has an action plan to implement the recommendations of the SG's Report of March 2017 on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A New Approach. Important aspects of this report include: raising awareness among personnel, partners and beneficiaries of the special measures that are there to protect them; emphasizing the importance of immediately reporting and taking action on allegations of SEA; ensuring that where there are alleged cases of SEA committed by a member of the workforce of UN Women, such cases are promptly referred for investigation; and ensuring that possible victims are provided with appropriate protection and support.
- If UN Women personnel became aware of incidents of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, they have a duty to report allegations through UN Women's dedicated webpage. Reports of alleged sexual exploitation and abuse are confidential. UN Women has also developed an intranet page on SEA, and has seven SEA focal points in New York as well as in each of the regions where it operates.
- UN Women also recognizes that gender-based violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied. The Take A Stand page provides information and resources to ensure that staff members can access support and advice on this issue, should they ever need it.

## Oversight mechanism:

- UN Women has created a database in terms of the personnel dashboard. UN Women hopes to adapt its current system to an area where information on "gender target" can be captured, making it possible for UN Women to see how each unit is performing against agreed targets, and promoting accountability towards an enabled environment.



## Summary and Looking Ahead

The United Nations must be at the forefront of the global movement towards gender equality. Since the adoption of its Charter, the UN has explicitly recognized this as an inalienable and indivisible feature of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a landmark framework for gender equality and women's empowerment adopted in 1995, set an initial target for the equal representation of women and men among United Nations staff by the year 2000.

The UN General Assembly has set numerical targets on the representation of women since as early as 1985. The Assembly's requests for increased representation of women at the senior levels date as far back as 1970. Regardless of these efforts, we are still far from reaching gender balance.

UN Women is committed to implementing both the UN Women specific recommended actions related to the system-wide implementation as well as other recommendations included in the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, as indicated in its plan.

The implementation plan for UN Women includes specific targets and measures to reach the commonly set goals and it reflects the core recommendations of the system wide strategy, including the creation of an enabling environment and ensuring accountability of the measures to be taken. Some of the requested actions will require adequate additional

resources in order to be implemented, and such requests have been submitted separately. The progress will be reported biannually through the Senior Management Group and CEB, and will also be published on the UN Women's public website.

In addition to implementing the recommended actions, UN Women is committed to supporting system-wide efforts to reach the important gender balance goal by 2028, and is ready to be at the forefront of the strategy's implementation process and fulfill its mandate to lead, promote and coordinate the UN system's efforts towards gender equality. We recognize that some of the measures will be challenging. They require commitment from all UN entities and inter-agency collaboration. Let us make the 50/50 goal a reality, together.

# Annex 1

## List of UN Women specific recommendations with responsible divisions

1

Good practices guidelines for an enabling and inclusive organizational culture

Lead: UN System Coordination

Support: Human Resources

2

Work with civil society partners to encourage shadow reporting on the overall strategy

Lead: Civil Society

Support: UN System Coordination

3

Dedicated strategy to significantly increase the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions

Lead: Peace and Security

Support: UN System Coordination

4

New public information, social and digital media campaign promoting women in UN field missions

Lead: Communications and Advocacy

Support: UN System Coordination

5

Database of women National Officers

Lead: Human Resources

Support: UN System Coordination

6

Communications strategy, including internal and external messaging

Lead: Communications and Advocacy

UN System Coordination



Photo: Ryan Brown

