



Volume No. 1, Issue 2, June-July 2000

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### **FROM THE DESK OF THE FOCAL POINT**

Although Beijing+5 is over, the memory and excitement lingers. The week-long 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly on Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century, from 5 to 9 June, convened to assess the progress made on issues affecting women and girls since the Beijing Conference in 1995. Improvements were obvious in many areas and the delegates took this opportunity to re-focus their efforts on areas which needed more attention.

The Office of the Focal Point for Women sponsored a panel discussion during Beijing+5 on sexual harassment. Women representing different regions of the world updated the attendees on the problems and shared a number of ways to address them. Gender sensitivity, and a number of other problems affecting women in the field, is highlighted in this issue of Network. If you are currently serving in the field or seeking a mission assignment, I believe you will find the insight contained in the article on Women and Peacekeeping extremely useful.

At least once a year, it is good to review the resources available to women in the Secretariat. In this issue of Network you will find the names of the departmental focal points who have been specifically designated to address the concerns of general service and professional women in each department. An initiative is now being launched between the Office of the Special Adviser and the Focal Point for Women and the Office of Human Resources Management to strengthen the roles of the departmental focal points and improve their effectiveness.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Network and remember we welcome articles from the staff on issues you believe are interesting to your colleagues. If you are interested in contributing an article, please feel free to contact me directly or a member of the production team.

Zohreh Tabatabai

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## **Recognition to ...**

In keeping with the declared goals of improving the number of women in higher level posts, we would like to welcome and recognize **Ms. Danuta Hübner** who has been appointed as Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) effective 1 July 2000.

A native of Poland, Dr. Hübner has been ECE's Deputy Executive Secretary since late 1998. In her service with the Polish government, Dr. Hübner has held the positions of Minister-Chief of the President's Chancellery, State Secretary for European Integration, and Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Industry and Trade. She also represented Poland during successful negotiations for membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and has directed academic institutes specializing in international economics and strategy studies.

**Ms. Catherine Bertini**, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme. WFP has recently reported that the percentage of international professional women in WFP increased from 18% (1992) to 24% (1995) up to 34% (1999), being one of the largest percentage increases in the UN system. During the last quarter of 1999, half of the international professional staff hired to WFP were women. By the end of 1999, 24% of the P-5 and D-1, and 30% of the D-2 women were women. WFP has also consistently had international and national professional female staff in Afghanistan. In Sudan, women now comprise 62% of international staff and 50% of local staff.

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## **A Special Welcome to ...**

**Ms. Monique Garrity** of USA who was appointed Special Representative of the World Bank to the United Nations on 1 April 2000.

**Ms. Mamphela Ramphele** of South Africa has taken office as the Managing Director of the Human Development Network in the World Bank in Washington in May 2000.

**Ms. Karen Koning AbuZayd** of USA who has taken office as Deputy Commissioner-General of UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees on 15 August 2000.

**Ms. Rina Hunaidi** of Jordan who will take office as Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP Arab States on 29 September 2000.

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## **Around the UN ...**

### **Beijing +5, 5 to 9 June 2000, New York**

The special session of the General Assembly "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" agreed on a political document and an action plan on how to better implement the commitments made at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The outcome document highlights the effects of poverty and globalization on women and commits governments to time-bound targets for implementation and incorporating the gender perspective into budgetary processes. It also commits governments to focus on social protection systems in the informal economy where many women work. Some of the areas of the Beijing Platform for Action were strengthened such as promoting education and mitigating the effects of armed conflicts on women. Renewed and further attention was given to women's reproductive and sexual health and trafficking in women. Also the conference called for the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the Professional category to be achieved.

The conference was attended by approximately 2,300 government officials, 2,052 NGOs representing 1,038 organizations accredited to the Special Session, in addition to approximately 2,400 other NGO representatives who registered to attend the events organized by the NGO Host Country Committee, representatives of UN organizations and the media.

There should be a lively follow up debate to Beijing +5 during the General Assembly and the Millennium Assembly.

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## **Network to the Top**

### **Ms. Rafiah Salim advises women to Take Risks" a candid interview with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management**

Upon meeting Ms. Rafiah Salim, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources

Management, you immediately notice her strength of character and determination. She is obviously a woman who has set and accomplished both personal and career goals.

*Network* was happy to spend some time with her, as one of the most influential women in the United Nations today, and hear her views on a number of serious issues affecting women. Following is a short interview with her.

- Q. How would you describe the general situation of both professional and general service women in the Secretariat today? Have there been major attitudinal changes and what role, if any, do you believe OHRM has played?
- A. Managers now feel duty bound to address female candidates when vacancies arise. Part of this change is OHRM's inclusion of gender modules in its training programmes, part is the goal setting portions of the Performance Appraisal System. But, mostly, it is the fact that departments now must answer yearly to the Secretary-General on this issue - something which has never happened before.

There is no doubt that senior women have had a tough life in the UN, but on the whole, organizational policy is in place, ownership of gender parity by managers is taking root, and as improvements can be seen as consistent, future generations of women staff will have more trust in the system.

- Q. How do the Special Measures for Women fit in OHRM's reform measures?
- A. The bulk of the special measures are not in conflict with the reforms. When two candidates for a post are equal, priority will still be given to the women candidate. There is a slight change regarding seniority, but it will not affect the overall special measures. Women have been given cumulative seniority to allow them to compete for posts at the next level. This will not change. When equal to male candidates, women will still get an automatic preference.
- Q. What specific contributions do you believe departmental focal points for women can make to improve the day-to-day situation of women in their departments and to assist managers to reach departmental goals?
- A. The role of departmental focal points needs to be addressed in the new culture. My vision is to move their activities upstream - so that the focal points are proactive rather than reactive. I would expect them to be a part of planning with the programme managers; identify sources of qualified women for the programme managers to investigate; and keep on top of advertised vacancies.
- Q. Work-life issues are playing an increasingly important role in the lives of staff. What do you feel are the obligations of the Organization towards these issues, in general, and particularly in the areas of spousal employment and childcare?
- A. Work-Life issues are critical for all staff, not only women. If the Organization is to pursue reforms in mobility and flexibility, these issues need to be

addressed. In this generation spouses are working and it is incumbent upon the Organization to keep spouses together to the extent possible. Spousal employment has a greater impact on women staff than on male staff because there is greater tendency for them to relocate to a duty station without a job.

On spousal employment, with the support of the Deputy Secretary-General, a number of forward steps have been taken. The UN has written to other Organization Heads to establish, informally, a network to give priority consideration to spouses of staff members for posts which they are qualified to fill. As Host Country Agreements are re-negotiated, provisions will be sought to allow spouses to work in countries which formerly would not permit it. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources, OHRM has mainly handled cases on an individual basis, but the long-term objective is to formalize a spousal employment system.

While I am very supportive of childcare and have firsthand understanding of its importance for women staff in particular, we must face basic financial facts. Most aspects of childcare require a financial commitment for which the United Nations right now has no funding. Therefore, this is a long-term problem for which we will continue to work towards a solution.

- Q. How do you believe the needs of general service women differ from those of professional women and what steps is OHRM taking to address the needs of general service women?
- A. I don't see basic differences in the need. All women have the need for challenging work and the need for opportunities. The difference is that meeting those needs is slightly more difficult in the general service category, particularly at the lower GS levels where functions tend to be more routine or repetitive.
- Q. What is OHRM proposing to do about career development for general service staff?
- A. During human resources planning meetings with departments, OHRM highlights staff who have been stuck for a number of years at one level. For those who want to know more about opportunities to change jobs and improve their job satisfaction, we encourage them to attend the career support programmes offered by OHRM.

One thing I cannot emphasize enough is that women need to take some risks. People tend to become comfortable in their job and don't often enough consider options like learning new skills and applying for new areas of work.

- Q. Do you feel personally as a woman ASG that you are treated as an equal to your male colleagues in all matters? If not, what differences do you see? And, are you taking steps to change that different treatment?
- A. I see myself as a facilitator rather than an enforcer. And, so far, in the United Nations I have had no problem with that role. I have experienced negative

treatment, however, in my career and would offer the following advice. First, don't immediately read negative criticism as "gender" related. Face your supervisor and clarify what her or his expectations are and why they feel you have not met them. And second, once you set your personal career goals and you have acquired the skills necessary to excel, do not be deterred by negativity from colleagues.

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## **Article**

**Sally Anne Corcoran, UNOG**

### **Women and Peacekeeping**

The expansion of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the 1990's and the establishment of several large operations in the last year alone, provides the perfect occasion for assessment of the evolving role and contribution of women in this area. As a woman who has herself served in two field operations, and after many discussions with female colleagues, it has become clear to me that a number of issues remain which continue to be of particular concern and relevance to women on the ground and to the overall success of peacekeeping in the future. It is my hope that the articulation of some of the common perceptions, experiences and difficulties which women have encountered and shared may serve to increase recognition of the same throughout the UN and lend itself towards their eventual resolution at the policy-making level.

The advantages to having a "critical mass" of women in peacekeeping operations are becoming increasingly clear to all. The presence of women is crucial considering that the majority of those effected by conflict are women and children and that many female victims of rape and/or violent crimes who wish to speak about their cases, often feel more at ease talking to a woman. Female mission staff thus have an obvious edge in regards to contact with and/or access to local women in crisis countries. Women also make substantial contributions in the peace and reconciliation areas due to their unique sensitivity, perspective and approach to conflict. Finally, among other things, the role women play in missions can be an encouragement for local women who may be struggling against the effects of a very rigid, patriarchal and war-torn society, where women are too often the objects of abuse. It can also demonstrate to men in these societies that it is possible to work on an equal basis with women thus effecting a larger socio-cultural transformation. This, of course, is only possible if the UN applies its principles within its own missions. Therefore, a clear gender equality policy on the part of the Head of Mission and Commanders is essential from the beginning. Mentalities must also change within male-dominated structures such as military and police.

Although the unique contribution women make in the field is well recognized, they

very often continue to face a discriminatory environment. Aside from the larger cultural setting, which may be of a non-female friendly nature, the Organizational environment itself may be overtly or subtly antagonistic towards women. The military elements of field missions often pose their own unique challenges. Military enclaves, not particularly well-known for being bastions of gender sensitivity, very often present the additional and delicate task of co-existence, along with achieving the objectives on hand, to women serving alongside their military counterparts. An incident comes to mind wherein the "special investigations unit" of the civilian police of one field office shared accommodations with the civil affairs component -- the staff of which was almost entirely female. The former was not very amenable to the idea that they simply conduct one of their "special investigations" to recover their pornographic calendar which had mysteriously disappeared. Notwithstanding, the senior civil affairs officer of that field-office thought it appropriate to conduct a lengthy inquiry himself and to individually question each staff member as to the whereabouts of the calendar rather than being concerned that it had been unsuitable to begin with.

Aside from being exercises in character building and in fine tuning ones diplomatic skills, all of these experiences -- especially when somehow tacitly accepted by the organizational culture on hand -- serve to undermine a woman's sense of esteem, equality and the mutual respect that is essential for positive and effective work relationships -- all so crucial in difficult mission environments.

All this having been said, the UN has made many efforts of late, which illustrate its belief that de facto equality or equality of result does begin within the Organization. The administration has continued to strive towards a greater awareness of gender within the Secretariat to foster an increased perception of relevant issues which have been instituted within the revised special measures for the achievement of gender equality (ST/AI/1999/9). Along these lines, there has been a long-term study on gender and peacekeeping in conjunction with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. A year-long study has also been conducted under the auspices of the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The Office of the UN Security Coordinator has also contributed with its: Security in the Field booklet published in 1998, which devotes a special section to "Security concerns for women", which discusses sexual harassment and rape awareness at duty stations in detail.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, a standardization of policies regarding improprieties perpetrated by personnel serving on missions is emerging. The Policy Planning Unit of DPKO has issued the *Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct For Blue Helmets*, rule #4 of which states: "Do not indulge in immoral acts of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population or UN staff, especially women and children"; as well as the *Guidance to Commanders of UN Military Operations*. The crucial point is standardization at the policy level regarding the establishment of clear repercussions for non-compliance -- not normative exercises. A clear mechanism is needed which must include a well-defined process for reporting, investigating and follow-up action, for it is evident, that while

compliance is still based purely upon the good will of those involved, that there will be deviation.

A clear set of standards has been issued by the International Civil Servants Association (FICSA) the main objective of which is: "to promote ethical conduct at an individual and organizational level". In addition to the above, the office of the Under-Secretary General for Internal Oversight (OIOS) serves as a confidential recourse for all staff who may have suffered any abuse of authority or power.

One of the most substantial advances of late in regards to the standardization of conduct, is the Secretary-General's recent step in making the fundamental principles and rules of international law applicable to UN forces in August 1999. As a result, "individual members of peacekeeping operations are now bound to conform to standards set out in the text which reflect existing customary law -- although enforcement continues to remain a national obligation. What this new document does is to provide Force Commanders with a clear set of principles and rules which must be followed." In this context, Article 27 of the 4th Geneva Convention expressly prohibits any form of indecent assault against women as does Article 4 of Additional Protocol II.

The conclusion is simple, for women to be able to contribute in their own unique fashion -- which has been proven to be an essential ingredient to the success of peacekeeping operations -- the UN must have one singular standard governing both internal and external conduct -- and this standard must be consistently applied. Standards are meaningless without implementation. The number of women participating in field operations, especially in management positions should be increased and perhaps most importantly, the policy towards women serving in missions must come from the top down, for it is at the policy level that change and clarification are needed. It is also clear that as the Organization which has authored the Women's Convention and championed women's rights, we can and must serve as a shining example of justice and equality within our own confines if we are to make any difference.

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### **Quote**

In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman.

Margaret Thatcher

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### **Did you know that ...**

#### **General Service and Related Categories Action Group**

General Service staff, who are predominantly women, have a new ally to assist in



having their concerns addressed. A group of staff have revitalized a committee that existed in the early 1980's - the General Service Action Committee. The advocacy group has a new name but has re-committed itself to many of the issues that were being followed by the form GS Action Committee.

This group is not a representational group and will not assist individual staff members except to steer them in the correct direction to solve their problems. The group has been formed to address the broader, grassroots issues that are affecting all general service staff across all departments and offices.

Some of the issues GSRCAG hopes to address are: more appropriate utilization of the abilities and skills of GS staff; highlighting abuses; monitoring the special needs of women, and proposing meaningful ways to include GS staff in the reform process of the Organization. The Group has an extensive work plan which includes: pension issues, career development, equalization of social benefits, G-to-P examination, compensation for overtime work, SPAs for higher level work, attitudinal change and image improvement, among others.

Ms. R. Salim, ASG/OHRM has met with the focal points for the group and informed them that she welcomes their advice on these issues. She has also made suggestions on specific areas where the group could concentrate its efforts. If you are interested in joining GSRCAG, please send your name, room number and phone extension to: GSRCAG, c/o Room S-2560C.

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## **Small notes ...**

### **ORIGIN meeting**

ORIGIN (Organizational Gender Issues Network) held its annual meeting in Washington, DC on 14 and 15 June 2000. ORIGIN is a group of human resources specialists from international organizations and the private sector which monitors issues affecting women staff and shares information. Among the items on the agenda this year were spousal employment, recruitment sources and international mobility of women.

ORIGIN has decided to take a very proactive approach to the long-standing problem of spousal employment. Many qualified women who could make contributions to their organizations are denied that opportunity because it is impossible or illegal for their spouses to be employed in the country to which they are assigned. It was decided at the meeting to hire a consultant who would prepare concrete data on the situation in each participating organization. This data would also help when reviewing the host country agreements as they are re-negotiated to include provisions for the employment of spouses.

Participation in ORIGIN is extremely valuable for women in the Secretariat since the

comparative data received present a comprehensive view of the present practices with regard to issues such as spousal employment or work/family life.

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## Article

### **Take Our Daughters to Work Day, 27 April 2000**

On Thursday, 27 April 2000, 500 girls aged 9 through 14 invaded the United Nations not to take over the Security Council - but to spend a day in reflection over how each of them could feel "Free to Be You and Me". Take Our Daughters to Work is an annual celebration started by the Ms. Foundation to motivate girls in this age group to pursue their highest goals and aspirations without boundaries. Customarily, the day is spent in the presence of a woman role model in the working world to give girls a taste of their future and to show them the variety of careers that are available to them.

This year, in honour of the millennium celebration, the line-up of speakers, workshops and entertainment was particularly stellar. The keynote speakers were the Permanent Representative of Australia, Ms. Penny Wensley, also distinguished by being the second woman Chairman of the Fifth Committee of the GA; Ms. Gloria Steinem, internationally acclaimed feminist, author and co-founder of the Ms. Foundation; and Col. Eileen Collins, the first woman shuttle commander from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The programme was moderated by the UN Focal Point for Women, Ms. Zohreh Tabatabai, who brought her usual exuberance and energy to the programme.

Immediately following the keynote addresses, the group was turned over to Ms. Andrea Johnston, of Girls Speak Out. Inc. who set the tone for the workshops that would follow by speaking to the girls about the future and its possibilities and by challenging them to think not only of themselves and the girls in the room, but to picture girls all over the world and identify with them. Background information on girls' views from all over the world was provided through the courtesy of the UN's CyberSchoolBus - an interactive web page for children.

After the presentations, the girls broke into workshops where they each had an opportunity to either learn a craft or talk with a professional in one of the year's featured disciplines which included: medicine, de-mining activities, modeling, sports, humanitarian officer. The girls spent approximately one hour in these groups where they were treated to a short presentation on what is required to perform the work and then were given an opportunity to ask questions.

By 1:15 p.m., the girls were ready for the most exciting part of the day - the opportunity to spend quality time with the mentors that had brought them to the United Nations for the day. They settled down in the Trusteeship Council Chamber to wrap-up and exchange views about the programme and they all participated in singing "Free to be You and Me" led by the writers/composers, Bruce and Carole

Hart. The girls were sent off happily to have lunch and to visit the offices of the United Nations for the afternoon where they would see actual work in progress.

Refinements are constantly being made to "Take Our Daughters to Work" Day to ensure that the girls are exposed to a mixture of learning and entertainment that will make an impression and lead them to start asking questions about the kind of futures they want to have. In fact, this lesson is so valuable for all children that the United Nations is considering beginning a second type of day for all children - boys and girls.

This year's Take Our Daughters to Work Day was presented at a very strategic time - shortly before Beijing+5. The girls developed a platform that was presented to the sponsors of Beijing+5 for incorporation into the work on the Special Needs of the Girl Child. In an innovative effort to link Take Our Daughters to Work with the Platforms for Women, the CyberSchoolbus will feature information all year about "Take Our Daughters to Work". All children are encouraged to regularly visit the site at: [www.un.org/CyberSchoolBus](http://www.un.org/CyberSchoolBus).

## Statistics

The following statistics have been compiled in IMF on behalf of the Organizational Gender Issues Network, ORIGIN. It shows the percentage of women staff in some of the UN family organizations as well as in other international organizations at the managerial, professional and support staff levels. In the professional category the UN Secretariat is well placed only with UNESCO and UNICEF ahead of us. In the management category the Secretariat is also one of the top organizations.

Organization	Management	Professional	Support	Total % of W
UNICEF	32.1	42.5	50.8	47.5
WFP	31.0	36.0	44.0	41.0
UNDP*	25.2	34.5	55.5	49.9
UN Secretariat	24.6	38.1	58.8	45.8
WHO	N/A	28.7	57.7	47.5
World Bank	19.0	35.4	77.8	51.7
Council of Europe*	14.6	34.8	71.5	58.2
IAEA	13.6	18.0	61.4	42.9
IADB*	11.9	35.5	85.2	49.7
IMF*	11.0	33.2	85.9	46.3

FAO	9.6	23.5	64.1	48.3
AFB*	8.9	22.0	52.1	33.7
EIB*	8.3	30.3	79.3	47.8
UNESCO	N/A	39.0	67.6	54.6
ADB	0.0	22.0	72.0	54.6

Source: Organizational Gender Issues Network, ORIGIN Member Fact Sheet 1999. Data is from 31 December 1999 except for figures marked with \* are as of 31 December 1998.

## Flash flash flash

### Network online

Network can now be read online in the following address <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpnetworks.htm>. Please tell your colleagues and friends about it. Network is also posted on the New York Headquarters email Bulletin Board under the title Network News Letter. We will continue the distribution of Network by email for those who request it.

### Departmental Focal Points for Women

A number of departmental focal points for women have recently been appointed. Therefore, below please find an up-to-date list for your information. Please remember that departmental focal points serve the interest of all women staff - professional and general service. When you have a gender-based concern or question, please feel free to contact them:

DDA	DPA	DPI
Ms. A. Marcaillou	Ms. R. Ludwig	Ms. K. Gordon
Mr. A. Bat-Erdene	Ms. K. Paser	
DESA	DGAACS	DM/OUSG
Ms. M. Chamie	Ms. M. Kelley	Ms. C. Larsen
Ms. R. Engo	Ms. C. Doerflinger	Ms. M. M. Than
Ms. A. Ito	Ms. D. Weiss	
Ms. C. Shaw	Ms. P. Duclos-Smith	

<b>OCSS</b>	<b>OHRM</b>	<b>OPPBA</b>
Ms. V. Bartosch	Ms. M. Brzak-Metzler	Ms. F. Zainoeddin
Ms. E. Sloan-Austin	Mr. K. St. Louis	Ms. S. Johnson
		Ms. M. Ramos
<b>OCHA</b>	<b>OIOS</b>	<b>DPKO</b>
Ms. A. Haggarty	Ms. S. Schweizer	Ms. L. Laheurte
Ms. R. Malango	Ms. F. Ndiaye	Ms. D. Chiurazzi-Del Gaudio
<b>OLA</b>		<b>UNJSPF</b>
Ms. M. Arsanjani		Ms. E. Phillip
Ms. P. Georget		Ms. P. Sinikallio
Ms. K. Wong		

## **In your interest ...**

### **Office of the Focal Point for Women**

Women in the Secretariat at both the general service and professional level, may at times, have difficulty with interpersonal relationships in the office, career enhancement, promotion and mobility. On those occasions when you are convinced that mistreatment you are receiving is the direct result of gender, it is important to remember that women have a strong ally in the Focal Point for Women in the UN, Ms. Zohreh Tabatabai.

Ms. Tabatabai and her team (Deirdre Pardal, Johanna Klinge, Rosemarie Waters, Marjorie George) under the guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Angela E. V. King, investigate problems, give advice primarily to women staff, and liaise with the Office of Human Resources Management and individual departments to mediate a successful solution to the problem. These services are offered for all women and men - regardless of category and level.

If you have a concern or problem that you believe is gender-based, please call the Focal Point for Women for a confidential meeting or send a memorandum/e-mail outlining your main concerns and the matter will be looked into.

## Letters and e-mails from readers

NETWORK wishes to thank all of you for your words of encouragement. For those who have requested additional copies of NETWORK and/or have provided an e-mail address for us to forward the newsletter to you, we hope NETWORK is reaching you in a timely manner. If not, please inform us.

Dear Readers ... If there is any manager--female or male--that you would like to recognize as someone who shares our commitment to improving the status of women in the Secretariat, let us know. We will highlight her/his work in our next issue.

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