SYSTEM-WIDE STRATEGY ON GENDER PARITY

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of gender parity at all levels in the UN is a commitment that is now two decades old, and is reflective of core values that are as old as the Organization itself.

In the intervening years there has been no shortage of policies, reports and recommendations to further this goal; yet implementation has been hampered in the main by a lack of sustained political will and accountability, absence of accompanying measures and enabling conditions for real reform, and resistance at different moments from key stakeholders. While fundamentally a right, parity is increasingly necessary to the UN's efficiency, impact and credibility. Greater diversity is directly correlated in both public and private sectors with significant gains in operational effectiveness and efficiency. This is particularly important as the UN is being asked to do more with less while increasing impact in all quarters. Across the three pillars, the impact of an inclusive workforce on the UN's ability to deliver on its mandates is clear. In the area of development, research shows that bringing more women into the labor force would unlock trillions of dollars for developing economies. In human rights, there is no greater protection mechanism for women's rights than empowerment. And in peace and security women's meaningful participation has a direct impact on the sustainability of peace, an assertion that is now quantifiable.[1] Moreover, for the UN, parity is critical to its credibility as a standard bearer, is an imperative requested by Member States and is reflected in a number of GA resolutions.

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1. *Radhika Coomaraswamy, Global Study on implementation of Security Council resolution 1325* (2000).

At the start of 2017, the picture across the Organization was a mixed one. The Secretary-General's global senior leadership team at the USG and ASG levels across the Secretariat (including Regional Commissions, Special Political and Peacekeeping Missions), Funds and Programmes, Research and Training and Other Entities, and Special Envoys and Advisers comprised 29% women and 71% men. There has been significant progress in some areas. Since 1 January 2017, the Secretary-General has appointed 32 leaders to the SMG (17 women and 15 men), bringing the composition closer to parity with a breakdown of 44% women and 56% men.[2] While there were only 2% female heads or deputy heads of peace operations missions in 2006, women currently comprise 25% of the senior leadership of missions.

More generally, while only five entities have achieved parity at the professional level and higher, the majority of entities are within only ten percentage points of making parity a reality. But the aggregate figures mask the stark underrepresentation of women in some of the most visible and critical categories: leadership and senior management, and in the field, particularly in conflict-affected settings where the UN plays a more prominent role. In particular:

> **there is an inverse relationship across the system between seniority and women's representation—the higher the grade, the larger the gap in gender parity; the gap to parity is wider in the Secretariat than the rest of the system at all levels; and the most stark and difficult to address gaps persist in peace operations. The rate of change has also been much too slow, with some levels showing almost no progress in a decade.**

The sharpest declines in gender balance occur between the P-2 and P-3, and P-4 and P-5 levels, with drops of 12 and 5.7 percentage points, respectively.[3] Such decreases indicate there are issues hindering the career advancement of women within the UN.[4] Conversely, there is significant over-representation of women in some quarters, particularly in more junior levels.[5] Parity does not simply mean a focus on women alone and areas of over-representation must also be addressed.

Upon taking office, the Secretary-General made a commitment to reach parity at the senior leadership level, including USGs, ASGs, SRSGs and Special Envoys, by the end of 2021, and parity across the Organization 'well before 2030'. In January 2017 the issue of gender parity was placed as an agenda item of the first Executive Committee meeting and a decision was made to launch a system-wide task force to develop a strategy to realize this

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2. As of August 2017.

3. Data as of 31 December 2015, A/72/220, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the UN system*.

4. As of 31 December 2015, there were 549 D2s and 1,711 D1s in the UN system, of which 30.8% and 33.5% are women respectively (A/72/220).

5. As of 31 December 2015, women comprised 60.9% of the P-1 level and 57.5% of the P-2 level in the UN system. (A/72/220).

commitment and to detail a clear roadmap with benchmarks and timeframes. Between February and April, the Task Force, comprised of approximately 30 entities across the Organization, worked across five working groups[6] to document good practice, review existing policies and past reports and formulate key recommendations. The draft strategy that resulted was then presented for consultations across the system, including with Staff Unions, Senior Management Group, Chiefs of the Chief Executive Board for Coordination, and the Human Resources Network as well as bilaterally with a number of senior officials. The resulting feedback was used to revise the strategy for finalization.

As the Organization as a whole is now 17 years behind on its due date for parity, it was agreed that a sense of urgency as well as ambition should guide all efforts.

> **As such, the Task Force upon review of the current situation decided that the overall goal for parity across the system at all levels should be set for 2026. Recognizing that there will be some outliers who owing to starting point will have a steeper slope of change, for these few the goal for parity will be 2028.**

While much of the reform and action to successfully achieve this goal will need to happen within entities, missions, and departments themselves, a holistic strategy for the whole UN is needed. This system-wide strategy should form the basis for the revision or

creation of entity-specific implementation plans which are informed by the specific context, challenges, and starting point of each entity. While there is a weighted focus on the Secretariat here, given that it is furthest behind in the System, the Strategy is intended to have **system-wide application**. Not every recommendation will be relevant to every entity, however the strategy also aims to highlight good practice and provide information on what others have been able to do; emphasizing that if it is possible for one part of the Organization it should be possible for all parts of the Organization to make real change. It is recognized that not all of these measures will be realizable in the immediate term, however the document details the range of measures that are needed to eventually achieve the goal of gender parity. The recommendations will then be pursued through their relevant pathways—through entity-level implementation, Staff Administrative Instructions and policy changes, and International Civil Service Commission and General Assembly decision where needed.[7]

The strategy paper is a result of a consultative and inclusive process across secretariat, funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other. The focus is on establishing ambitious,

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6. Targets and Accountability; Special Measures; Enabling Environment; Field Settings; Senior Appointments.

7. The vast majority of the recommendations in this strategy are within the authority of the Secretary-General and the system. Very few will require Member State decisions.

realistic and customized targets and providing bold and targeted recommendations to accelerate change, including encouraging leadership and accountability for achieving these targets; strengthened special measures and their consistent application; and the addressing of changes needed to ensure an enabling policy and institutional environment for inclusion. Specific focus is given to field settings, with emphasis within this on peace operations where the bulk of secretariat staff are located and where the gaps in gender balance, as well as the challenges in addressing this, are the greatest. Lastly, there are separate recommendations with regards to senior leadership appointments, as these are outside the purview of regular staff selection and recruitment policies and require a different approach.

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. Initiatives should be sought which

strengthen both simultaneously: For example, in recognition of the low representation of the Arab States amongst Resident Coordinators (4%) and particularly of Arab women, the UNDG for Arab States/Middle East and North Africa has convened a Thematic Group on Women RC/UNCT Leadership. The group focuses on increasing female leadership in the region, with particular attention to staff from the Arab region. While each entity should work to bring these two goals together, as highlighted by the Secretary-General geographic representation cannot be used as an excuse not to achieve gender parity[8] and the focus of this plan is therefore on **achieving and sustaining gender parity**. Efforts to sustain are critical and we cannot afford to be complacent as we approach or even when we meet our targets. Past experience has shown that gains can be eroded very quickly if efforts at maintaining parity and ensuring institutional and cultural change are not in place.

Perhaps one of the most concerning elements of the consultations process for this strategy has been an often repeated claim by staff and management alike that parity must be done in accordance with Article 101 and the criteria of merit, and should not weaken the quality of staffing. The assumption that the recruitment and promotion of women would somehow lessen standards rather than raise them is refuted by evidence;[9] as is the assumption that our institutional processes at present are geared towards securing and promoting the most talented staff in an unbiased manner.[10] A recent ImpactPool

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8. Remarks of the Secretary-General at the meeting with Group of Friends of Gender Parity, March 24, 2017.

9. The RC assessment process is just one example of in-System evidence—as the number of women taking the assessment has increased as a result of affirmative action and targeted efforts, so has the pass rate increased. Women are also more successful in the YPP exams.

10. Research in fact shows that organizations that believe they are pure meritocracies with no bias are more likely to pay women less (eg smaller bonuses for equally evaluated work). Joan C Williams, 'Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem' Harvard Business Review (October 2014) https://hbr.org/2014/10/hacking-techs-diversity-problem

study of long term staff compared those who had remained in the system and those who had left—disaggregating by sex and reviewing their career path trajectory. What was found was that women who left the system moved up in their career paths faster than those who remained in the System. For men this experience was the opposite—those that remained accelerated at a higher rate.[11] This highlights the bias inherent in our policies and practices as well as organizational culture. Achieving gender balance will be facilitated by a modernization of systems and processes that draws on the evidence and experience of other sectors.

> **Ultimately a more inclusive workforce will contribute to an Organization that visibly demonstrates its core values, has a modelling impact on the communities it serves, and reaps the gains in efficiency and productivity proven to come from gender balanced workforces.[12]**

Lastly, gender parity should not be conflated with the totality of the UN's efforts on gender equality. Dedicated financing, expertise, and strengthened programming on gender equality are needed to achieve this goal. As per an Executive Committee decision, each of these have been addressed specifically within the three major reform streams currently underway—on management, the development system, and peace and security architecture. Gender parity is however a crucial first step to orienting the system more strongly to deliver on gender equality and Agenda 2030 as a whole.[13] To ensure that the strategy is in line with other processes of institutional reform, efforts were made to ensure that the recommended actions should be compatible with the principles and actions adopted under the Management reform.

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11. Are women paying a higher price for a UN career?, (2017) https://blog.impactpool.org/articles/are-women-paying-a-higher-price-for-a-un-career

12. Some measures have already been taken in parallel to the development of the strategy. These include the lifting of the 'no right of return' policy by the Executive Committee which will impact the pool of female candidates for Head/deputy Head of mission positions as well as the soon to be promulgated Secretary General's Bulletin on Flexible Working Arrangements.

13. While one outcome of parity is likely to be strengthened gender equality outcomes, parity is a first step and is separate from the full range of measures—including capacities, financing and targeted programming—needed to deliver on gender equality outcomes as committed to in Agenda 2030 and in all three pillars of the UN's work.

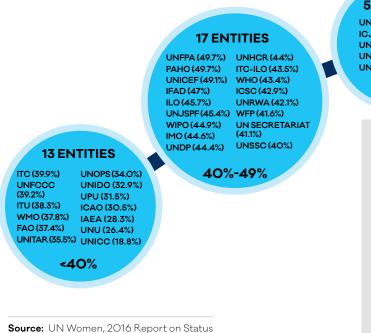## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, BY LEVEL (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2015)

47.3% P-1 to P-5

32.1% D-1 to UG

			%
UG*	216	81	27.3%
D-2	387	169	30.4%
D-1	1,135	573	33.6%
Sub Total	1,738	823	32.1%
P-5	4,062	2,289	36.0%
P-4	6,163	4,435	41.9%
P-3	5,506	4,557	45.3%
P-2	1,516	2,049	57.5%
P-1	72	115	61.5%
Sub Total	17,319	13,445	43.7%
Total	19,057	14,268	42.8%

A negative correlation exists between the representation of women and seniority–as grade levels increase, the proportion of women decreases. The sharpest declines occur between the P-2 and P-3, and P-4 and P-5 levels, with drops of 12.2 and 5.9 percentage points, respectively. Such decreases indicate there are blockages in the pipeline hindering the career advancement of women within the UN.

*Ungraded: Aggregate of senior leadership posts

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, BY ENTITY (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2015)

5 ENTITIES
UN Women (78.9%)
ICJ (57.1%)
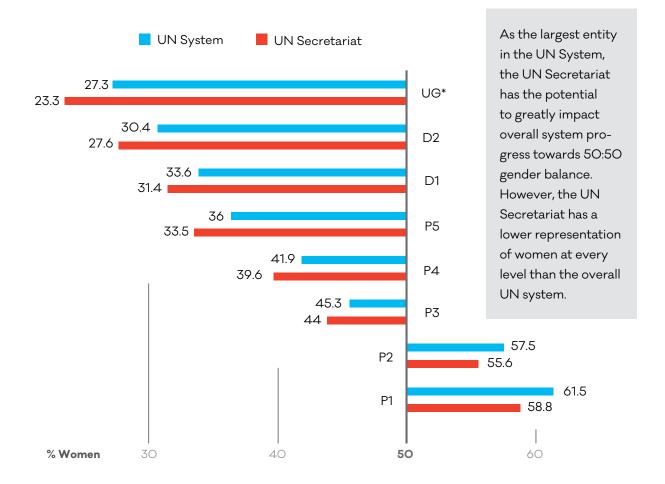UNAIDS (50.8%)
UNESCO (50.6%)
UNWTO (50%)
≥50%

17 ENTITIES
UNFPA (49.7%) UNHCR (44%)
PAHO (49.7%) ITC-ILO (43.5%)
UNICEF (49.1%) WHO (43.4%)
IFAD (47%) ICSC (42.9%)
ILO (45.7%) UNRWA (42.1%)
UNJSPF (45.4%) WFP (41.6%)
WIPO (44.9%) UN SECRETARIAT (41.1%)
IMO (44.6%)
UNDP (44.4%) UNSSC (40%)
40%-49%

13 ENTITIES
ITC (39.9%) UNOPS (34.0%)
UNFCCC (39.2%) UNIDO (32.9%)
ITU (38.3%) UPU (31.5%)
WMO (37.8%) ICAO (30.5%)
FAO (37.4%) IAEA (28.3%)
UNITAR (35.5%) UNU (26.4%)
  UNICC (18.8%)
<40%

GENDER PARITY IS WITHIN REACH

While only 5 entities have achieved or exceeded overall gender parity at the Professional levels or higher (P-1 to UG), the majority are within 10 percentage points. Notwithstanding this, much progress remains at the individual levels. Each grade level, therefore, must be targeted and monitored independently.

Source: UN Women, 2016 Report on Status of Women in the United Nations System.

COMPARISON OF UN SECRETARIAT TO UN SYSTEM (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2015)

UN System ■ **UN Secretariat** ■

Level	UN System	UN Secretariat
UG*	27.3	23.3
D2	30.4	27.6
D1	33.6	31.4
P5	36	33.5
P4	41.9	39.6
P3	45.3	44
P2	57.5	55.6
P1	61.5	58.8

% Women 30 40 50 60

As the largest entity in the UN System, the UN Secretariat has the potential to greatly impact overall system progress towards 50:50 gender balance. However, the UN Secretariat has a lower representation of women at every level than the overall UN system.

*Ungraded: Aggregate of senior leadership posts

Source: UN Women, 2016 Report on Status of Women in the United Nations System.

SETTING TARGETS AND MONITORING PROGRESS FOR PARITY AT ALL LEVELS

SETTING TARGETS

The Secretary-General has pledged to reach parity at the senior leadership level, including USGs, ASGs, SRSGs and Special Envoys, by 2021, and parity across the entire UN System "well before 2030".

The Task Force recommends that the target for the system as a whole be 2026, however it is recognized that there are some outliers who have starting points that may make this goal not possible even with the best of efforts. For these the end goal should be set at 2028 (2026 is referred to below as it represents the system-wide target, but encompasses equally the 2028 target for those few

furthest behind). Similarly, entities that are on track are encouraged to be ambitious and aim to achieve parity by the 2021 deadline or as soon thereafter as possible. While the goal is 50/50 parity, it is recognized that sustainability at that number is unlikely and for the purposes of this strategy parity is considered to be within the 47%-53% margin.
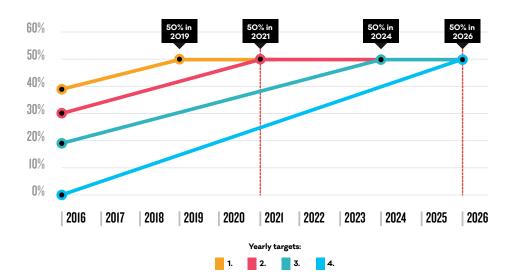
In Phase 1, target setting will only apply to the international staff population, P1 level and above, on fixed-term, continuous, or permanent/indefinite appointments. However monitoring of data will include G staff and National positions.

The target of gender parity will be **set for each level and for each Secretariat Department and UN entity**. It is recognized that HQ locations have made better progress than

Non-HQ locations, and on average are 10 percentage points closer to gender parity. While system-wide monitoring will not be location disaggregated, entities are encouraged to independently disaggregate by location in order to target interventions and are reminded that in order to achieve gender parity they will have to address gender imbalances in the field.

The Task Force proposes a simplified target calculation methodology that can be applied across the UN common system. **Annual targets are set for each entity/level combination** (e.g. Department of Management D2 will have a different target from Dep artment of Management P3 as well as from UNDP D2). **The annual targets will be calculated based on the gap to parity**. A percentage gap range (above and below 50%) to parity will be established to determine which ultimate year target (2021 or 2026) an entity/level combination should be applied. The percentage gap to parity will be calculated based on approximately half of

the entity/level combinations with the year target of 2021 and the other half with the year target of 2026. Therefore, if the starting point of an entity/level combination, as at January 2017, is within the percentage gap range to parity, the ultimate year target would be 2021. If it is outside the percentage gap range to parity, the ultimate year target would be 2026.

The targets will be set linearly using the same slope, i.e. yearly percentage point increments. If the slope is not sufficient for an entity/level to reach parity by 2026, a linear target will be drawn directly to 2026, resulting in a more aggressive slope. Assuming the percentage gap to parity is set at +/-20% (starting point of 30%-70% will have the yearly target of 2021), below are a few sample scenarios and a graph showing the yearly targets:

1. An entity/level combination with a starting point of 38% is within the range and therefore has an ultimate year target of

2021. The yearly targets will be set at 42% in 2017, 46% in 2018, and 50% in 2019.

2. An entity/level combination with a starting point of 30% is also within the range and therefore has an ultimate year target of 2021. The parity should be achieved on the target year of 2021.

3. An entity/level combination with a starting point of 18% is outside of the range and therefore has an ultimate year target of 2026. The yearly targets will be set at 22% in 2017, 26% in 2018 and so forth, and finally 50% in 2024.

4. An entity/level combination with a starting point of 0% is outside of the range and therefore has an ultimate year target of 2026. Since the parity cannot be achieved using the 4% slope, a more aggressive 5% slope will be assigned to set targets of 5% in 2017, 10% in 2018 and so forth to achieve 50% in 2026.

Those entities starting with low starting levels will have more aggressive slopes to achieve gender parity by 2026 (or in the case of a few, 2028). Success here will require concerted monitoring and targeted support. Each individual entity should make efforts to take advantage of every hiring opportunity, through workforce planning, to progress towards gender parity. A concern has been raised regarding the impact of the shift in retirement age from January 2018. However, the average retirement rate in the Secretariat, for example, will only change from 1.9%[14] to 0.4%[15] and these numbers will have minimal impact in the overall population. In the case of small departments or entities—comprising less than 10 persons in total—where any shift in numbers will move the balance significantly, it is recommended that aggregate targets for parity be used while still respecting the principle of pursuing balance at all levels.

While in Phase 1 targets will only be for international staff on fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointments, all personnel, regardless of appointment or contract type (Temporary Appointment, G staff, national staff etc.) should be included in the **data analysis**. Failure to document sex-disaggregated data regardless of contract types means that it is unclear whether temporary appointments, which are less secure, are being used in greater numbers for women or men, and if so the reasons behind this.

Specific strategies are needed to address the barriers to recruiting more female national staff into international positions. Globally, women constitute approximately 42% of national officers system-wide.[16] They are therefore an important pipeline for addressing not just gender parity but geographic diversity particularly with regards to under-represented countries. Longer term planning which addresses recruitment and retention among national staff and then from national to international staff would allow the future-UN to have a sustainable

14. Composition of the Secretariat (A/71/360: Table 13).

15. Composition of the Secretariat (A/72/xxx Table 15)

16. CEB and UN Women reference. There are however-er disparities within these numbers. Currently only 17% of national staff in peace operations missions are women (DFS).

gender-equal and geographically diverse pool of talented and experienced staff and senior leaders. While it is not possible to include national staff in the current time frames and strategy as more time and a dedicated strategy is needed, the Task Force recognized the importance of making progress towards gender parity for all staff and at all levels.

Equally this strategy does not cover uniformed personnel, as this category is regulated by a different system than staff. However, 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 our protection reach and operational effectiveness and sends the wrong message about who the UN serves and represents. This is an issue currently being addressed through the task force on sexual exploitation and abuse, however it is broader than SEA alone and would benefit from a dedicated strategy to reach the targets requested by the Security Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- OHRM to provide the methodology and template for all entities to calculate targets by level, and to develop the targets and baseline for Secretariat entities

- OHRM to initiate in 2018 Phase 2 of the Gender Parity Strategy focused on expanding the current strategy to cover G staff and national staff system-wide. For entities that are able to integrate all staff types into their entity's implementation plan from the start, this is strongly encouraged

- UN Women in conjunction with Resident Coordinators' Office and UNCTs, as well as peace operations missions 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

- 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

MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

To support monitoring, it is recommended that entities use platforms such as an HR Dashboard to facilitate analysis and make data immediately available in real-time to managers and all staff. For example, UNDP has a model system which allows up-to-date information on sex and geographic distribution of staff and provides the basis for monitoring progress and identifying lags.

Having up to date analytical software will also support system-wide monitoring, which at present experiences a significant time delay. Currently entities provide annual demographic data to the CEB and UN Women as of 31 December. Data collection and validation are a time consuming process that result in a time lag of a year or more. In order for accountability measures related to targets to be operational, it is essential that data is as current as possible. In the short-term, while proper systems are being put in

place for real-time monitoring, it is recommended that entities report on their overall progress on targets at all levels twice a year (see "Implementation" section).[17] More frequent monitoring should be done internally by each entity and inform staffing decisions.

System-wide monitoring and reporting as well as transparency would be greatly improved through the development of a public website where entities can upload statistics on current demographics, targets and progress made at each level. This will enable entity heads to see the progress of each UN agency and recognize/reward those who are making significant gains. It could also have an accompanying impact of increasing credibility and support from Member States and other stakeholders who will be able to transparently access information. Shadow reporting of civil society bodies should also be encouraged.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• HR Network to cost the move to entity-wide analytic platforms which allow for real-time monitoring of demographic changes in the workforce, and move to similar models by 2019

• The Secretariat is currently developing a public website for tracking demographics of the work force. This will be in place by Q3 2017. It is recommended that the full system be added to this website by Q4 2017 and that ownership transfers to the CEB Secretariat once set up

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

OTHER DATA COLLECTION AVENUES

A revised version of the UN-SWAP will be rolled-out in 2018, with updated indicators. This will include a disaggregated gender parity indicator. As 65 entities now report against the SWAP this will provide an important additional data collection avenue, bearing in mind the limitations that the data is only collected once a year, is largely self-reporting and does not undergo a vetting process. Data will also be supplemented through UN Women's ongoing efforts to collect system-wide data on the appointments, career advancement, separations, staff selection/recruitment and flexible work arrangement usage of staff. UN Women also collects qualitative data through a biennial survey to Gender Focal Points on the gender-related policies and practices of their entity, including facilitative policies, work-life balance, leadership, mentoring, and supporting architecture. Best practices from across the system are published biennially in the Secretary-General's Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women.

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17. In the interim, the CEB and UN Women should coordinate and streamline data collection and processing. A mid-term plan could be to have the CEB be responsible for the creation of an analytics platform and a database from which UN Women and other UN agencies can generate reports. This will also enable agencies as well as UN Women to shift resources from reporting/data collection to expanding data analysis, and to provide enhanced evidence-based policy advice.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

While the rate of progress in much of the UN system has been slow, rapid change is possible. Evidence from a number of entities demonstrates that rapid transformation can be achieved when underpinned by dedication from senior leadership and accountability measures.

For example, UNAIDS initiated a Gender Action Plan with clear targets and an emphasis on accountability and career development. Between March 2013 and June 2017, the number of female heads of country offices increased from 23% to 48% with UNAIDS being close to reaching parity in P5 and above levels. ITC is another example of an entity that is on track for rapid and transformative change. In 2015, it was one of the few organizations more than ten points from parity, yet its Executive Director set 2020 as a target at the professional level overall. This ambitious target is accompanied by accountability—gender parity is now a mandatory goal assessed in performance appraisals for senior staff across all levels, effective planning, and special measures in staff selection. These measures have been codified in an Executive Director's bulletin giving them institutional force. The focus on accountability is consistent with broader literature which shows that this is perhaps the most important element in creating a more inclusive workforce.

> **Research shows that organizations with more robust gender metrics and accountability systems are more than twice as likely to improve the representation of men and women.**

ACCOUNTABILITY AT EACH LEVEL

Establishing real accountability, backed by consequences, for senior leadership in relation to targets will assist to replicate this culture more widely within the Organization, making clear that achieving gender parity and equality is the responsibility of all staff at all levels. Senior Compacts should include targets, and senior leaders should ensure that all hiring managers use targets, are aware of the impacts of their hiring decisions and that an inclusive workplace is integrated into performance evaluations.

> **At present less than a quarter of entities are using hiring targets to guide towards parity.[18]**

Accountability should match the level of responsibility and delegated authority. For example, senior managers in job networks that are **practicing mobility** no longer have delegated authority for all selection decisions but can still be held accountable for presenting parity shortlists, an area that is within their authority. While targets are the key indicator of change used, they are only an indicator, and it is expected that these will be achieved by using the range of tools detailed in this strategy—from creating an inclusive work environment, to prioritizing talent management, to the consistent use of special measures. The approach should actively engage the workforce so that adhering to the desired

behaviours becomes an intrinsic need rather than an obligation for staff.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Accountability at each level for this strategy will include:

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

- Include in Senior Managers' Compacts specific, time-bound, and entity specific targets for reaching parity at all levels, based on the methodology described in "Target Setting"

- Request non-secretariat Executive heads to sign similar Compacts with calculated targets voluntarily to be monitored and reported on to the CEB Secretariat

- Monitor compliance and hold senior managers accountable for meeting targets, including through taking corrective actions

Below are the accountability measures to be adopted for the Secretariat at the senior most levels. It is recommended that all entities with delegated hiring responsibility integrate similar measures for accountability of senior leadership within their own rules and regulations.

FOR THE SECRETARIAT

Heads of departments/offices/missions

- Responsible to Head of Entity to reach the calculated time-bound, entity and level specific targets within their departments/offices/missions

- First reporting in June 2018 will confirm if the entity is on track to meet the gender parity target for 2018. Targeted support

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18. 22% of entities surveyed by UN Women reported using hiring targets (A/72/220).

offered to those not on track. As of December 2018, if the entity has not met its gender parity targets for 2018, Heads of departments/offices/missions will receive a warning from their Head of Entity and will receive support, if needed, from the central HR office in their entity

- If targets are not met by December 2019, the department/office/mission's selection authority will be revoked for the under-represented grade level(s), and the central HR office will make all selection decisions for the under-represented grade level(s) for one year

- If following the resumption of selection authority, targets are not met for the following year, this will be reviewed by the Secretary-General directly for decision

Assistant/Deputy Heads of departments/offices/missions

- Will be held accountable for supporting the Heads of Departments/Offices/Missions to meet the annual targets, and gender equality and parity goals/performance results will be reflected in their annual work plans/compacts/performance appraisals

SYSTEM-WIDE

All Staff with Supervisory/ Hiring Responsibility

- To personally acknowledge and sign off on the departmental statistical status on gender parity and the implications of their selection prior to final decision of a candidate[19]

- Workplans to include a SMART goal related to contributing to gender equality and parity and performance appraisal to include an assessment of staff member's performance in this area, including the consistent application of special measures and the creation of an enabling work environment. UNOG has begun implementation of this from April 2017

Senior-most official responsible for human resources management

Workplan and annual performance plan to include responsibility to:

- Provide the most up to date information on gender balance for the relevant level to a hiring manager prior to recruitment, sex-disaggregated information at each stage of recruitment, and ensure that hiring managers are aware and personally sign off on the implications of their hiring decision for overall parity goals

- Monitor progress against annual targets at all levels

- Ensure that special measures are applied consistently

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19. In line with the 2013 Policy Committee decision

RECOGNIZE AND REWARD ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER PARITY TARGETS

The achievement of gender parity will require considerable effort and account-ability should also be matched with pub-lic recognition of those who perform and provide positive leadership as well as real incentives for institutional transformation. Institutional resources and investment by Member States should be used to ensure that benefits accrue to those sections instituting best practice on gender parity.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• EOSG to work with system to ensure that resources for programming on gender equality are made more readily available for entities and sections within entities that have made significant progress on parity, and to work with Member States to encourage similar incentivization

• Managers at all levels who meet their targets and/or demonstrate good practice in sup-port of gender equality and parity should be profiled on entity intranets, gender-related websites, at town hall meetings, and through an annual Secretary General Gender Award as well as any other available means

• As called for in an earlier Executive Com-mittee decision, all senior managers are encouraged to follow the Secretary-Gen-eral's example and join the International Gender Champions, and make specific, concrete and ambitious commitments to enhance gender equality and parity within their organizations

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, PROGRESSION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL MEASURES

Temporary special measures[20] have long been recognized as critical elements to level the playing field and overcome inherent gender biases in recruitment, whether in national governments, private sector, or the UN. These measures are based in international treaty law, in particular CEDAW the most ratified international treaty[20], and are regularly advocated by the UN in relation to Member States.

Within the UN, numerous review reports have highlighted the importance of special measures and numerous entities have special measures in some form. The secretariat has also adopted significant policies in this regard, including most importantly Staff Administrative Instruction 1999 and the 2013 Policy Committee decision both

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20. CEDAW requires the UN to take 'all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women' (Article 3). **This includes temporary special measures to accelerate 'de facto equality between men and women [which] shall not be considered discrimination** as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objective of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved' (Article 4.1).

focused on special measures to further gender parity. Despite these recommendations and policies, there remains real resistance to implementation. Only half of entities report using temporary special measures to reach gender parity[21] and implementation has sometimes been blocked by claims of discrimination.

Existing special measures are either insufficient in strength or applied in an ad hoc manner. For example, the requirement that one in three shortlisted candidates be a woman has been shown to have limited impact. External research shows that one woman on a shortlist is seen as a token woman: **when only one woman is recommended, she has only 5% chance of being selected; when 2 or more are present the selection rate jumps to 35%.**[22]

Moreover even this requirement measure, weak as it is, is not consistently applied. As an example, for 764 job openings at P5 level in the Secretariat during 2010-2015, 41% had lists of recommended candidates that were male only.[23] This demonstrates the importance of policies which require equal opportunities and overcome structural biases in recruitment and selection.

> **It will not be possible to meet the parity targets without special measures—and where such measures have been adopted they have yielded real results.**

Unfortunately to date, the inconsistent use, lack of accountability mechanisms, and ad hoc nature of special measures has limited their impact in the Organization.

The Task Force is therefore recommending for the Organization as a whole the consistent application of existing special measures and the development of a limited group of additional measures. Many of these in the field of selection, appointment and promotion and are intended to be complemented by measures for outreach and in-reach of candidates and career development and retention. **These measures are temporary in nature to the extent that they should assist to reach parity and then cease, but should also be on hand should parity not be sustained.** The success of all measures depends on both the strength and consistency of their implementation across all levels and corresponding accountability mechanisms, but it should also be recognized that special measures are intended as positive tools for supporting hiring managers and not as punitive measures.

It is recommended that every entity review their existing measures and their effectiveness and adopt a set of tiered special measures for immediate implementation. In the first tier would be measures that should be

21. UN Women, 'Status of Women in the UN System' (2016).

22. Stefanie K. Johnson, Stephanie K, Hekman, David R. and Elsa Chan, "If there's only one woman in your candidate pool, there's statistically no chance she'll be hired." Harvard Business Review, 26 April 2016. https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired

23. 'Source: HR Insight'.

implemented at all times. Drawing on the existing best practice across the system, Tier 1 measures to be implemented by all consistently should at a minimum include:

- Hiring Managers to be required to recommend 50% women and 50% male candidates for selection for all types of Job Openings at all levels, including senior appointments. Where this is not possible owing to job family or objective obstacles, written justification should be submitted

- To increase the pool of applicants, including the number of women to select from— temporarily suspend restrictive requirements from the job description for all applicants. These will be different by entity but would include for example removing requirements for time in post or those related to the number of lateral moves to be eligible for applications to a higher level

- Job openings that fail to yield a minimum 20% female applications will require written justification from the hiring manager on the positive outreach measures taken to attract women applicants. In the absence of a strong justification, job openings to be extended / reopened

Individual entities are encouraged to expand this list of minimum temporary measures, to include for example creating inter-agency coalitions for those entities that have differentiated requirements for internal and external candidates, to treat female candidates from participating UN system organizations as internal candidates, where internal candidates are given priority consideration in selection.

Further examples of good practice measures include:

- UNDP has women-only candidate pools for bureaux that have fallen below 45% representation and strengthened accountability of managers to reach gender balance targets;

- a 'global south women only' call for the Peace and Development Advisers (UNDP/ DPA) roster was recently issued;

- multiple entities enforce the removal of ranking of recommended candidates to allow for greater latitude in the final selection process, and compare candidates' qualifications against the job vacancy requirements, as opposed to against one another;

- both UNDP and UNHCR apply flexibility in around time in post criteria for female candidates;

- UNHCR considers women who have separated to be internal candidates for a number of years after separation, as well as women from other agencies

Where entities are not on track for their targets, a second tier of stronger special measures should be instituted. This should include requiring senior managers who do not meet their targets in the previous year to submit written reasons why, a plan for rectifying the situation, and bi-annual reporting until targets are met. Where targets have not been met for the year, Level 3 special measures would automatically take effect and would include the mandatory selection

of women on the recommended list. In the Secretariat this should involve the updating and consistent application of ST/AI/1999/9. [24]

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Each entity's implementation strategy should detail the use of special measures along three tiers—Level 1 to be implemented at all times (including the minimum measures detailed above); Level 2 when entities are not on track to their targets; Level 3 when the targets have not been met for one year. Level 3 would include the mandatory selection of women on the recommended or short list or some variant of this policy

- For the Secretariat—OHRM to revise and update ST/AI/1999/9 to reflect changes in contract modalities and selection rules, qualify when the measure would apply, and amend language to say if recommended, the woman candidate should be automatically selected. All subsequent STAIs on staff selection policies should reflect special measures

- Special measures should apply not just to recruitment but equally to downsizing—eg, where two candidates are equal the woman will be retained

OUTREACH FOR RECRUITMENT– POOLING COLLECTIVE RESOURCES

Reaching gender parity in an accelerated timeframe will require significant sourcing and outreach efforts, both within and outside the UN system. Sourcing and outreach functions in the Secretariat and each of the UN entities across the system are largely independent. While outreach missions to Member States and vacancy notices may be shared, each entity typically sources their vacancies individually, developing their own strategies, tools, approaches, rosters and databases in line with their capacity. While colleagues may informally share best practices and lessons learned, there is no formal inter-agency candidate referral mechanism or centralized database of qualified women, senior or otherwise, that can be accessed by all agencies. Therefore, many entities are currently working to develop their own senior talent pipeline, database and networks, often expanding the definition of "senior" to include posts at P5, D1 and D2 levels. The fractured use of resources is equally applicable to recruitments at all levels and is both an unwise use of resources and an obstacle to greater efficiencies.

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24. ST/AI/1999/9 "Special Measures for the Achievement of Gender Equality" is the most current Administrative Instruction on special measures and it is valid and applicable to the UN Secretariat. It mandates that vacancies in the Professional category and above (at levels where gender parity had not been met), "be filled when there are one or more women candidates, by one of those candidates", when "her qualifications are substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates". The measures put forward by ST/AI/1999/9 are to be taken into account once the conditions of merit have been met and are not in conflict with the application of Article 101. **ST/AI/1999/9 has been repeatedly upheld through United Nations Tribunal jurisprudence, in cases of both male and female complainants.**

The challenge to achieve gender parity within the UN system is a shared one. While each agency's talent needs may be specific to their mandate, there are opportunities for collaboration in the creation of shared databases of qualified women and the creation of incentives to collaborate in the time and resource-intensive process of sourcing for talent. System-wide collaboration to improve functioning and effectiveness, as outlined in the QCPR and Delivering as One models, provides the space to consider the feasibility of a UN shared sourcing and outreach architecture, potentially outsourced collectively, that benefits and supports all agencies in recruiting qualified women in line with their needs. Existing successful initiatives, such as the Senior Women Talent Pipeline (highlighted below) should be supported and built up as a model for other sectors.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Human Resources Network to commission a study to take inventory of all existing senior talent pipelines, rosters and databases within the UN system and propose a common platform for system-wide sharing of senior female talent data (P5 and above)

ADDRESS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN RECRUITMENT

Gender biases can lead to unintentional discrimination in selection processes. Such biases can influence the evaluation of curricula vitae, assessments and interview performance, letters of recommendation, as well as in-job performance assessment. Ensuring that larger numbers of qualified women reach each stage

SENIOR WOMEN TALENT PIPELINE FOR UN PEACE OPERATIONS

In 2013, DFS launched the "Senior Women Talent Pipeline", which developed a pipeline of primarily external candidates for D1 and D2 positions in peace operations in the areas of public information, political affairs, civil affairs, and rule of law. A public global call was initiated to attract candidates, yielding more than 750 applicants from 92 countries. Following the call, candidates were screened for suitability and an inter-departmental board selected an initial pool. Pipeline candidates were directed to suitable vacancies and received support on preparing their applications and throughout the assessment process. Candidates who were selected also were tracked into pre-deployment training such as the Senior Mission Leaders Course and received some limited post-deployment support such as mentorship. About 10 deployments were made through this initiative, which was funded through extra budgetary sources from the UK, the Netherlands, and Japan.

of the application process, as well as having gender balanced assessment panels, will go some way to ensure that women are evaluated more accurately.

Low numbers of women applicants comprise one of the contributing factors to the lack of progress towards gender parity. Several factors contribute to the lower number of female candidates. Research shows that women often opt out of applying for positions for which they do not meet 100% of the requirements, while men will apply or confirm interest, even if they meet only 60% of the requirements.[25] Attention should be given to ensure that vacancy announcements, where applicable, and post profiles do not suffer from unconscious bias, that Terms of Reference are developed in a more gender neutral manner and explicitly encourage women to apply, that job descriptions contain only criteria that are essential to the functions of the post, and non-essential qualifications that may limit female applicants are removed.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- All entities to require hiring managers to be trained on eliminating unconscious bias in the workplace in general, and in job design, job descriptions and vacancy announcements in particular, to increase awareness and standardize practice across the system. This should be implemented at the D1 level and up initially with across the system application after three years

- Each entity to consider developing ways of masking personal information including marital status and number of children from hiring managers during recruitment

- Central HR of each entity to establish standards for each set of TORs to ensure that they are written with only the essential qualifications of the job, rather than non-essential criteria

RETENTION, PROGRESSION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Ensuring tomorrow's pipeline of women leaders requires a focus on managing talent starting at more junior levels. The vision for a truly global and diverse workforce will only be achieved if junior and mid-level managers, particularly women from the global south, are identified early on and nurtured. Equally, all staff within the system should have an opportunity to be considered for posts with no obstacles other than qualification and criteria. This would allow the system to most effectively support and career-path internal talent as well as make use of the range of expertise and experience on hand, and would broaden the number of qualified women considered for various posts. Institutional structures for mentoring and supporting can have a significant impact on retention and progression as well as build networks for peer support. A number of initiatives are underway within and across entities. UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) for example has created a network for female P5 staff across all 60 entities. In New York the UN system and a number of missions are joining together to launch a new initiative 'Women in Leadership and Development' that will provide a space to address the challenges women face to career progression and establish an informal mentorship network.

25. https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified

Much of what we know impacts on staff retention in relation to working conditions is dealt with in the section on "Enabling Environment". But monitoring and ongoing information on the consistent implementation of policies and their impacts will help to course correct and point to further measures needed.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Allow all UN system staff to apply for positions where they fulfil the requirements (in contrast to the current system of only allowing application one grade higher). This would impact senior levels—eg D1 to ASG, management layers—P5 to D2, and equally G to P)

• Each entity to implement a system for mentoring female staff by both women and men, involving staff from all categories with a mentor being more senior. CEB HR Network to develop a good practice guidance note on the development of such networks

• Staff engagement surveys and exit questionnaires and/or interviews to be mandatory across the system, regardless of category or level. Responses should protect the anonymity of respondents, and whenever possible be administered by a third party as well as be transparently shared across the entity and inform policy development. Where necessary owing to resource constraints, a phased approach could be utilized

• Secretary General to propose a talent management pilot initiative of 50 staff across the UN system, with a focus on women at the P1-P3 level from the global south. The initiative should be spearheaded by OHRM, in close consultation with the HR Network of the CEBs High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). Staff to be chosen from across the UN system, including those on the Young Professionals Programme (YPP) list, and would be provided opportunities and experiences which would provide them with the right skills for tomorrow's leadership

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

The Secretary-General enjoys discretionary power to appoint certain UN officials at the USG/ ASG level. These appointments provide a unique opportunity to move towards parity at an accelerated rate at the senior most levels, where the gap is the largest.

Within the category of Senior Appointments there are three main selection streams (herewith referred to as subcategories) [26]:

1. Under-Secretary-General (USG) and Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) appointments within the Secretary-General's prerogative;
2. Head and Deputy Head of Mission (also mainly at the level of ASG and USG); and

3. Resident Coordinator.

While sharing much in common, the differences in function, nature of the role, and mechanisms for outreach, evaluation and appointment for each of these three subcategories require the use of different approaches and strategies to reach parity. For example, attracting women to senior appointments for Head and deputy Head of Mission positions (positions that are usually not advertised) require different approaches than those of headquarters appointments.

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26. This prerogative encompasses positions in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General as well as Special Envoys and positions at the Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General levels (General Assembly Resolution 51/226). Not included here is the category of Force Commanders and Police Commissioners, although these appointments are also made by the Secretary-General and form part of his senior leadership team in the field. Incumbents are nominated by and seconded from their Member State.

Senior Leadership Appointments Section, Department of Field Support, for instance, has developed and is implementing a specific strategy to achieve gender parity among heads and deputy heads of missions by the required deadline. Resident Coordinators are the one place in the UN system where parity is within sight at a senior level (currently 46%).[27] There are important lessons to be learned from the RC system process for other senior appointments and the system more generally—including the explicit use of affirmative action language and the dedicated targeting of women applicants.

The category of senior leaders also includes special advisers, thematic SRSGs, and special envoys—a subgroup where numbers are perhaps the lowest across all categories, particularly the Special Envoys who are focused on mediation processes. A recent Executive Committee decision requested a strategy on enlarging the pool of high-level envoys and senior mediators, with a specific focus on adding women mediators to the pool. The strategy has now been developed and is being taken forward by DPA in cooperation with UNDP, DFS/SLAS, UN Women and EOSG.[28]

Success in reaching gender parity among senior leaders requires a multi-pronged approach. While the numbers can be moved initially by the increased selection and appointment of women, it must then

be sustained and facilitated throughout a life-cycle approach. This means that any efforts to achieve and sustain parity must address the process from vacancy through to selection, approval process, in-briefings, support, career development and appraisal. Gender parity at the senior levels can be achieved not just in line with the highest standards of merit, but in fact while simultaneously strengthening standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

This following section proposes some key strategies for accelerating gender parity in senior positions in general, and then highlights some considerations for specific categories of senior posts. There are also a number of recommendations in the sections on recruitments and enabling work environment generally for the system which will equally have an impact on senior leaders, but are dealt with in their respective sections.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SENIOR APPLICANT POOLS

For a variety of reasons, women apply for senior positions in lower numbers than men. Further challenges include the small internal pipeline of women at the P5-D2 levels within the UN and the imbalance of women in leadership positions globally, all of which reduces the pool of internal and external female candidates. Strategies to increase the number of senior women candidates must address the slightly different and specific challenges faced in attracting both internal and external female candidates, including the fact

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27. DOCO (2017)

28. For this reason this subgroup is not dealt with explicitly here.

that some of these positions are not advertised. This will also require awareness-raising of opportunities and sufficient brand and role attractiveness to secure potential female candidates' interest. The Global Call for the generic SRSG/DSRSG positions in UN Field Missions which was launched by the Senior Leadership Appointment Section, DFS earlier this year and used Member State networks, advertising, and outreach through networks to build a pool of applicants stands as a good practice on the kind of outreach and sourcing efforts needed in all areas.

Identification, outreach and sourcing of talent is a time-consuming, ongoing activity. DFS/SLAS observes that it often takes many more phone calls to persuade an external woman to confirm her interest in a (senior leadership) position than to prompt a man to do so. Female employees are also far less likely to apply for a higher level position until they are certain they match the full skillset and criteria, which is comparatively different for men and can lead to fewer numbers of women applying.[29] It should be noted however that while women apply in fewer numbers, data broken down in the different stages of the recruitment process show that they tend to perform better than men relative to their application rate.[30]

Strategic sourcing, proactive recruiting efforts and targeted outreach, along with the creation of an enabling supportive work environment, can directly help to address such challenges by targeting networks that women access. Progressive sourcing strategies that are common practice in the private sector must be adopted and resourced in order to increase the number of applications from women for senior posts.

> If the goal of accelerating the numbers of women into senior appointments is to be met, the UN system must have the architecture to deliver as a modern, proactive source agent.

This requires consideration of the potential resources required. At present the sections which deal with the three substreams of senior appointments have between them only a handful of staff.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- EOSG to develop a consolidated modern executive search function for senior appointments across the UN system for the purposes of developing and maintaining a senior talent inventory of eligible women, including outsourcing of key aspects to widen scope and reach and build on external best practice;

- SLAS and EOSG, supported by OHRM and any other interested entities to create and maintain a common platform with information of senior managers internally and relevant profiles of externals

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29. http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/04/theconfidence-gap/359815/. Accessed on 28 May 2014.

30. According to OHRM data, during 2010-16, 35% of applicants to Secretariat posts were women and of these 48% were selected. Source: HR Insight. All selections which occurred from 2010 to 2016, including FS, GS and P+ as of 31/07/2017

STRENGTHEN MERIT-BASED SELECTION PROCESS AND REMOVE POTENTIAL BIAS

Strengthening the merit-based nature of senior appointments will raise the overall quality of the selection process as well as mitigate bias inherent in more discretionary and less criteria-based selection. In light of the very senior, and often political, nature of potential candidates for senior appointments, careful consideration should be given to the nature of testing used to ensure that such tools do not inadvertently reinforce cultural or gender bias. Lessons learned from across the UN system, especially those tools in use as part of the RC assessment process and those being piloted by SLAS for use in the selection of deputy Heads and Heads of Mission, could be evaluated for use in other categories. In addition, induction processes should be used strategically to build on and strengthen capacity gaps for all incoming appointments.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Selection process of senior staff to include additional assessment tools such as psychometric profiling, personality tests, situational judgment questionnaires, the inclusion of scenario-based questions in interviews and more thorough standard reference checking. Due regard should be given to eliminating potential gender or geographical bias from such assessment tools

- Extend the requirement for both women and men to be represented at all stages of the assessment and interview processes for senior appointment selections to ensure 50/50 representation of women and men at all stages of the selection process and on interview panels and consider including externals on senior level appointment panels

- Use induction processes to complement the recruitment process for all appointed senior managers (men and women) and address and build on identified capacity or skills gaps as needed

USING TARGETS IN SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

Like with the rest of the system, targets and special measures can have an impact on both gender balance and geographic diversity. For example, the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel which oversees the Resident Coordinator recruitment process, includes in the call for nominations for the RC assessment that affirmative action measures have been adopted and that preference will be given to women and those from the global south, noting that "Any agency that submits two or more nominees must ensure that at least one is a woman and at least one is from the South." Such measures have contributed to an overall rate of 46% women's representation among resident coordinators. Moreover, in recent years, not only are numbers of women being put forward for assessment rising, but in the past two years women have constituted the majority of those who passed the assessment—demonstrating that efforts at affirmative outreach can in fact increase levels of competence overall.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- EOSG and DFS/SLAS to continue to maintain projection tables for each category of senior appointments by job type and stream, indicating the number of new female appointments required every year to reach gender parity by December 2021 and maintain it from there. This will form the basis for the establishment of short, medium and long-term targets

- EOSG to monitor data on senior staff selection at each level of the recruitment process (e.g. number and percentage of candidates who applied or who were considered, screened, long-listed, short-listed, interviewed, recommended and selected, disaggregated by sex)

- Recommendations to the Secretary-General by a Department must include written justification of efforts made to consider and recommend female candidates

BUILD AND MAINTAIN AN INTERNAL FEMALE SENIOR TALENT PIPELINE

A likely consequence of success in meeting short-term gender parity targets for senior levels may be a depletion of the current cadre of qualified women at the D2 level. It will therefore be essential to ensure that this important internal female talent pipeline is replenished and nurtured in the short, medium and long-term to sustain progress. This could be achieved through a number of temporary measures and longer-term developmental initiatives and should ideally be done in partnership with public sector entities globally. In addition, the Resident Coordinator Pool continues to be a credible, standardized talent pipeline that could be further supported as a way of preparing future senior female candidates. The lifting of the 'no right of return' policy by the Executive Committee already this year will have a significant impact on the pool of women internally prepared to be deployed for Head/deputy Head of mission positions.

ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

Once parity is attained, there is a critical need to have in place a mechanism to sustain such parity. This is particularly important in Heads and deputy Heads of Mission due to the small number of available positions, the nature of appointments, and the high turnover, as the average tenure is 2.4 years. Any strategy for more diverse senior leadership must therefore include a "life-cycle" approach that goes beyond selection and appointment and focuses on sustaining gains made by providing support throughout the entire duration of a posting. This should include providing newly appointed senior female leaders with strong leadership support at the very beginning of their assignment, ongoing career development, and effective performance management throughout their assignment. For all subcategories, an accountability mechanism must be in place to enable unbiased performance review, the outcome of which would have a direct influence on any renewal of appointment process. The UN must improve its image as a female and family friendly workplace, and ensure gender-sensitive workplace practices to build an enabling environment and secure a sustainable approach to parity.

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Inclusivity and equality will not be attainable without a working environment that prizes diversity and flexibility, provides equal opportunities, recognizes that staff are also family and community members, and ensures a safe environment in which to work.

Achieving such an environment requires a clear commitment formalized through a strategy and consistent policies, and mechanisms for implementation, enforcement and accountability. This also requires more deliberate investment into advocacy and awareness initiatives centred on the values of the UN, highlighting that gender parity and diversity are part of the UN DNA. Jobs with a higher anticipated work-life balance and organizations with a higher proportion of women, as well as gender-sensitive recruitment materials, have been shown to increase the number of female applicants.

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 in full.[31] 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 they work in. They will need to be developed, communicated,

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31. Some of these are already included in the UN SWAP under organizational culture

implemented and monitored in each entity of the UN system. Reports on their use should be made available to all staff to ensure transparency. A sample of elements for inclusion in the guidelines list is annexed below **(see Annex 1)**.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 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

- Every entity to ensure it has in place a strong legal framework on sexual harassment and that staff are aware of support in place and actions to take

- To ensure that efforts in one area are not undermined by efforts in another, any organizational change should entail a gender assessment impact study—this is particularly important with current reform processes

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWAS)

FWAs, including staggered working hours, telework, provisions for on-the job and formal learning activities to be undertaken during working hours, and compressed work schedules, are available to all staff members regardless of their grade and category, subject to exigencies of service. Flexibility in work times has been shown to improve morale, productivity and sense of well being

of the employees and loyalty to the organization. Within the UN, their consistent usage however is often undermined by a sense of stigma in requesting flexible work arrangements, a fear of paying the penalty in career mobility, as well as by managers who refuse requests for a variety of reasons. OHRM has amended the FWA policy for secretariat and an SGB will be forthcoming in 2017. All entities however should ensure consistent application of FWA policies and should take every opportunity to encourage and destigmatize the use of FWAs.

Provision for part-time work is related to flexible work arrangements and can have significant positive impact in allowing staff to adjust schedules around family situations and other considerations. While there are challenges in some contexts owing to host country visa criteria, in other countries where this is possible, provision should be fully explored. For those entities that access regular budget funds for posts, flexibility should be given so that funds are not returned where a post is part-time rather than full time (disincentivizing the use of part-time employment) but can be utilized in other ways.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- To the extent possible, vacancy announcements should state required office presence time and provision for flexible work arrangements

- Each entity should issue 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 requirements, and the prerogative of a manager to ensure coordination across team members' schedules. To facilitate this all entities should move towards ensuring that staff have the equipment needed, including laptops, which facilitate flexible work arrangements

• Where visa and other logistical considerations permit, entities should make provision for part-time work arrangements

BALANCE PERSONAL, FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS

Balancing personal, family and professional commitments means that UN staff are able to effectively attend to commitments and needs at work, while taking adequate care of what is important to them outside of work, including family, health, professional and other interests. Staff members who manage to effectively balance work and other commitments and needs are on average more engaged, more productive and efficient, and less absent. They are more likely to innovate and proactively look for solutions and better ways of working as well as to remain on in their organizations.

In order to sustain parity gains made and ensure the attractiveness of field postings, there is a need to further strengthen support provided to families when taking up a posting. This could include revisions of Host Country Agreements to enable family visa support, support for spouse employment

and training, and an expansion of the role of "Family Focal Points" to include non-crisis services.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Replace maternity/paternity/adoption leave policies with one parental leave policy where parental leave (maternity, paternity, adoption and surrogacy) is equal in length, provided that specific pre- and post-delivery needs of the birth parent are covered additionally (including insurance and leave) in line with WHO's recommendation of 6 months for breastfeeding/bonding with child

• Allow for additional 6 months of parental leave for staff in non-family duty stations

• Entities to ensure on-site creche availability for children or alternatively a percentage reimbursement of costs for creche where there is no facility

• 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 irrespective of the staff member's nationality

• Revisit all Host Country Agreements to see which can include spousal employment visas or where it would be possible to reopen discussions on the issue

• OHRM to update the existing STAI on spousal employment

MISSION SETTINGS

When staffing numbers are disaggregated by location, it is clear that for all entities the numbers of women is lower in the field than it in HQ locations.

The percentage of women among all international staff in peace operations is 28.3 % and this figure has not significantly increased since UN Security Council resolution 1325 was passed in 2000. While UNHCR reports overall incremental progress toward gender parity with women representing 44% of international staff globally, the percentage in the field is 30%. Likewise, OCHA reports achieving an overall rate of 46% international female staff (P grades and higher) when its HQ duty stations in New York and Geneva are included, but the ratio of women in OCHA field offices for the same group is 39%.[32]

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—going all the way up to **703 years to achieve gender parity at the D2 level**. To reach parity at all levels by 2026, all UN field entities need to dramatically accelerate the current rate of progress by increasing the rate of recruitment of women and making more effort to retain the current female staff already on board.

Making an impact in the field, and in mission settings in particular, will not only significantly address overall numbers, it will also ensure that the UN has a more representative and therefore credible face with the

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32. Data provided by OCHA to DFS in an email dated 15 March 2017.

populations it serves in the field. Location specific challenges require additional measures that should fit the specific challenges of the context. The pool of women who are available to work in missions has grown in the past two decades—globally women are more educated and are entering the workforce in larger numbers than ever before, even in traditionally 'male' dominated areas. Yet applications for these posts and overall numbers in the field remain low. **Without positive intervention the UN is unlikely to achieve the 50/50 parity goal in civilian peace operations and will in fact experience a decline before any improvement.**[33]

This will significantly impact the goal of parity throughout the Organization as the field represents over 50% of the Secretariat workforce and is equally where the greatest challenges to gender balance are experienced.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE CURRENT GENDER BALANCE

The challenge of achieving gender parity for international civilian staff in the field varies across the UN depending on the structure of the workforce in each UN entity. For instance, humanitarian organizations are closer to gender parity than peace operations, in part, because they hire staff from traditionally female-dominated careers such as education,

health, social work, and programme management. On the other hand, the footprint of UN Peace Operations differs, including 64% mission support (e.g. logistics, administration, ICT, engineering, human resources, finance/budget), 14% security, and 22% substantive staff.[34] The global labour force for these types of jobs in logistics, security, engineering, ICT, and finance is already heavily male-dominated. This gender disparity is replicated and amplified in UN Peace Operations for reasons addressed below.

Percentage of women in international staff positions in UN Peace Operations by Level

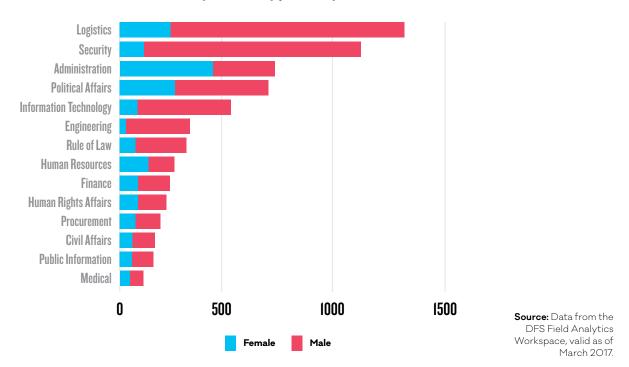| LEVEL	% WOMEN
All levels	28%
D2	16%
D1	25%
P5	23%
P4	29%
P3	32%
P2	41%
FS6	18%
FS5	30%
FS4	28%

Source: Data from the DFS Field Analytics Workspace, valid as of March 2017.

Thus, as portrayed in the bar graph below, addressing gender disparity in "male dominated" jobs such as logistics, security, ICT, and engineering is essential to achieve the goal of gender parity in UN Peace Operations as these areas of work comprise the bulk of civilian

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33. Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations: Final Report (2013)

34. Data from the DFS Field Analytics Workspace valid as of April 2017.

Breakdown of men and women in UN Peace Operations by job family

Job family	Female	Male
Logistics		
Security		
Administration		
Political Affairs		
Information Technology		
Engineering		
Rule of Law		
Human Resources		
Finance		
Human Rights Affairs		
Procurement		
Civil Affairs		
Public Information		
Medical		

■ Female ■ Male

personnel. The challenge is not that there are no women in these areas of work, but as numbers are lower in traditionally male-dominated fields of work more needs to be done to target outreach and make the UN an attractive employment option.

Reports on the challenges of increasing women's recruitment for peace operations missions identify a number of common concerns shared by women; in particular that too few missions make an effort to be gender sensitive in the design of missions and mission life, including in the placement of sanitation points, lighting, availability of medical including gynaecological facilities, and other similar issues. Messaging and outreach are also factors—external women appear to not apply for peace operations missions

because they understand them as military rather than civilian spaces. This is reinforced by UN messaging and policies which treat the field as an all-male location. However mission contexts in fact provide important opportunities and attractive benefits for all staff—including R&R on regular cycle for non-family duty stations, financial incentives, increased opportunity for promotion and advancement, and enhanced job satisfaction. Addressing both objective factors of working conditions scaled up and targeted outreach and recruitment along with better messaging, will be needed to address the challenges of parity in missions. Many of these efforts will require time and resource investments. Leadership should be provided with the enhanced tools which are field specific to support targeted recruitment.

With this in mind, the main areas of focus to bridge the gender gap in missions settings are:

1. Gender parity targets set for field mission entities which recognize the specific challenges and are linked to accountability for decision makers;

2. A positive image of female civilians working in the field is developed focused on how missions are a secure, rewarding work environment for women who want to contribute to international peace, security, humanitarian response, and protection of civilians. This is essential to boost the rate of qualified civilian female applicants;

3. Creation of broader and deeper talent pools of women who can be assessed and selected under special temporary measures promulgated by the Secretary-General to help field missions select qualified women at faster rates;

4. Improve the working and living conditions in field operations with a focus on, *inter alia*, improved minimum standards for camp living and working environments (including accommodations and security), flexible working arrangements adapted to the field, and rotation policies within missions with extreme hardship locations.

Recruitment and promotion systems and authorities:

There are varied systems for recruitment and promotion in place in the UN common system. While Agencies, Funds and Programmes have internal promotion schemes and provide advantages to internal candidates for recruitment, the Secretariat has neither. The relative centralization and decentralization of selection decisions also varies among the different entities.

- **Secretariat:** Selection authorities are currently split due to the transition to a more centralized recruitment system. Heads of Departments/Missions (SRSGs) have selection authority for all posts up to the D1 level with the exception of jobs in POLNET and ITECNET. Accountability for achieving gender targets is split according to the entity with the selection authority. There is no internal promotion track and internal candidates have no official advantage in the recruitment system. DFS policies require hiring managers to recommend at least one qualified female candidate for every job opening. However as noted in the "Special Measures" section, this requirement has not had a significant impact on selection rates of women

- UNHCR has a centrally-managed recruitment system with hiring managers in the field playing a role in making recommendations, while selection authority is retained at HQ. In addition, UNHCR manages a global internal promotions board at HQ. **UNHCR instituted a policy of recruiting women only for external recruitments in 1995-1996. This yielded 63% recruitment of women at the time and significantly impacted on the gender balance at the P-2 and P-3 levels.** UNHCR reports that this measure is almost solely responsible for the parity UNHCR has managed to achieve at the junior levels of the organisation

Field Focused Talent Pools

A 2015 DFS study found that women apply to Recruit from Roster posts at the same rate at which they are represented on the roster (25-30%); they are more successful than male candidates in the written test on average; comprise 25-30% of short-listed candidates; and at least one woman is on the recommended list in 70% of cases. **Despite this, women are only selected in 33% of P3-D1 selections from roster.** As with the rest of the system, special temporary measures are needed to address the institutional obstacles and biases inherent in current recruitment and to broaden our talent pools.

The creation of talent pools of women who can be assessed and selected under special temporary measures promulgated by the Secretary-General would significantly support field missions to select qualified women at faster rates. Entities with selection authority could select candidates directly from these talent pools to achieve quicker overall progress toward their phased gender parity benchmarks. Field Personnel Division, DFS, would be tasked to develop this strategy specifically for peace operations mission, with all other entities in the common system requested to develop a common system of rosters.

Special temporary measures for the creation, management, and selection from these talent pools would speed their creation and allow direct selections from the pools. These measures should include:

- Call for applications from women only. As rosters for all job families are already open to both sexes, the single sex call would be targeted outreach to ensure women apply;

- Field missions to make selections directly from the talent pools without any other competitive process;

- Internal UN Common System staff to be included in the talent pools for peace operations missions. They could be selected for lateral reassignment or promotion through an inter-organizational agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Entities who have not met gender parity targets to establish talent pools of internal and external female candidates for all job families/levels where women are under-represented. UN common system entities may decide to collaborate on the outreach, recruitment, and/or establishment of joint campaigns and/or talent pools as appropriate

- DFS and OHRM to draft a new ST/AI, or if possible amend existing STAIs on selection, for the establishment of female talent pools with a set of special temporary measures on their establishment, management, eligibility, assessment, selection, and contractual mechanisms related to the pools

- All restrictions should be removed on the recruitment of UNVs in the field. UNVs are a significant component of staffing in the field and lifting restrictions would widen the pool of experienced talent as well as broaden diversity of staff, particularly women, to recruit from

WORKING, LIVING, AND SECURITY CONDITIONS

The working, living, and security conditions in field missions and the system for designation of family and non-family duty stations are contributing factors to the lower application rates from female candidates and higher turnover rates for female staff in field mission locations. For example, a 2015 DFS survey of why staff (women and men) left field missions found that two-thirds left for "involuntary" reasons, with the most responses registered for **(1)** family reasons (often defined as caring for family members or being home with family), **(2)** difficult or negative work environment, and **(3)** a lack of opportunities for professional development or promotion.[35]

Currently duty stations are designated family duty stations almost exclusively on the basis of the prevailing security situation. Little account is taken of the availability of things such as schools, medical facilities or recreational facilities that can be particularly important for staff with families. For example Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea is designated as a family duty station despite the lack of an international school and specialized medical care. The current system creates a situation where staff with young families assigned to such duty stations effectively cannot bring their families but are not able to benefit from mitigating measures in place

in non-family duty stations (including R&R, family visits etc). Given that what makes a duty station suitable for a family varies on the individual family situation, assuming the security situation allows, staff should be able to make individual decisions.[36]

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Establish a series of workplace and accommodation minimum standards for non-family duty stations, including "camp" environments. These measures would include improvements identified by women staff (e.g. internal toilets and kitchenettes in containerized accommodation, safe recreational spaces etc) and design of camps so that police and military elements are cantoned separately from civilian staff. Missions to be required to meet these standards within one year of mission start-up and established missions within two years

- Relevant entities to remain engaged in the ICSC review of duty station classification. The review should be encouraged to look specifically at: **1)** including a third category of duty station for couples with no dependents **2)** the creation of 'flexible non-family duty stations' which are approaching family duty station standards and where staff could have the choice of "opting in" to a contract with family duty station benefits and entitlements **3)** revising how classification is done to consider not just security conditions but living conditions for the family and the possibility of allowing staff choice where a duty station is fit from a security perspective but not a living conditions perspective or vice versa

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35. "Reasons for Leaving Field Operations: 2015", an internal DFS document summarizing the results of a survey of 332 staff who had formerly served in UN Peace Operations.
36. DFS confirms that there would be little cost difference to the organization in the medium-term.

- The Secretariat should examine the possibility of giving staff members serving in non-family duty stations the option of installing their family members in a designated neighboring family duty station. For example, staff in Mogadishu could install their families in Nairobi[37]

- Secretariat should explore the feasibility of staff serving in marginal duty stations having the option to have them designated as either family or non-family to suit their particular situation

PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF WOMEN CIVILIANS WORKING IN THE FIELD

Global media portray conflict zones as highly dangerous locations with war, danger and hardship being the predominant images. While UN field mission staff do work in dangerous and hardship conditions, the organization also has improved security protocols, protections, and living conditions to ensure safety, security and welfare of its staff. The predominant global image impacts application rates from women for UN positions in field missions. For example, only 22% of candidates applying to UN Peace Operations rosters are female. UN Peace Operations are still branded through the image of the "blue helmets" in uniform, with civilians and civilian women nearly invisible in the global media. The link between the UN's image and brand is closely linked to the Organization's ability to attract the best global talent. Indeed, there should be more coherence between public information and recruitment efforts, which should be coordinated to promote a **positive image of female civilians working in humanitarian and peace operations in the field**.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 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

This would be an integrated public information-recruitment drive building the image of 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 image should be of women at all levels working in secure and decent conditions and communicating (in their own voice) a sense that they are contributing to the establishment of peace and security, protection of civilians, and alleviating humanitarian suffering.[38] The effort would also focus on how the UN is an employer that supports families (flexible work arrangements applied to the field, benefits and entitlements) and work-life balance. The goal of this initiative would be to boost the number of qualified applicants to UN field mission positions and promote the United Nations as the leading employer in crisis countries.

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37. This was an approach previously used by some AFPs with success but was discontinued as a result of the harmonization of conditions of service in 2009.

38. A positive example of this is the recent DFS and ImpactPool site for the Global Call for Heads/ deputy Heads of mission at https://www.impactpool.org/campaigns/un/usg

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Once the elements of the system-wide strategy on gender parity are finalized and approved, each entity should develop or update their own strategy in line with the recommendations.

A full implementation plan of cross-system and Secretariat specific recommendations will be developed including responsible actors, time frames, and a delineation of policy changes that can be done internally in the immediate term and those that will require legislative change, as well as a plan for a communications strategy, institutional architecture and resource costings.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- On the basis of the system-wide strategy, all UN system should align or develop their specific gender strategies and implementation plans before December 2017. The plans should include specific targets, measures and resources allocated/required to reach the commonly set goals and reflect the core recommendations of the system wide strategy, including consistent implementation of special measures, accountability, and the creation of an enabling environment

- Each UN System entity should establish an internal oversight mechanism to monitor the progress of its departments/offices/missions, prescribe remedial action when necessary, and report performance semi-annually to the head of the entity. All progress should also be updated on the public website—which will in the first

stages be Secretariat specific and will be broadened to cover the common system (see "Targets")

• Reporting on implementation of the strategy and progress to targets will take place bi-annually through the Senior Management Group and CEB. For the Secretariat this will be complemented by quarterly reviews of progress in the Management Committee. Overall implementation and oversight will rest with the Senior Adviser on Policy, EOSG on behalf of the Secretary-General

The overall institutional architecture for implementation will need to be identified and put in place. In some cases this will require additional resources—for example for real-time analytic HR platforms in each entity, institutional changes such as minimum standards in missions, executive search functions, and policy changes in relation to family leave. Additional human resources will also be needed at key points in the institution. These elements should be costed and provisions made in the short-term with responsibility placed on entities to plan for these in regular budgets in the medium-term. Equally each entity should ensure that they have gender focal points appointed at a senior level, with clear and written terms of reference and an appropriate allocation of dedicated time and financial resources as well as training. DGACM for example has instituted that focal points be at D2 and D1 level in order to impact and partake in decision-making. Strategic

communications and messaging on the strategy, both internally and externally, will be vital to the success of the strategy.

NEXT STEPS

• 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

• For the secretariat, a Secretary General Bulletin should be drafted by Department of Management by December 2017 to cover the range of special measures, accountability elements, changes to policies within the Secretary General's purview and an audit should be undertaken by DM of existing policies that should be amended or updated, including for example the spouse employment STAI

• Support of Member States will be required to effect any legislative changes but also to be active partners in the initiative, fund the investment in systems and staffing that will be needed to implement the strategy, undertake outreach domestically, put forward names of women for senior

leadership positions, and support ongoing messaging in relation to the UN as a positive and inclusive working environment. In this respect the role of the Group of Friends of Gender Parity should be leveraged through a direct and regular relationship with EOSG. Innovative partnerships and healthy competition should also be encouraged— for example, all 127 members of the Group of Friends should be asked to detail parity numbers within their own missions and this should then be used for benchmarking and comparisons of UN against Member States to encourage both to achieve more

Changing the UN's culture towards a more enabling environment is a long-term process that will require leadership from all and measures to tackle 'institutional software'—attitudes, beliefs and behaviours within organizations. By focussing on what drives organizational culture, the UN can develop an inclusive work environment free of discrimination in any form, with the cumulative impact being a happier, healthier more effective and efficient workforce.

ANNEX 1 – SAMPLE ELEMENTS OF MINIMUM STANDARDS

Standards of conduct: Ethics, safety and prevention of harassment

- All staff members are made aware of and held accountable for following the standards of conduct for international civil service

- Policies for the prevention of harassment and abuse of authority, ethics, abuse of authority, administration of justice, conflict resolution and protection against retaliation are implemented in each entity

- Safe ways are available to staff members —especially in field duty stations—to confidentially report harassment, sexual harassment or abuse of authority without fear of retaliation

- Allegations of misconduct are followed up and/or investigated and their outcomes tracked

Family-friendly policies

- Each entity has a breastfeeding policy in place, including designated nursing zones with appropriate facilities

- Data is collected and reported on the number of use of maternity, paternity, adoption, and breast-feeding provisions with the highest level of disaggregation (sex, location, level, etc.)

- Decisions on staff mobility should be communicated at least 6 months prior to the move and moves scheduled for months following the completion of the school year or accommodate family needs otherwise as appropriate. As much as feasible, accommodate family considerations for international reassignments

Flexible work arrangements

- Data is collected and reported on the number of requests and approvals for FWAs with the highest level of disaggregation possible (sex, location, level, etc.)

- Periodic staff meetings by units are scheduled during common working hours and on working days of staff working part-time, with teleconference or other virtual means of collaboration actively promoted

- Equip all staff with means to work remotely (e.g. laptops, tablets, other technology solutions)

- Showcase senior managers role-modelling the use of and explicitly encourage the use of FWAs (eg, through system-wide and entity specific communication campaigns). Empower managers to optimally manage staff who work remotely as well as use other FWAs.

- Proactively encourage gender-responsive working practices

- Require gender-responsive and people-centred leadership and make it the norm for all management and leadership development interventions

- Consult with staff concerned before making assumptions regarding their preference for work-life balance. More deliberately consider female staff members for official travel, stretch assignments or hardship locations

- Institutionalize equal representation in panels, conferences and delegations and among speakers, and provide networking opportunities during working hours

- Integrate a gender perspective in all relevant learning and management/leadership development programmes and ensure 50/50 participation in all leadership /managerial learning programmes across the UN system