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**Advancement of women****Human resources management****Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat****Report of the Secretary-General****Contents**

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	1–6	5
II. Overview of current status .....	7–23	5
A. Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in the Secretariat .....	7–16	5
B. Appointments and promotions of staff in the Professional and higher categories in the Secretariat .....	17–21	6
C. Women in the General Service and related categories .....	22	7
D. Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in organizations of the United Nations system .....	23	7
III. Measures undertaken for the achievement of gender equality .....	24–51	7
A. Special measures for women .....	24–30	7
B. External circulation of posts at P-5 and above .....	31	8
C. Advocacy and outreach .....	32–37	8
D. Participating Agencies Mobility System (PAMS) .....	38–39	9

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\* A/53/150.

E.	Mission of the Focal Point for Women to peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia .....	40–43	9
F.	Gender sensitivity training and gender mainstreaming .....	44–47	10
G.	Counselling of women staff .....	48–49	11
H.	Women in the General Service and related categories .....	50	11
I.	Other matters .....	51	11
IV.	Conclusions .....	52–63	11

## Tables

1.	Gender distribution of all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and by grade, as of 30 June 1998 .....	14
2.	Gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff with appointments subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and by grade, as of 30 June 1998 .....	15
3.	Gender distribution of D-1 and higher-level staff with appointments subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat, by department and grade, as of 30 June 1998 .....	16
4.	Comparison between Professional and higher-level staff with appointments subject to geographical distribution and all Professional and higher-level staff in the United Nations Secretariat, by gender and grade, as at 30 June 1998 .....	17
5.	Comparison of the number and percentage of women with appointments subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat, as at 30 June 1988 and 30 June 1998 .....	18
6.	Gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff with appointments subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat, by region, as at 30 June 1998 ..	19
7.	Gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff appointed to the United Nations Secretariat between 1 July 1996 and 30 June 1998 .....	20
8.	Gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff promoted in the United Nations Secretariat between 1 July 1996 and 30 June 1998 .....	21

## Annexes

I.	Statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system: a commitment for action .....	22
II.	Gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff in the organizations of the United Nations system, as at 31 December 1996 .....	23

## Abbreviations

CICP	Centre for International Crime Prevention
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGAACS	Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DM	Department of Management
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
DPKO/FALD <sup>a</sup>	Department of Peace-keeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HC/CHR	United Nations High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights
INSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
INTERORG	Interorganizational bodies
	Joint Inspection Unit
	Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions
	International Computing Centre
	Information Systems Coordination Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCSS	Office of Central Support Services
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budgeting and Accounts
OSG	Office of the Secretary-General
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

<sup>a</sup> All staff with appointments of one year or more assigned to peacekeeping missions.

UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the United Nations Staff Pension Committee
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNOIP	United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission established by the Security Council pursuant to Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/96 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly reaffirmed the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Assembly also expressed concern that the representation of women at the D-1 level and above remained unacceptably low and called upon the Secretary-General to implement fully the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995–2000)<sup>1</sup> in order to achieve the goal of gender balance, especially at the D-1 level and above.

2. Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels was identified as a critical area of concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.<sup>2</sup> In support of the Platform for Action, the Administrative Committee on Coordination adopted a statement on gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system in March 1998 (ACC/1998/4). The statement, which is contained in annex I of the present report, is a commitment to action which squarely establishes gender equality as a strategic objective of the international community and of the organizations of the United Nations common system.

3. The International Civil Service Commission reviewed the status of women in the organizations of the common system at its forty-seventh session in the spring of 1998.<sup>3</sup> While the Commission noted that there had indeed been progress over the past 12 years in improving the representation of women in the organizations, the rate of progress had been too slow, the increase in women's representation averaging less than 1 percentage point per annum between 1984 and 1996. The Commission's findings echoed those contained in the Secretary-General's 1996 report on the composition of the Secretariat, which projected that at present rates and all other factors remaining unchanged, gender equality would not be reached in the Secretariat before 2006 in the Director category or before 2007 in the Professional category.<sup>4</sup>

4. In view of the slow rate of progress, concerted efforts and new initiatives are required to meet the goal of gender balance overall and at each level of the Professional and

higher categories by the year 2000. The establishment of clear lines of accountability for the achievement of this goal is a key aspect of the Secretary-General's strategy. In line with the Secretary-General's approach to the reform of the management of the Organization, heads of departments and offices will have primary responsibility and be accountable for the achievement of gender balance in their offices (see para. 29 below).

5. The present report is presented to the General Assembly pursuant to its request in resolution 52/96. It is divided into three sections. Section II contains an overview of the representation of women in the United Nations Secretariat. Section III reviews measures undertaken for the achievement of gender equality in the Secretariat. Section IV presents conclusions and strategies for improving the representation of women in the Secretariat.

6. In order to provide more comprehensive data to Member States, the statistical reports contained in section I have been expanded to include, in addition to staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution, all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more.

## II. Overview of current status

### A. Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in the Secretariat

7. Further to the General Assembly's decision to extend the target of 50/50 gender distribution in posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000 to all categories of posts, table 1 has been included to provide information on the gender distribution of all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more. This table includes staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution as well as staff with special language requirements and staff on appointments limited to service with a particular office, mission, fund or programme. The latter two groups of staff are not subject to the system of desirable ranges used as a guideline for estimating the comparative representation of the nationals of each Member State. Table 2 depicts the gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution only. Further information on the composition of the staff is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat.

8. As of 30 June 1998, the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution was 36.9 per cent, corresponding to 885 women out of 2,400 staff. The percentage of women on all appointments of one year or more was somewhat lower, 34.6 per cent, equivalent to 1,441 women out of 4,164 staff.

#### **Representation of women in departments and offices of the Secretariat**

9. In view of the General Assembly decision to extend the goal of 50/50 gender distribution to all categories of posts and not only to those subject to geographical distribution, it is appropriate to review the representation of women by department on the basis of table 1, which includes all staff with appointments of one year or more.

10. As of 30 June 1998, a critical mass of women had been achieved in the majority of departments, with two offices having surpassed the goal of gender balance overall (DM/OHRM and DPI). Women in the following eight offices,<sup>5</sup> however, still account for less than 30 per cent of all staff: UNEP, ESCWA, OCHA, ECE, CICP, UNCHS, UNCTAD, and ECA. The gender distribution of staff on geographical appointments by departments depicts a similar pattern (table 2). As indicated in table 3, the only offices to reach the 50-per-cent goal by 30 June 1998 at the D-1 level and above were DM/OHRM (five women to three men) and CICP (one woman and one man).

#### **Representation of women by grade in the Secretariat**

11. As depicted in table 4 and the accompanying graph, the representation of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution at each grade level, with the exception of the level of Under-Secretary-General, is greater than the corresponding percentages of women in the larger population of staff with appointments of one year or more. The statistics for both groups show, however, that gender balance is almost met at the P-2 level but remains elusive at the higher grades. In addition, the largest number of women is found at the P-3 level, whereas the highest concentration of men is at the P-4 level.

12. While women remain concentrated at the lower grades, notable progress has been made in improving the representation of women at the P-5 to D-2 levels, as illustrated in table 5 and the accompanying graph. At the P-5 level, for example, the number of women on geographical appointments increased from 59 in June 1988 to 139 in June 1998, a 18.9 percentage point increase during the period. At the D-1 level, the number of women on appointments subject

to geographical distribution increased from 19 to 60 during the same period, an increase of 20.1 percentage points.

13. Since the submission of the Secretary-General's last report on the improvement of the status of women, the number of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution at the D-1 level and above has increased significantly, from 62 to 79. This corresponds to a notable increase in women's representation at those levels, from 20.1 per cent in June 1997 to 25.2 per cent in June 1998.

#### **Representation of women by region in the Secretariat**

14. Table 6 and the accompanying graph depict the representation of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution by region. Of a total of 885 women staff on geographical appointments, the largest numbers continue to originate from two regions, North America and the Caribbean (253 staff) and Western Europe (207 staff). This data is consistent with the trend in the United Nations system. In the Secretariat, women from those regions also account for the highest proportion of women staff compared to men. Compared to the total population of women, Eastern Europe (35 staff) and the Middle East (36 staff) have the lowest numbers of women. Eastern Europe has the lowest representation of women compared to men (14.2 per cent) followed by Africa (23.1 per cent).

#### **Representation of women on posts with special language requirements**

15. With respect to the gender distribution of staff with special language requirements, the percentage of women has increased slightly, from 36.1 per cent (317 staff) in June 1997 to 37.0 per cent (318 staff) in June 1998.

#### **Representation of women on project posts**

16. As of 30 June 1998, the percentage of women on project posts was 26.6 per cent (195 female staff), as compared to 23.3 per cent (177 female staff) in June 1997.

### **B. Appointments and promotions of staff in the Professional and higher categories in the Secretariat**

17. Table 7 and the accompanying graph depict the number of women and men appointed during the past two years at the P-2 through the D-1 levels through national competitive examinations, language examinations, and through the appointment and promotion bodies. Table 8 and the

accompanying graph show the number of women promoted during the past two years at the P-3 to the D-1 levels.

18. Since June 1997, five men and eight women (61.5 per cent) were promoted from the General Service category to the P-2 level through the G-P competitive examination.

19. As depicted in table 7, there was an increase in the percentage of women appointed during the period 1 July 1997–30 June 1998 (43.9 per cent), compared to the previous year (41.0 per cent). However, when appointments made through the national competitive and language examinations are excluded, the percentage of women appointed shows a significant decline, from 42.5 per cent to 37.9 per cent. This is of particular note at the P-5 and D-1 levels. Similarly, although the number of staff promoted increased from 144 to 265, the proportion of women promoted declined slightly, from 47.9 per cent to 46.0 per cent. At the D-1 level, however, the percentage of women promoted increased significantly, from 31.3 per cent to 56.0 per cent.

20. It is important to note that the small number of appointments each year as compared to the size of the population limits opportunities for improving the overall representation of women in the Secretariat. The above data reveal that priority must be given to the development of an integrated recruitment plan for women which would take into account the anticipated staffing needs of individual departments and offices as well as the impact of those needs on the staffing of the Organization as a whole.

21. The decline from June 1997 to June 1998 in the percentages of women promoted to the P-5 level (from 56.8 per cent to 35.6 per cent) and appointed at the P-5 level (from 55.6 per cent to 31.6 per cent) is of especial concern. This grade level will, therefore, be given particular attention to ensure that sufficient qualified internal and external women candidates are identified and considered for vacant P-5 positions.

### **C. Women in the General Service and related categories**

22. The majority of staff in the General Service and related categories are women (4,162 women as compared to 3,539 men). However, while women comprise 56.7 per cent of the General Service category, women are under-represented in both the Security and Trades and Crafts categories, where they account for 4.5 per cent and 3.2 per cent of staff, respectively.

### **D. Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in organizations of the United Nations system**

23. Pursuant to the General Assembly's request in resolution 52/96, statistics on the gender distribution of professional and higher level staff in all organizations of the United Nations common system, as at 31 December 1996, are provided in annex II. The statistics were derived from the statistical tables issued annually by the secretariat of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ).<sup>6</sup> Further information on the status of women in the organizations of the common system is contained in the recent report on the subject issued by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).<sup>3</sup>

## **III. Measures undertaken for the achievement of gender equality**

### **A. Special measures for women**

24. In implementing the General Assembly mandates on the status of women in the Secretariat, the Secretary-General instituted a series of special measures applicable to the recruitment, promotion and placement of women. Those measures, which are aimed at the achievement of the goal of 50/50 gender distribution in the Secretariat, will remain in effect until the Secretary-General is satisfied that substantial progress towards the goal of gender balance has been made.

25. In order to further strengthen the applicability of the special measures for the achievement of gender equality in the Secretariat, a working group, chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, reviewed and revised the special measures for the achievement of gender equality contained in administrative instruction ST/AI/412. The revised administration instruction clarifies and strengthens the provisions of the special measures and includes enhanced mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of those measures, including systems for ensuring the accountability of managers.

26. The special measures governing the selection and placement of women candidates apply throughout the Secretariat for the filling of all vacant posts at the Professional level and above in every department and office that has not met the goal of 50/50 gender distribution overall and at each grade level.

27. The guidelines governing the review and selection of women candidates when their qualifications are substantially equal to or superior to competing male candidates have been tightened to specify that the comparison of the candidates' qualifications and experience must be based on the core requirements of the vacant post and not on the basis of secondary considerations. In recommending the selection of male candidates to posts in departments and offices which have not reached the goal of gender balance, programme managers must also document how the qualifications and experience of the recommended candidate are clearly superior to those of the female candidates who were not recommended. In order to improve career development opportunities for women, those guidelines also apply in the review and selection of women staff members for temporary assignment to higher-level posts.

28. As some concern has been expressed that men are not treated equally, it is important to emphasize that both men and women are given the fullest consideration under Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that the paramount consideration in the selection of staff will be competence, integrity and efficiency. As depicted in paragraphs 19-21 and in tables 7 and 8, more men than women have been appointed and promoted during the past two years. In several departments and duty stations, men still account for more than 60 per cent of the staff.

29. Under the special measures, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) will assist departments and offices in identifying qualified women candidates and will ensure that qualified women are included in the pool of candidates for vacant posts. The Office will also monitor the representation of women by occupation and identify and develop recruitment sources to expand the pool of women candidates for posts in occupations in which women are under-represented. Where required, the Office of Human Resources Management, in consultation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, will establish occupational targets for the recruitment, placement and promotion of women.

30. In line with the Secretary-General's strategy for the reform of the management of the Organization, heads of departments and offices will have primary responsibility and be accountable for the implementation of the special measures. Under the new special measures, heads of departments and offices will develop action plans with specific targets to achieve the goal of gender balance in their departments, including posts at the D-1 level and above. The plans will include an assessment of gender distribution within individual offices at all levels and the evaluations of programme managers on the factors that have contributed to

or impeded efforts to achieve gender balance in their departments. Implementation of the action plans, including full application of the special measures for women, will be monitored and evaluated by the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and reported to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General will hold each head of department accountable for the achievement of the action plan in his or her department.

## **B. External circulation of posts at P-5 and above**

31. There are two principal means for achieving the goal of gender balance. One is the recruitment of women; the other is the placement and promotion of women. While increases in the rate of promotion and placement of women improve grade distribution, the goal of 50/50 gender distribution overall can be met only through recruitment. In order to expand opportunities for the recruitment of women and to improve the geographical representation of all staff in the Secretariat, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management decided in February 1998 to require the external circulation of all vacant posts at the P-5 to D-2 levels, with the exception of P-5 language posts.<sup>7</sup> This is a welcome initiative which will expand the pool of women candidates for selection to senior and higher-level policy-making posts. It should be noted that, in accordance with staff regulation 4.4 and subject to the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, the fullest regard shall be paid, in filling vacancies, to the requisite qualifications and experience of persons already in the service of the United Nations.

## **C. Advocacy and outreach**

32. The goal of gender equality signifies not only the achievement of gender balance in staffing but also the establishment of a supportive working environment, free from harassment and conducive to the full and equal participation of women and men in the work of the Organization. One of the major functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is to increase awareness of and support for initiatives to achieve both gender balance and a gender-sensitive work environment.

33. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Focal Point for Women have undertaken a number of official visits to offices away from Headquarters, such as the United



Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna, ESCAP, ECLAC, and peacekeeping missions, to obtain first-hand information from staff and administration about the actual situation on the ground, to review progress towards gender balance, to assess conditions of service affecting women staff in those regions, and to brief managers and staff on measures for promoting gender balance and gender equality in the Secretariat.

34. The quarterly newsletter, *Network*, published by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, serves as a forum for the dissemination and exchange of information on gender issues. It provides regular updates on gender statistics, recent resolutions, administrative instructions, and other policies and issues concerning gender. In addition, the newsletter includes articles on subjects such as career management, networking, women in peacekeeping and mentoring. The newsletter is available both in hard copy and in electronic format. It is distributed widely to staff in the Secretariat, other organizations of the common system, and permanent missions.

35. The Focal Point for Women is a member of ORIGIN, a network of senior human resource management and gender specialists within and outside the United Nations system. The network provides a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences on gender issues of common concern. It is also used to circulate vacancy announcements and to identify qualified women for senior positions in participating organizations. At their annual meeting in July 1998, the members of ORIGIN agreed that the network would identify best human resource management practices within individual organizations for common review and consideration.

36. The website WomenWatch (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>), launched by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW, highlights selected vacancy announcements in the United Nations Secretariat and provides links to the websites containing information on all external vacancies maintained by the Secretariat and other organizations of the common system. Since WomenWatch is designed to provide up-to-date information on the work of the United Nations on behalf of women, and since it will eventually offer a gateway to information on global women's issues throughout the United Nations system, it is considered a very effective means of reaching a broad and targeted audience.

37. The Secretariat, in cooperation with UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, the Staff Committee and the Group on Equal Rights for Women, organized the third annual celebration of Take Our Daughters to Work Day on 23 April

1998. The theme of the Day, following the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was "Imagine a day in which all girls have their rights". The more than 800 girls who participated in the event had an opportunity to interact with prominent women role models, including women ambassadors, renowned women in public affairs and United Nations staff members. They were also introduced to the substantive work programmes of the United Nations and to the working environment of an international and multicultural organization.

#### **D. Participating Agencies Mobility System (PAMS)**

38. The Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), together with the Information Systems Coordinating Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, are in the process of developing a database, known as the Participating Agencies Mobility System (PAMS), to facilitate the inter-agency mobility of staff. The system, which is designed to encourage the mobility of women in particular, will allow interested staff members of the common system organizations to enter their curriculum vitae into a database from which personnel officers of participating organizations will be able to search for candidates meeting their needs. It will also facilitate the employment of spouses and significant others, since the resumes of those individuals may also be entered in the database.

39. The first phase of the project, which will allow staff members to complete and submit an electronic resume form to organizations of their choice, is in the final stages of software development. The objective of the second phase will be to establish a searchable data bank of resumes that can be accessed by the recruitment staff of participating organizations. If, as envisaged, the United Nations system and other international organizations join the initiative, the result would be the establishment of an international, inter-agency roster of candidates.

#### **E. Mission of the Focal Point for Women to peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia**

40. At the invitation of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the Focal Point for Women undertook an official visit in June 1998 to the peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia. The purpose of the visit was to assess first-hand the special situation of women in peacekeeping operations, to identify issues of particular concern, and to review

opportunities for improving gender balance. The Focal Point met with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, military and civilian staff, managers and the staff at large to brief them on the Organization's policy on gender equality and gender balance and to elicit their ideas on measures that could be taken to create a more gender-sensitive working environment in peacekeeping operations.

41. Upon her return, the Focal Point for Women met with the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and his senior staff to review findings from the mission and to discuss proposals and initiatives for improving the situation of women in peacekeeping operations. Since peacekeeping operations are multidisciplinary and involve direct interaction with numerous elements of civil society, it was recognized that the different perspectives and life experiences of women brought a new dimension and dynamic to the peacemaking and peace-building process. Accordingly, it was agreed that improving the representation of women at all levels and in all occupations would have a positive impact on both peacekeeping operations and mission working conditions. The low representation of women at the senior and decision-making levels was identified as a particular area of concern. It was agreed that the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women would assist and support the Department of Peace-keeping Operations in its continuing efforts to identify qualified women for mission assignments, including those at senior decision-making levels.

42. Further to the mission of the Focal Point, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations is reviewing the training programme for mission staff to ensure that all personnel assigned to missions are sensitized to gender issues and aware of the Organization's goals and policies on gender equality. The Department will also seek the advice and cooperation of Member States with the goal of establishing common approaches to gender-sensitivity training.

43. In June 1998, the Special Adviser and the Focal Point for Women, after her return from the former Yugoslavia, participated in a very useful seminar on a gender perspective of child protection and rights in the context of international peacekeeping, organized by UNICEF.

## **F. Gender sensitivity training and gender mainstreaming**

44. Gender awareness training has been incorporated into staff development programmes on leadership, management, and administration. In the training courses, gender issues are examined, through the use of case studies and focused

discussion groups, with the aim of raising participants' awareness of assumptions and perceptions regarding gender and how they affect the workplace. In addition to the courses, which deal with broad management issues, a training programme on valuing diversity, which addressed gender concerns, *inter alia*, was delivered to 188 staff of the Security and Safety Service in November and December 1997.

45. Gender mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace were the focus of a series of workshops in May 1998 for 168 staff of the Department of Political Affairs. The workshops were designed to engage all levels of management and staff in a discussion of possible changes which would bring fuller expression of a gender perspective to the work of the Department and its management practices. Participants examined best practices regarding gender and made recommendations for furthering a gender perspective. Following the workshop, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs established a departmental management advisory group, composed of a cross-section of staff, balanced for grade and gender, to advise him on gender and management issues.

46. The Economic Commission for Africa launched a programme on gender-sensitivity training and gender mainstreaming in November 1997. The training, which was attended by 79 staff at the Professional and Director levels, focused on developing gender awareness, understanding the gender mainstreaming concept, and applying gender analysis to a review of programmes and projects in different sectors. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific also organized gender sensitivity training for 40 Professional staff members in June 1998. At the United Nations Office at Vienna, a gender training programme will be offered to approximately 200 staff starting in November 1998.

47. Training programmes on gender mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace will be organized for other departments and offices. Each programme will be tailored to meet the unique needs of the individual departments and offices, incorporating lessons learned from the initial programme undertaken by the Department of Political Affairs.

## **G. Counselling of women staff**

48. An important function of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is to provide advice and assistance to women staff members on contractual and career development issues and matters pertaining to the work environment. Since 1996, more than 200 women, from a variety of departments and duty stations,

have contacted the Focal Point for Women and the Special Adviser for guidance and counselling.

49. The matters brought to the attention of the Office of the Special Adviser can be classified as follows: appointments and promotions under the special measures for women; transfers between duty stations for family reasons; harassment in the workplace; sexual harassment; placements under the staff redeployment programme; delays in the appeals process. A number of cases have been successfully resolved by the Office of the Special Adviser, in collaboration with the Office of the Human Resources Management and the departments concerned.

## **H. Women in the General Service and related categories**

50. The staff in the General Service and related categories, the majority of whom are women, make a significant contribution to the work and functioning of the Organization. Their contribution, however, is not always fully recognized nor are their talents fully utilized. For instance, opportunities for movement to the Professional category are limited by the number of posts set aside for the G-P examination. Moreover, there is a notable lack of mobility of General Service staff between departments: out of a total of 168 General Service staff who were promoted between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998, only four moved between departments and offices. Measures should, therefore, be introduced to facilitate the movement of staff between jobs and across occupations and departments. Heads of departments should take the lead in facilitating training and career development for staff in these categories, by such means as managed rotation between posts and assignments, movement within and between occupations, and the acquisition of skills in different areas.

## **I. Other matters**

51. Developments concerning work and family-life issues, the improvement of the gender component in the performance appraisal system, the institution of a skills inventory of staff, and the status of the United Nations harassment survey are addressed in the Secretary-General's reports to the General Assembly on human resource management.

## **IV. Conclusions**

52. Since the submission of the Secretary-General's last report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/52/408), significant progress has been made in improving the representation of women at the D-1 level and above. While the progress at the highest levels is encouraging, the incremental pace at which women's overall representation has increased is cause for concern. In large part, the small increase in the proportion of women to men in the Professional and higher categories is due to low staff turnover: the relatively small number of appointments each year, compared to the size of the population, limits opportunities for realizing significant increases in the representation of women.

53. As indicated in section II of the report, strategies are in place to support the goal of gender equality in the Secretariat. Experience has shown, however, that managerial commitment and accountability are key to the successful implementation of measures to improve gender balance. This is particularly true in an organizational setting where appointment and promotion opportunities are few. In such a climate, progress hinges upon careful and targeted planning.

54. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is currently analysing the representation of women overall and by grade and occupation in each department and office. On the basis of these analyses, the Secretary-General will request programme managers to develop action plans with specific targets to achieve the goal of gender balance in their departments. These plans will be tailored to the staffing requirements of individual offices, taking into account projected vacancies through the year 2000, including retirements by gender, and the availability of qualified women for inclusion in candidate pools. Each plan will measure the gap between women's current representation and the numbers required to reach the goal of gender equality. Since opportunities for improving the representation of women vary among departments, specific targets for the appointment of women will be established for each office. The targets, in turn, will be reviewed and refined in light of their impact on the staffing of the Secretariat as a whole.

55. A sample gender action plan has been developed to illustrate different strategies that might be envisaged to improve the representation of women. The plan is based on the staffing structure of a department which, while hypothetical, displays many characteristics typical of departments and offices within the Secretariat. The sample department is a small organization devoted to the review and analysis of social developments in certain sectors. A total of 109 posts have been approved for the 1998–1999 programme budget. Of the 109 posts, 10 are currently vacant, and 6 are

authorized only from 1 January 1999. Women and men encumber 26 and 67 of the remaining 93 posts (28 per cent women). In addition to the 16 vacant positions currently on the staffing table, another 10 posts will be vacated due to staff retirements by the year 2000. Of the 10, only 1 is encumbered by a woman.

56. Based upon the above staffing profile, the following scenarios have been developed to illustrate the impact of different recruitment and promotion targets on the representation of women. One scenario assumes that 50 per cent of the 26 vacancies projected through the year 2000 will be filled by women. Under this scenario, the percentage of women in the department would increase from 28 per cent to 35 per cent. Were all of the vacancies filled by women, women's representation would increase to 47 per cent, still 3 percentage points under the goal of gender equality. While these scenarios are useful in identifying opportunities and limits for improving the overall representation of women in a department, factors such as the distribution of staff by gender, grade, and occupation must be taken into account in the establishment of realistic and concrete departmental plans for improving gender balance.

57. As indicated in section I of this report, women remain concentrated at the lower levels of the Professional category, with the majority of women at the P-3 level. While there will normally be a sufficient pool of women qualified for promotion to the P-3 level, the pool of qualified women diminishes in size with each succeeding grade due to the lower representation of women at those levels and accompanying variations in their representation by occupational group. In the case of the sample department, the majority of vacancies are at the P-4 level and above, in occupations in which women are under-represented. Moreover, a number of the women who would otherwise be eligible for promotion to the P-5 and D-1 vacancies were only recently promoted to their present grades, thus further limiting the pool of eligible internal women candidates.

58. In light of the gender distribution of staff by grade and occupation in the sample department, a number of strategies could be pursued to improve gender balance. They would include evaluating, in advance, the potential candidacies of women from within the department against the qualifications, competencies, and skills required for the upcoming vacancies. Gaps in the substantive or managerial backgrounds of eligible women candidates could then be addressed through targeted training programmes, the redesign of work plans to broaden women's skills and experience, or the rotation of women between jobs and organizational units. In order to expand the pool of women candidates, efforts could also be made to identify qualified women from other departments and offices

of the Secretariat and from other organizations of the United Nations system. Executive searches, in turn, could be conducted to identify external women candidates.

59. Since women in the sample department are under-represented in the principal occupations pertaining to the department's work programme, occupational targets could also be established. External circulation of posts at the P-4 level could, in turn, be authorized to meet those targets in cases where there is an insufficient number of internal women candidates at the P-3 level.

60. In order to maximize opportunities for improving the representation of women overall in the Secretariat, departments and offices must endeavour to increase the rate of women's recruitment and promotion to over 50 per cent of all vacancies. As the statistics for the year 1 July 1997–30 June 1998 bear out, appointment and promotion percentages in the range of 41–46 per cent do not have a significant impact on the improvement of women's representation overall in the Secretariat. Accordingly, the Secretary-General will request department heads, in their gender action plans, to set specific targets for the appointment and promotion of women which will be above 50 per cent until the target is reached.

61. In view of the current age and gender distribution of the staff population, more men than women will be reaching retirement age in 1998 and the years ahead. Nearly 400 staff members, the majority of whom are men, will retire by 31 December 2000. Those retirements will provide much needed opportunities for the improvement of women's representation in the Secretariat, particularly at senior levels. The increase in the retirement turnover rate illustrates the need for proactive human resource planning, elements of which will be reflected in the departmental gender action plans.

62. In addition to the development and implementation of gender actions plans, existing strategies for the achievement of the goal of gender equality will be pursued. They include the full application and monitoring of the revised special measures for women, continued publicity, advocacy and outreach efforts to promote awareness of gender issues and means for achieving gender equality, and the expansion of training opportunities in the areas of gender sensitivity and mainstreaming, as described in section II of this report. Work/family initiatives will continue to be reviewed, within the framework of the reform of human resource management, with the aim of improving conditions of employment, thereby increasing the Secretariat's ability to attract and retain staff.

63. The Secretary-General is committed to achieving the goal of gender balance in the Secretariat and will hold all managers accountable for the achievement of the gender equality goals set forth in the statement of the Administrative

Committee on coordination on gender equality and mainstreaming gender in the work of the United Nations system. The commitment and active support of Member States is also vital. There are still too few opportunities, for women and men, on equal terms, to represent Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations. Therefore, the Secretary-General would be greatly assisted in his work if Member States would propose more women candidates, from a broader array of occupations, for appointment to intergovernmental and expert bodies and to positions within the Secretariat.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> A/49/587 and Corr.1, sect. IV.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>3</sup> ICSC/47/CRP.6/Add.11.

<sup>4</sup> A/52/580, para. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding DPKO/FALD and INTERORG. The former includes all staff with appointments of one year or more assigned to peacekeeping missions. Interorganizational bodies are: Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), International Computing Centre (ICC) and Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC).

<sup>6</sup> ACC/1998/PER/R.9.

<sup>7</sup> Since language posts are filled exclusively by staff who have passed the competitive language examinations, external circulation of these posts is impractical.



## Annex I

### **Statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system: a commitment for action <sup>a</sup>**

1. The Charter of the United Nations affirms "... faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women ..."
2. We reiterate our commitment to working with all members of the international community to uphold these principles of the Charter by promoting gender equality.
3. We are firmly convinced that the overriding United Nations goals of peace, sustainable development and human rights cannot be achieved without the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination. The United Nations system is uniquely placed to bring about change and provides a platform for the effective realization of gender equality.

<sup>a</sup> ACC/1998/4.

4. Gender equality is a major strategic objective of the international community. The global United Nations conferences, in particular those on women held in Nairobi and Beijing, have set out a comprehensive global agenda for achieving that goal.

5. We commit ourselves to giving strong support to national, regional and international efforts to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and other global agreements.

6. The United Nations system has, to date, made considerable progress in advancing the status of women and their human rights. We are determined to accelerate that progress, and we pledge to mainstream a gender perspective in all of our institutions, policies and programmes by implementing the specific recommendations on gender mainstreaming elaborated by the Economic and Social Council in 1997 in its Agreed Conclusions.

7. We are committed to ensure that institutional culture is both gender-sensitive and gender-responsive and that our staff policies, programme budgets and resource allocations reflect our commitment to goals of gender equality.

