

**General Assembly**

Distr.: General
27 September 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session

Agenda items 109 and 164

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

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Abbreviations

DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DM	Department of Management
DM/OCSS	Department of Management/Office of Central Support Services
DM/OHRM	Department of Management/Office of Human Resources Management
DM/OPPBA	Department of Management/Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts
DGAACS	Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPKO/FALD*	Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Pacific
ESCAP	Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
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
ODCCP	Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OSG	Office of the Secretary-General
OSRSGCAC	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
REGCOM	Regional Commissions Liaison Office
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

* All staff with appointments of one year or more assigned to peacekeeping and other special missions.

UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
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 53/119 of 9 December 1998 on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, including by providing statistics on the number and percentage of women in all organizational units and at all levels throughout the United Nations system, to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. In the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at the D-1 level and above, 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 continuing lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

2. The Assembly welcomed the ongoing personal commitment of the Secretary-General to meeting the goal of gender equality and his assurance that gender balance would be given the highest priority in his continuing efforts to bring about a new management culture in the Organization, which would include full implementation of the special measures for women outlined in his report to the General Assembly (A/53/376). The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that heads of departments and offices developed gender action plans that established concrete strategies for the achievement of gender balance in individual departments and offices, so as to ensure, as far as possible, that the appointment and promotion of women would not be less than 50 per cent until the goal of 50/50 gender distribution was met.

3. The General Assembly, in section X of its resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999, noted with concern the imbalance in the representation of women from different regions, and requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate remedial action when pursuing the goal of 50/50 gender distribution. The Assembly also noted that the rate of progress in improving the representation of women from developing countries, particularly at the senior level, had been very slow, and urged the Secretary-General to make greater efforts to redress the situation in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The General Assembly decided that the objective of 50/50 gender distribution by 2000 should be pursued in compliance with the provisions of Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter and staff

regulation 4.3 in order to ensure equal opportunities for qualified women and men in recruitment and promotion.

4. The General Assembly first formally recognized the importance of the status of women in the Organization by the adoption of resolution 2715 (XXV) of 15 December 1970 on the issue. In the resolution, the General Assembly urged the United Nations and its system of organizations to take appropriate measures to ensure equal opportunities for the employment of qualified women in senior and other professional positions, and expressed the hope that the United Nations system would set an example in that regard. Although the earliest request for a report on the nature of posts encumbered by women in the Secretariat was made by the Commission on the Status of Women in April 1949, statistics on the gender distribution of staff in the Professional and higher categories were reported for the first time to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session in 1971 (A/8483). Of the total of 2,250 Professional and higher level staff on geographical appointments in 1971, only 382 (16.9 per cent) were women. Over the following three decades, additional resolutions on the status of women in the Organization were adopted by various intergovernmental bodies and four world conferences on women.

5. Since 1970, significant progress has been made in improving conditions of service for women, through the elimination of provisions from the Staff Rules which discriminated between staff members on the basis of gender; issuance of Secretary-General's bulletins setting out the policies of the Organization on the equal treatment of men and women; modification of terminology to include gender neutral and bias free language in official documents; introduction of gender-sensitivity training; development of guidelines for addressing sexual harassment; introduction of a family leave programme; and the institution of special measures governing the recruitment, placement and promotion of women. While improvements in the organizational climate are less easy to gauge, attitudinal change has taken place, thereby improving the working environment for all staff, men and women. This change is evident in the notable increase of women in senior and decision-making posts, including the second highest post in the Organization, the regular inclusion of women in advisory boards and committees, and the presence of women in occupational areas where, historically, they were unrepresented. Over this period, the face of the Organization has changed: the presence of women in highly sensitive, technical and visible positions, such as directors of divisions, chiefs of information centres, and heads of peacekeeping missions, is no longer controversial. Equally significant, the different perspectives that women bring to the substantive

work and management of the Organization are increasingly recognized and valued.

6. While visible progress has been made in improving the representation of women at the senior and policy-making levels, progress in improving women's representation overall in the Professional and higher categories has been slow. Although the goal of 50/50 gender distribution has been very useful in keeping up the momentum, the target will not be met by 2000. The report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/54/279) projects that gender balance will not be achieved in the Professional and higher categories before 2012. Although low staff turnover, recruitment freezes and the downsizing of the Organization have had a major impact on its ability to meet the goals set by the General Assembly, other factors include the lack of specific targets for improving women's representation in individual departments and offices, the generally lower number of women applicants for posts, and the absence of effective tools for monitoring managers' performance in meeting gender equality goals. These issues are presently being addressed within the framework of the action plans on human resources management jointly developed by the Office of Human Resources Management and the heads of departments and offices.

7. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its request in resolution 53/119. Following the introduction, the report is divided into three sections. Section II contains an overview of the representation of women in the United Nations Secretariat; section III reviews developments since the submission of the last report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly; and section IV presents conclusions and strategies for improving the representation of women in the Secretariat in the year ahead.

II. Overview of current status

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

8. The gender distribution of all staff in the Professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more is provided in table 1. The table includes staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution, 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. The gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff in the smaller population of staff on geographical appointments is provided in table 2. Further information on the composition of the staff is contained in the above-mentioned annual report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat.

9. Since 30 June 1998, the increase in the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution has been small, rising from 36.9 to 38.1 per cent. Table 3 shows that there were 919 women out of a total of 2,410 staff on geographical appointments as of 30 June 1999, compared to 885 women out of a total of 2,400 staff on geographical appointments on 30 June 1998. The increase in women's representation from June 1998 to June 1999, while not remarkable, is consistent with the 1 per cent annual rate at which women's representation has increased since 1989. Despite this trend, considerable progress has been made in improving women's representation at the P-5 level and above, as illustrated in table 5 and the accompanying graph. At the D-1 level, for example, the number of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution increased from 15 in June 1989 to 71 in June 1999, an increase of 27.9 percentage points. Since 30 June 1998, the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution at the D-1 level and above has increased from 25.2 to 29.1 per cent.

10. In the larger population of staff on appointments of one year or more, the number of women increased from 1,441 in June 1998 to 1,542 on 30 June 1999. Table 4 shows that the percentage of women with appointments of one year or more was 35.8 per cent as at 30 June 1999, compared to 34.6 per cent as at 30 June 1998. The largest percentage increase in the representation of women with appointments of one year or more has been at the D-1 level. The number of women at that level increased from 65 in June 1998 to 76 in June 1999, corresponding to an increase in women's representation at the D-1 level from 23.7 to 28.1 per cent. During this period, the percentage of women at the D-1 level and above on appointments of one year or more increased from 21.2 to 24.4 per cent.

11. The goal of 50/50 gender distribution has nearly been met at the P-2 level. Since June 1998, the percentage of women at that level has increased from 45.4 to 48.2 per cent. The percentage increase in women's representation at the P-3 to P-5 levels, however, has been very small, ranging from 0.1 per cent at the P-3 level to 1.4 per cent at the P-4 level. Compared to June 1998, the largest number of women continue to be found at the P-3 level, whereas the highest concentration of men is at the P-4 level.

12. The gender composition of staff with appointments of one year or more by department and office is provided in table 1. Since the submission of the last report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the improvement of the status of women, the goal of gender balance has been met in one additional office with 20 or more personnel (the Department of Management).¹ The Office of Human Resources Management continues to surpass the goal of 50/50 gender distribution. Women's representation in the Department of Public Information, however, has declined from 51.2 to 49.8 per cent. Although a critical mass of women has been achieved in the majority of departments and offices, women in the following nine departments or offices² still account for less than 30 per cent of all staff: the Department of Management/Office of Central Support Services, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme. The only office to have reached the goal of gender balance in the staffing of posts at the D-1 level and above is the Department of Management/Office of Human Resources Management. Of those departments and offices with more than 20 staff at the senior and policy-making levels, the departments which have achieved a critical mass of women at those levels, as of 30 June 1999, are the Department of Political Affairs (40 per cent), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (30 per cent) and the Department of Public Information (34.8 per cent). UNEP, which has 34 staff at the D-1 level and above, has the lowest representation of women (4) at those levels (11.8 per cent).

13. In resolution 53/221, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to discontinue the established practice of showing the representation of staff according to major geographical groupings and to list countries in alphabetical order. Information on the representation of Member States in the staff of the Secretariat by nationality, grade and gender is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat.

14. With respect to the gender distribution of staff with special language requirements, the percentage of women increased from 37.0 per cent (318 staff) in June 1998 to 38.1 per cent (322 staff) in June 1999. While the net increase in the number of women on language posts is marginal, women's representation at the P-5 level increased from 35.8 to 40.2 per cent (53 women, compared to 79 men).

15. As of 30 June 1999, the percentage of women on project posts was 28.2 (214 female staff), as compared to 26.6 per cent (195 female staff) in June 1998. While the number of women at the L-2 level (116 women) exceeds 50 per cent (54.2 per cent), the representation of women at the higher levels is significantly lower. Women at the L-4 level account for only 13.7 per cent (16 women) of the staff at that level (117 staff). At the L-5 level, the percentage of women is only 8.7 per cent (16 women out of a total of 183 staff).

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

16. Table 6 and the accompanying graph show the number of women and men appointed during the past two years at the P-1 to the Under-Secretary-General levels, including through the national competitive and language examinations. Table 7 and the accompanying graph show the number of women and men promoted during the past two years at the P-1 through the Under-Secretary-General level, including through the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories (G to P).

17. Since June 1998, 25 of the 47 staff members (53.2 per cent) recruited through the national competitive examinations and 11 of the 18 staff members recruited through the language examinations (61.1 per cent) were women. During the same period, 8 women (61.5 per cent) and 5 men were promoted from the General Service category to the P-2 level through the G to P examination.

18. There was a marginal increase in the percentage of women appointed during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 (40.1 per cent), compared to the previous year (39.3 per cent), as shown in table 6. This is 10 percentage points lower than the goal of 50 per cent requested by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (see para. 2 above). The decline in the percentage of women appointed at the P-3 and P-4 levels is attributable to the large number of men recruited at those levels in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, following the establishment in the 1998-1999 support account budget of 48 additional Professional and higher-level posts to replace gratis personnel (see A/53/847). Since June 1998, 18 of the 21 staff members recruited at the P-3 level for that department were men. At the P-4 level, of the 18 staff members appointed to the department during the period under review, 17 were men. This higher number is owing, in large part, to the fact that 18 of the 48 posts approved by the General Assembly were filled by the recruitment of active military or civilian police officers

on secondment from government service. When the appointments of staff at the P-3 and P-4 levels in the department are excluded from the total number of appointments made in the Professional and higher categories during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, the percentage of women appointed shows a significant increase from 40.1 to 45.1 per cent.

19. The percentage of women promoted during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 was 45.5 per cent, compared to 42.8 per cent the previous year. While the overall percentage of women promoted falls short of the goal of 50 per cent, there has been a notable increase in the number and percentage of women promoted to the P-5 level. As indicated in table 7, a total of 35 women (43.2 per cent) were promoted to the P-5 level during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, compared to 17 women (29.3 per cent) in the preceding year. In addition, at the D-1 level, the promotion rate for women surpassed 50 per cent (53.8 per cent). Although the appointment rate for women at the D-2 level has exceeded 50 per cent in the last two years, the decline in the already low percentage of women promoted to the D-2 level from 28.6 to zero per cent during the period under review is cause for concern. The Secretary-General will therefore request heads of departments and offices to pay special attention to the career prospects of women at the D-1 level when considering candidates for vacant D-2 positions.

20. With respect to interdepartmental movement of staff, 21 (53.8 per cent) of the 39 cases of lateral transfer of staff reviewed by the appointment and promotion bodies were women. Of the 316 promotion cases reviewed by the appointment and promotion bodies, 33 (10.4 per cent) entailed the transfer of staff between departments and offices, while the remaining 283 cases involved the promotion of staff within departments. Women accounted for 15 (45.5 per cent) of the 33 promotion cases requiring the movement of staff between departments and offices. Of the 72 cases involving the movement of staff between departments, 44 entailed a change of duty station. Of these, 21 cases pertained to women (47.7 per cent). These data suggest that, while the mobility of staff, both women and men, across departments and offices in the Secretariat is low, women are just as willing to move as men when deciding to seek career advancement or new assignments. In order to address the issue of low mobility of staff, priority has been assigned, in the reform of the human resources management system, to establishing means to achieve greater mobility of staff across functions, occupations, departments, duty stations and organizations of the United Nations system (see A/53/414). The introduction of the managed reassignment programme for entry-level Professional staff, currently under development by the Office

of Human Resources Management, will provide this critical category of staff with greater opportunities to develop and broaden their skills, thereby improving their morale and optimizing their contribution to the United Nations. By providing new challenges, the programme will also discourage the early separation of junior Professionals from the Organization.

C. Women in the General Service and related categories, including such issues as the G to P examination and staff development opportunities

21. The majority of staff in the General Service and related categories are women (4,375 women, as compared to 3,954 men). However, while women comprise 54.9 per cent of the General Service category, women are under-represented in both the Security and the Trades and Crafts categories, where they account for 5.8 per cent (12 women out of 206 staff) and 3.6 per cent of staff (7 women out of 192 staff), respectively. In the Field Service category, women account for 12.3 per cent (103 women out of 835 staff).

22. There is a notable lack of mobility of General Service staff between departments, similar to staff in the Professional category. Out of a total of 149 promotion cases at the GS-5 to GS-7 levels reviewed by the Appointment and Promotion Panel at Headquarters during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, only 8 entailed the movement of staff between departments and offices.

23. As regards the promotion of staff in the General Service and related categories to the Professional level through examinations, the General Assembly, in resolution 53/221, requested the Secretary-General to complete the realignment of those examinations with the national competitive examinations, in particular regarding academic qualifications and equitable geographical distribution, as well as equal treatment with regard to probationary appointments. The Secretary-General has decided to take the matter back to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in order to inform the Assembly of the concerns of management and staff on the issue and, in particular, of the fact that implementation of the General Assembly's request would deny some General Service staff any opportunity for promotion to the Professional category by reason of their nationality. The introduction of the requirement of equitable geographical distribution in determining a staff member's eligibility to sit the G to P examination would further limit the few opportunities for staff in the General Service and related

categories, the majority of whom are women, to be promoted to the Professional category.

24. The Secretary-General is committed to the establishment of an organizational culture in which professional excellence, productivity and achievement are recognized and rewarded in all categories and at all levels. In 1998, staff development and learning programmes were strengthened and refocused to facilitate the process of reform of the management of the Organization and to enable staff to meet the changing needs of the United Nations. To improve staff development opportunities for General Service staff, a number of new programmes have been introduced, including a General Service Development Programme, supervisory skills for General Service staff who supervise others and collaborative negotiation skills. In addition, Career Support Programmes are being offered to educate staff members about the work of individual departments and the skills required of those who work in those areas, and to teach career planning skills. As noted in paragraphs 20 and 22 above, there is a need to improve the mobility of all staff across functions and offices of the Secretariat. This is particularly true of staff in the General Service category, many of whom have university degrees, but whose career prospects are limited by the very small number of posts allocated each year to the G to P examination. The career development and morale of these staff can be greatly enhanced by assignments to different areas of work and different departments, including assignment to peacekeeping missions. Moreover, the Organization needs to channel more creatively the skills and experiences of the many staff in the General Service and related categories who have had the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for professional assignments while serving in peacekeeping missions.

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

25. In order to meet the request of the General Assembly contained in resolution 53/119, statistics on the gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in all organizations of the United Nations common system, as at 31 December 1997, are provided in the annex. The statistics were derived from the tables issued annually by the secretariat of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions. Since 31 December 1996, the percentage of women with appointments of one year or more at Headquarters and other established offices of the United

Nations system of organizations has risen from 30.8 to 31.8 per cent. Among organizations with 100 or more staff, the United Nations Population Fund continues to have the highest representation of women (47.8 per cent), followed by the United Nations Children's Fund (46.9 per cent). A recent booklet issued by the International Civil Service Commission containing data for the United Nations system, as of 31 December 1996, points out that over 61 per cent of women in the Professional category in the common system work in programme support functions: administrative, language and library-related fields (excluding the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the International Trade Centre, for which occupational data was unavailable).³

III. Developments since September 1998

A. Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat

26. The Secretary-General, to reaffirm the importance of the principle of gender equality and of the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, issued revised terms of reference of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat in June 1999 (see Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1999/9). The Steering Committee, which is composed of 12 senior staff members and chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, has, *inter alia*, the following functions: to initiate and review proposals for policies and concrete measures for the achievement of the goal of gender balance; to initiate and review proposals for the institution of a more gender-sensitive work environment supportive of the needs of the staff, both women and men; to monitor implementation of the special measures for the achievement of gender balance, including the compliance of those accountable in the Organization with existing policies and guidelines; to monitor the development and implementation of action plans by heads of departments to achieve the goal of gender balance in individual departments and offices; and to review the impact of proposed reforms in human resources management policies and practices with a view to ensuring that the goal of gender equality is fully taken into account. The Committee has met and is drawing up its programme of work.

B. Development of action plans to achieve gender balance in departments and offices

27. The Secretary-General, in his report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session, indicated that, during 1999, priority would be given to the development and implementation of action plans for the improvement of gender balance in individual departments and offices. The objectives of these plans would be to identify the opportunities and limits for achieving gender balance in individual departments and to put in place strategies to ensure that there is a pool of qualified women candidates for specific vacancies. The institution of these plans would also provide the Secretary-General with a tool for measuring the performance of individual departments and offices and for ensuring the accountability of individual managers.

28. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women will continue to hold discussions with departments and offices on the development of gender action plans. In so doing, she will build upon the series of meetings with heads of departments and offices initiated in January 1999 by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, with the objective of developing, for each department and office, action plans on human resources management. Those plans are based on a review of staffing projections for the 1999-2001 period and cover, *inter alia*, the filling of vacancies, taking into account the career prospects of staff and the Organization's goals of improving both geographical representation and gender balance in staff composition. Other aspects of human resources management addressed in the plans include career development, staff development and training, staff mobility, performance management and staff-management relations.

29. To identify the staffing profile and opportunities for improving women's representation in individual departments, the Office of the Special Adviser is currently reviewing the action plans agreed upon by the Office of Human Resources Management and respective heads of departments and offices. On the basis of that assessment, the Secretary-General will request heads of departments and offices to set specific targets for meeting the goal of gender balance in their offices. The Secretary-General will also request heads of departments and offices to undertake a review of the adequacy of the pool of women candidates for projected vacancies within their departments, as well as to identify sources of women candidates from other departments in the Secretariat, other organizations of the United Nations system and external national and professional organizations. In the identification of external recruitment sources, heads of departments and offices will be requested, in particular, to identify sources of women candidates from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

C. Representation of women in peacekeeping operations

30. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations took up the subject of gender balance and gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations in March 1999. In her presentation to the Committee, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women observed that the integration of women's interests and experiences in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction was essential to the peace-building process. A critical mass of women in all components of peacekeeping operations, particularly at the decision-making levels, would broaden perspectives and bring a new dynamic to the peace-building process. As of 1 January 1999, two women headed peacekeeping missions. Strengthening the pool of qualified women candidates from all regions for posts in peacekeeping, including leadership positions, should be a priority. In its report (A/54/87), the Special Committee expressed its support for the development and implementation of innovative strategies for increasing the participation of women, on a broad geographical basis, in all aspects of peacekeeping operations. In June 1999, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Adviser wrote jointly to all Permanent Representatives to request the cooperation and support of Member States in improving women's representation in all areas of peacekeeping operations, *inter alia*, by proposing more women candidates for vacant positions within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and for assignment to peacekeeping missions, including to military and civilian police positions.

31. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Focal Point for Women have regularly briefed delegations on the programme to advance the status of women in the Secretariat and requested the assistance of Member States in identifying women candidates, in particular from developing countries and those which are under-represented in the Secretariat. During the year under review, special briefings on recruitment for regular and peacekeeping posts were also organized for members of the African group and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

D. Gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity training

32. Gender issues are increasingly incorporated into staff development programmes, such as people management and supervisory skills. Specific training programmes on gender

mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace are also being organized on a departmental basis. Each programme is tailored to meet the special needs of individual departments and is developed in collaboration with department heads and focus groups of staff.

33. In April 1999, a pilot gender sensitivity training seminar was organized for senior managers at the United Nations Office at Vienna. Subsequently, training sessions were organized for staff in the Professional and General Service categories. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with the assistance of the Office of Human Resources Management, has prepared a training programme on gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity to be offered to all staff of the department in the last quarter of 1999. The programme will build upon the lessons learned from the gender mainstreaming training conducted in 1998 in the Department of Political Affairs. ESCWA will launch a training programme on gender mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace in the last quarter of 1999. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is planning a training programme in gender mainstreaming for all its Professional category staff early in 2000. The Department for Disarmament Affairs has also included gender training in its staff development programme for 2000. The Special Adviser and staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women briefed staff members of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at an orientation session on gender issues organized by the latter office in July 1999.

E. Network of senior women staff members

34. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women established an informal network of women at the D-2 level at Headquarters in December 1998. Following the meeting between the Special Adviser and senior women staff members in Geneva in spring 1999, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe organized a parallel network of women at the D-1 and D-2 levels at that duty station. The meetings of the two groups provide a forum for senior women to share their experiences as managers within the Organization and to exchange ideas on steps that can be taken to mentor junior women colleagues and to improve career development opportunities and working conditions for all staff.

F. Work/family agenda

35. In resolution 53/119, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his work to create a gender-sensitive work environment supportive of the needs of his staff, both women and men, including through the development of policies for flexible working time, flexible workplace arrangements, child-care and elder-care needs. Those issues are currently being examined by the Quality of Work/Life Committee, which is chaired by the Office of Human Resources Management and includes the participation of representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and the Office of the Special Adviser. Priority issues which have been identified by the Committee for review include spouse employment, flexible work arrangements, child care and domestic partnerships.

36. Spouse employment was among the major issues discussed at the annual meeting in June 1999 of ORIGIN, a network of senior human resource management and gender specialists within and outside the United Nations system. Although organizations have recognized for many years that measures must be introduced to attract and retain staff members in dual-career households, legal and other obstacles remain to be tackled. These include negotiating arrangements for spouse employment with a number of host countries and providing more comprehensive information to candidates and new recruits on applicable visa and work permit regulations, child-care arrangements and employment opportunities. The members of ORIGIN agreed that the network would share country information on these issues and on job opportunities.

37. In response to a number of cases, the Secretary-General, in March 1999, decided that the United Nations would voluntarily deduct the amounts owed from the salaries of staff members found to be in default of court-ordered family support payments and pay them to the spouse and/or children.

38. The Office of the Special Adviser continues to provide advice and assistance to women staff members on contractual and career development issues and matters pertaining to the workplace. The matters brought to the attention of the Special Adviser include appointments and promotions under the special measures for women; transfers between duty stations for family reasons; and harassment in the workplace.

IV. Conclusions

39. Since the submission of the last report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, notable progress has been made in improving the representation of women at the D-1 level. However, the progress in improving the representation

of women overall is still limited, owing to the lower rate at which women are recruited into the Secretariat and the relatively small number of appointments made each year compared to the size of the staff population. While the majority of staff appointed at the P-2 level are women, women continue to account for less than 50 per cent of the appointments made at the remaining grade levels, with the exception of the D-2 level.

40. In view of the limited progress made in improving women's representation in the Secretariat, the Secretary-General decided in 1998 to develop departmental action plans to supplement the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) (A/49/587). The decision to develop plans at the level of individual departments and offices was made, in view of the importance of managerial commitment and accountability to the achievement of the gender equality goals of the Organization. Although a number of strategies had been pursued successfully under the strategic plan, in particular, efforts to develop and implement gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity training, it became clear with the passing of time that additional concrete strategies requiring the active participation and visible commitment of managers were required.

41. As indicated in section III of the present report, work has begun on the development of action plans on human resources management for individual departments and offices. One of the objectives set jointly by the Office of Human Resources Management and heads of departments and offices in those plans relates to improving gender balance. The performance of departments under the plans will be monitored by the Office of Human Resources Management and, with respect to gender, by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. It is intended that specific targets will be established for improving gender balance in individual departments and offices. An assessment will also be made of the adequacy of the pool of women candidates for projected vacancies within individual departments and across departments by occupation. Reports on progress made in meeting the goals set out in the plans will be submitted to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has also decided to institute quarterly reviews by the Senior Management Group of progress made in meeting gender equality goals in departments of the Secretariat and in United Nations funds and programmes.

42. The establishment and monitoring of targets for the improvement of women's representation in individual departments and offices is one component of the Secretary-General's strategy for the achievement of gender balance in the Secretariat. Other elements that will be pursued in the

coming year include the review of the pool of women candidates within the Secretariat for projected vacancies by departments and occupations and the identification of external sources of women candidates, particularly in Member States which are unrepresented or under-represented in the Secretariat, in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition and in occupations in which women are presently under-represented. Attention will also be paid to the further development of policies and practices to support the reconciliation of staff members' work and family responsibilities with the aim of attracting and retaining the best qualified staff and enhancing their morale and productivity.

43. Moreover, the framework for action must include the following elements if the goal of gender equality is to be achieved and sustained in the early years of the next century:

(a) The Office of Human Resources Management must lend effective support to programme managers through the design of innovative recruitment strategies to identify and attract women candidates, particularly those from under-represented and developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(b) The Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women must continue to monitor closely the implementation of the special measures for women and the progress made by departments in meeting the goal of gender balance, including through the development of mechanisms to effectively encourage, monitor and assess the performance of programme managers in meeting targets for improving women's representation as referenced in paragraph 41 above;

(c) Women candidates, both internal and external, must be encouraged to submit applications for posts for which they are qualified, and women staff members must take the lead in improving their career prospects by broadening their skills and experience;

(d) Member States should be apprised of forthcoming vacancies and encouraged to nominate qualified women for those positions, as well as for appointment to intergovernmental, judicial and expert bodies, such as the International Court of Justice, the Joint Inspection Unit, the International Tribunals and the International Civil Service Commission. Member States should also be encouraged to identify and propose national recruitment sources which will assist the Secretary-General in identifying suitable women candidates for posts with the Organization.

44. As noted in the introduction to the present report, significant progress has been made in improving the status

of women in the Secretariat since the item was first addressed by the General Assembly in 1970. Milestones include the elimination of provisions discriminatory to women from the Staff Rules; the establishment of policies governing the equal treatment of men and women in the Secretariat; the introduction of gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming training; and the institution of special measures governing the recruitment, placement and promotion of women. While, clearly, much work remains to be done to ensure the full and equal participation of men and women in all activities of the United Nations, the contribution of women to the effective design, management and implementation of the Organization's programmes is recognized. This recognition is owing, in large part, to the growing number of women in decision-making positions who serve as powerful catalysts for changing the manner in which individual men and women perceive women's roles and opportunities in the Organization.

45. The challenge for the early years of the new century will be to build upon this foundation by ensuring that women participate fully at all levels and in all programmes and activities of the United Nations. This will require the continued commitment and leadership of senior management. Managers at all levels must redouble their efforts to achieve the goals of gender equality, including through full implementation of the special measures for women and achievement of targets for improving gender balance in individual departments and offices.

Notes

- ¹ Including the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, the Contributions Service, the Treasury, the Management Policy Office, the Oversight Support Unit, the Executive Office, the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint Disciplinary Committee. Excluding the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Office of Central Support Services, and the Office of Human Resources Management.
- ² Excluding the Field Administration and Logistics Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which includes all staff with appointments of one year or more assigned to peacekeeping and other special missions.
- ³ "Gender balance in the United Nations Common System", International Civil Service Commission, December 1998, p. 3.

