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Advancement of women: implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/147](#). In it, the Secretary-General assesses the status of women in the United Nations system for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Since the previous reporting period (1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015), the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system has increased from 42.8 per cent to 44.2 per cent. The largest increases were registered at the highest levels (Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General), which is a direct result of the efforts of the Secretary-General in line with his commitment to reach parity at the highest levels by 2021.

While the present report highlights some positive achievements, it also shows that progress towards advancing the representation of women in the United Nations system and reaching the goal of 50/50 gender balance has remained slow and uneven in the period under review. The representation of women during the reporting period continued to be highest at the entry levels, namely P-1 and P-2, before decreasing progressively at the higher grade levels. Disparities persist between headquarters and non-headquarters locations; the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the latter is 8.7 percentage points lower. The gap is greatest and the rate of change slowest at non-headquarters locations, including peace operations. Historic achievements have now been achieved at the most senior level, including among resident coordinators, Under-Secretaries-Generals and Assistant Secretaries-General; however, these fall outside of the period under review.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 23 September 2019.

** [A/74/150](#).



The present report contains recommendations aimed at assisting United Nations entities in moving forward to achieve gender parity, including through more rigorous implementation and harmonization of existing policies, such as special temporary measures, strengthened accountability mechanisms and enhancement of career development. The creation of an enabling environment remains vital in supporting the goal of 50/50 gender balance by fostering an inclusive workplace that attracts, retains and advances women and supports all staff in balancing the obligations of home and professional life.

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Abbreviations

CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICC	United Nations International Computing Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSSC	United Nations System Staff College
UNU	United Nations University
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization

UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

I. Introduction

1. Since I took office as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the attainment of gender parity across the United Nations system has been a top priority. This commitment is specifically to achieving parity at the senior-most levels by 2021 and across the system at all levels by 2028. Notable gains have been made since the launch in September 2017 of my system-wide strategy on gender parity, although not all were reflected in the period 2016–2017, the reporting period of the present report. In 2018, for the first time in the United Nations history, parity was achieved in the Senior Management Group and among resident coordinators. We are now only steps away from achieving parity across the system at the senior-most level, well ahead of my 2021 target. The Organization has a record number of women heads and deputy heads of peace operations in its history. I have appointed the first female Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and three female special envoys – almost equivalent to the total number of female special envoys in the United Nations over the past 70 years. Beyond the senior levels, however, the rate of progress has been uneven.

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/147](#), the present report provides data on the representation of women in the United Nations system and analyses progress and challenges in advancing towards the reaffirmed goal of 50/50 gender balance across all levels of the United Nations system.

3. Analysis is based on the most up-to-date available data from the 36 entities¹ of CEB and a biennial survey² on gender-related policies and practices completed by the gender focal points and focal points for women³ across the United Nations. In addition, the report draws on the extensive work of UN-Women, in line with its mandate, to lead and coordinate gender equality efforts across the United Nations system. The data in the present report are supplemented by web annexes available on the UN-Women website.⁴

A. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other intergovernmental bases

4. In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action established the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the Professional and higher categories. Paragraph 193 (c) of the Declaration states that the United Nations is required to “continue to collect and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data on women and men in decision-making and analyse their differential impact on decision-making and monitor progress towards achieving the Secretary-General’s target of having women hold 50 per cent of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000.”

¹ Since the previous report ([A/72/220](#) and [A/72/220/Corr.1](#)), IOM joined CEB, hence the report includes 36 entities.

² UN-Women conducts a biennial survey on gender parity-related policies and practices. Two versions of the survey were developed: one for United Nations Secretariat departments and offices; and another for United Nations system entities, which included questions on entity-specific policies. The Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance answered policy questions on behalf of the entire United Nations Secretariat. In total, 40 entities completed the 2019 survey, and their inputs are reflected herewith.

³ The term “focal points for women” is used by the United Nations Secretariat and is guided by the Secretary-General’s departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat ([ST/SGB/2008/12](#)). The remainder of the United Nations system uses the term “gender focal points”. The two terms are synonymous.

⁴ See www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/women-in-the-united-nations/reports-and-monitoring.

5. The United Nations continues to strive towards that goal, which has been reiterated in several resolutions of the General Assembly. It is worth noting that in its resolution 25/2715 (XXV), dating back to 1970, the Assembly called for an increased representation of women at the senior levels. The upcoming twenty-fifth anniversary of the Platform for Action is a reminder that the goal of 50/50 gender balance is long overdue and progress must be accelerated. The Beijing +25 anniversary commemoration will assess the current challenges affecting implementation, as well as the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and identify areas for accelerated implementation as a contribution to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity

6. As a first priority upon taking office, I created a task force, led by my office, that was responsible for undertaking wide consultations that informed the development of my system-wide strategy on gender parity. The strategy covers targets, leadership and accountability, temporary special measures and the specific challenges in the field. Following its launch, all United Nations entities have started working on or have submitted implementation plans on how to meet their targets and fully implement the recommendations of the strategy.

7. Parity has also been explicitly integrated as a core element of my overall reforms, and through the strategy other goals have been strengthened, such as transparency. A public website showing current parity data is available for the United Nations Secretariat, allowing anyone to track progress.⁵

8. In an effort to strengthen accountability, I have integrated gender parity goals in senior leadership compacts and confirmed in writing to all senior management the ongoing validity of the administrative instruction on temporary special measures intended to support the recruitment and selection of female candidates and clarified processes for monitoring and compliance (ST/AI/1999/9).

9. Strengthened efforts have been taken and coordinated by more than 200 gender focal points and human resources experts across the system in order to develop and enhance the implementation plans of the respective United Nations entities in response to the strategy.

10. While the above achievements have had an impact, progress in the field and in peace operations in particular has been slow. In the light of this, and given the fact that nearly half of the United Nations Secretariat currently serve in field operations where conditions for achieving gender parity are the most challenging, I have established at the highest levels a working group on emergency measures to achieve gender parity in peace operations. The work of the group is ongoing and will tackle the specific challenges of rosters, downsizing, recruitment, retention and mission conditions.

11. The system-wide strategy on gender parity provides more than fifty concrete recommendations to guide the system in achieving that goal. One of the recommendations was implemented in March 2019 with the launch⁶ of the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System.⁷ The Guidelines provide

⁵ www.un.org/gender/.

⁶ See <http://webtv.un.org/en/ga/watch/new-enabling-environment-guidelines-launched-to-support-the-un-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-system-wide-strategy-on-gender-parity/6008913591001/?term=&lan=english>.

⁷ See also "Supplementary guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System in support of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity", available at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/supplementary-guidance-on-the-enabling-environment-guidelines-for-the-united-nations-system>.

suggested measures and good practices on flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, standards of conduct, implementation, recruitment and talent management for all staff.

II. Representation of women in the United Nations system

A. Representation by grade

Table 1

Distribution by gender of staff in the United Nations system on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, at all locations, by grade, as at 31 December 2016 and 31 December 2017

	31 December 2016			31 December 2017			Difference (Women as a percentage of total), 2016–2017	Difference (Women as a percentage of total), 2015–2017
	Men	Women	Women (% of total)	Men	Women	Women (% of total)		
USG	104	36	25.7	84	43	33.9	8.1	–
ASG	114	40	26.0	96	48	33.3	7.4	–
Subtotal	218	76	25.9	180	91	33.6	7.7	6.8
D-2	349	168	32.5	393	204	34.2	1.7	3.4
D-1	1 226	630	33.9	1 254	685	35.3	1.4	1.8
Subtotal	1 575	798	33.6	1 647	889	35.1	1.4	2.3
P-7	1	1	50.0	1	1	50.0	0.0	–
P-6	128	55	30.1	34	16	32.0	1.9	–
P-5	4 142	2 375	36.4	4 040	2 427	37.5	1.1	1.4
P-4	6 490	4 657	41.8	6 399	4 842	43.1	1.3	1.3
P-3	5 642	4 770	45.8	5 432	4 791	46.9	1.1	1.4
P-2	1 621	2 176	57.3	1 565	2 129	57.6	0.3	0.1
P-1	67	111	62.4	83	140	62.8	0.4	1.9
Subtotal	18 091	14 145	43.9	17 554	14 346	45.0	1.1	1.4
NOE	1	1	50.0	1	1	50.0	0.0	0.0
NOD	207	161	43.8	200	172	46.2	2.5	2.6
NOC	1 871	1 484	44.2	1 868	1 523	44.9	0.7	0.1
NOB	3 129	2 216	41.5	3 111	2 284	42.3	0.9	0.2
NOA	1 845	1 463	44.2	1 655	1 393	45.7	1.5	(0.9)
Subtotal	7 053	5 325	43.0	6 835	5 373	44.0	1.0	0.0
FS7	27	0	0.0	23	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
FS6	329	77	19.0	335	77	18.7	(0.3)	0.3
FS5	1 135	467	29.2	1 115	460	29.2	0.0	(0.6)
FS4	1 335	504	27.4	1 145	433	27.4	0.0	(0.3)
FS3	29	12	29.3	24	8	25.0	(4.3)	(6.6)
Subtotal	2 855	1 060	27.1	2 642	979	27.0	(0.0)	(0.5)

	31 December 2016			31 December 2017			Difference (Women as a percentage of total), 2016–2017	Difference (Women as a percentage of total), 2015–2017
	Men	Women	Women (% of total)	Men	Women	Women (% of total)		
G7	1 758	2 406	57.8	1 695	2 420	58.8	1.0	(0.4)
G6	5 285	7 258	57.9	5 099	7 230	58.6	0.8	(2.9)
G5	5 849	8 025	57.8	5 852	7 800	57.1	(0.7)	(3.2)
G4	6 328	4 345	40.7	5 813	3 802	39.5	(1.2)	(2.5)
G3	5 292	1 155	17.9	4 361	939	17.7	(0.2)	1.9
G2	5 831	297	4.8	5 232	254	4.6	(0.2)	(0.3)
G1	303	137	31.1	215	59	21.5	(9.6)	(3.9)
Subtotal	30 646	23 623	43.5	28 267	22 504	44.3	0.8	(1.7)
Total	60 438	45 027	42.7	57 125	44 182	43.6	0.9	0.0

Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; DSG, Deputy Secretary-General; ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; D, Director; P, Professional; NO, National Professional Officer; FS, Field Service; G, General Service. Disaggregated data were not reported on in document [A/72/220](#) and Corr.1 for the USG, ASG, P-7 and P-6 levels.

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/147](#), the present report uses data provided annually by entities to CEB. The most recent data available cover the period of 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Where possible, more recent updates have been provided and efforts to obtain comparable real-time data continue.

13. As at 31 December 2017, the representation of women in the United Nations system in the Professional and higher categories stood at 44.2 per cent, up from 42.8 per cent as at 31 December 2015.

14. Excluding the National Officer grade and P-7 grades, of which there are only two staff members each, only the G-5, G-6, G-7, P-1 and P-2 levels had women representing 50 per cent or more of posts. In no staff category did women represent more than 45 per cent of all posts.

15. The overall representation of women during the reporting period continued to be negatively correlated with seniority. However, significant and recent gains at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels were closing the gap, and, as at 2019, the overall representation of women at those levels was ahead of the target for the goal of parity by 2021.⁸ Between 2016 and 2017, the percentage of women in the ungraded level⁹ increased from 25.9 to 33.6 per cent. Notably, this had been preceded by two consecutive years of decline and reflected the prioritization of accelerating gender parity progress.

16. Since the previous report, the representation of women increased by 2.3 percentage points in the Director category and by 1.4 percentage points in the Professional category. Representation among National Professional Officers remained unchanged at 44 per cent. Representation in the General and Field Services categories decreased by 1.7 and 0.5 percentage points, respectively. The category with the lowest representation of women continued to be the Field Service category, at 27 per cent.

⁸ See www.un.org/sg/en/global-leadership/home.

⁹ Ungraded encompasses all levels above D-2, including Assistant Secretary-General, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Assistant Director-General, Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General.

B. Trends¹⁰

Table 2
Distribution by gender of staff in the Professional and higher categories (P-1 to ungraded) in the United Nations system, 2007 to 2017

Year	P-1			P-2			P-3			P-4			P-5			D-1			D-2			Ungraded			Total		
	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)
2007	71	81	53	1 407	1 742	55	3 874	2 881	43	4 962	2 774	36	3 708	1 575	30	1 260	473	27	404	122	23	172	56	25	15 858	9 704	38.0
2008	59	67	53	1 363	1 690	55	3 869	3 058	44	5 155	2 949	36	3 792	1 727	31	1 262	509	29	423	147	26	186	60	24	16 109	10 207	38.8
2009	68	80	54	1 473	1 975	57	4 347	3 531	45	5 528	3 331	38	3 979	1 843	32	1 319	534	29	427	155	27	180	65	27	17 321	11 514	39.9
2010	51	77	60	1 467	1 968	57	4 630	3 805	45	5 731	3 569	38	4 040	1 879	32	1 296	561	30	417	144	26	177	79	31	17 809	12 082	40.4
2011	48	75	61	1 477	1 965	57	4 816	4 027	46	5 947	3 805	39	4 125	2 004	33	1 295	565	30	430	158	27	182	78	30	18 320	12 677	40.9
2012	43	75	64	1 418	1 902	57	4 986	4 185	46	6 021	3 975	40	4 123	2 095	34	1 304	594	31	423	167	28	194	78	29	18 512	13 071	41.4
2013	58	71	55	1 417	1 917	57	5 208	4 270	45	6 029	4 092	40	4 114	2 116	34	1 268	606	32	405	174	30	194	72	27	18 693	13 318	41.6
2014	63	92	59	1 449	1 943	57	5 243	4 275	45	6 090	4 164	41	4 087	2 215	35	1 244	611	33	394	174	31	198	76	28	18 768	13 550	41.9
2015	61	95	61	1 464	1 984	58	5 288	4 407	45	6 070	4 363	42	4 046	2 281	36	1 138	573	33	380	169	31	221	81	27	18 668	13 953	42.8
2016	67	111	62	1 621	2 176	57	5 642	4 770	46	6 490	4 657	42	4 142	2 375	36	1 226	630	34	349	168	33	218	76	26	19 755	14 963	43.1
2017	83	140	63	1 565	2 129	58	5 432	4 791	47	6 399	4 842	43	4 040	2 427	38	1 254	685	35	393	204	34	180	91	34	19 346	15 309	44.2

¹⁰ Data for 2007 to 2014 are drawn from the annual CEB human resources statistics reports (<http://unsceb.org/content/un-system-human-resources-statistics-reports>) and reflect staff on contracts of one year or more. Data for 2014 onwards reflect staff on permanent/continuous/fixed-term appointments.

17. Increases in the representation of women have been registered across all levels since 2016. While modest at most levels, together those increases have contributed to an overall annual increase of 1.1 percentage points between 2016 and 2017. The last time an annual increase of that magnitude happened was between 2008 and 2009. By comparison, between 2015 and 2016, the gain was 0.3 percentage points.

18. The dramatic increase in the representation of women at the ungraded level in the period 2016–2017 reversed a trend of declines and plateaus since 2010 and brought representation to its highest level to date – nearly 10 percentage points higher than in 2007. Without that recent gain, the ungraded level would have ended the period 2007–2017 with almost no progress.

19. That latest gain also increased the average annual gain for the ungraded level from 0.1 to 0.9 percentage points. For the period 2007–2017, the average annual gains were between 0.3 and 1.1 percentage points per level, and 0.6 per cent for the Professional and higher categories overall.

C. Representation by location

Table 3

Distribution by gender of staff in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, by location, as at 31 December 2017

Level	Headquarters			Non-headquarters			Total		
	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)
USG	61	34	35.8	23	9	28.1	84	43	33.9
ASG	63	31	33.0	33	17	34.0	96	48	33.3
Subtotal	124	65	34.4	56	26	31.7	180	91	33.6
D-2	246	139	36.1	147	65	30.7	393	204	34.2
D-1	624	345	35.6	630	340	35.1	1254	685	35.3
Subtotal	870	484	35.7	777	405	34.3	1 647	889	35.1
P-7	0	1	100.0	1	0	0.0	1	1	50.0
P-6	11	6	35.3	23	10	30.3	34	16	32.0
P-5	2 046	1 321	39.2	1 994	1 106	35.7	4 040	2 427	37.5
P-4	2 920	2 668	47.7	3 479	2 174	38.5	6 399	4 842	43.1
P-3	2 176	2 563	54.1	3 256	2 228	40.6	5 432	4 791	46.9
P-2	741	1 203	61.9	824	926	52.9	1 565	2 129	57.6
P-1	49	97	66.4	34	43	55.8	83	140	62.8
Subtotal	7 943	7 859	49.7	9 611	6 487	40.3	17 554	14 346	45.0
Total	8 937	8 408	48.5	10 444	6 918	39.8	19 381	15 326	44.2

20. Overall progress towards gender parity at non-headquarters locations in the Professional and higher categories continued to trail headquarters locations, with an 8.7 percentage point difference in 2017. Only the Assistant Secretary-General level had a higher representation of women at non-headquarters locations than at headquarters locations. The level with the greatest disparity was the P-3 level, where the representation of women at headquarters was 13.5 percentage points higher than at non-headquarters locations.

21. Of the surveyed entities with field-based locations, 30 per cent specifically addressed field settings in their gender parity implementation plans in response to the strategy. Outreach and recruitment, as well as working and living conditions, were the most common field-specific efforts mentioned in the implementation plans to increase the representation of women. Other analysis has suggested that selection and accountability are among the top impediments.

1. Resident coordinators

Table 4

Number of resident coordinators of all field offices worldwide (2016, 2017 and 2018)

Grade	December 2016			December 2017			December 2018		
	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)
ASG	11	2	15.4	9	5	36.0	9	6	40.0
D-2	23	11	32.4	20	13	39.0	18	13	41.9
D-1	35	39	52.7	36	36	50.0	34	43	55.8
Total	69	52	43.0	65	54	45.4	61	62	50.4

Source: United Nations Development Coordination Office.

22. Data for 2018 are used here on an exceptional basis as they were made available by the United Nations Development Coordination Office. In 2018, the representation of women resident coordinators reached gender parity for the first time in United Nations history. While the majority of women resident coordinators are at the D-1 level, gains since 2016 have improved their representation at the D-2 and Assistant Secretary-General levels. To sustain the gains made, efforts have focused on improving gender parity in candidate pools and pipelines by targeting women, particularly from the Global South.

2. Mobility

23. The nature of work within the United Nations often requires staff to rotate and be mobile between duty stations in order to deliver on their mandates. However, staff may face mobility challenges owing to ascribed gender roles and stereotypes, such as caregiving responsibilities or security concerns, and may therefore be at a disadvantage when it comes to career advancements. Inclusive mobility can be promoted through improvements to infrastructure, the reclassification of duty stations, more comprehensive information and onboarding support, incentives to redistribute caregiving responsibilities, such as parental leave, and enhanced spousal employment opportunities and networks.

D. Representation by entity

Table 5
Percentage of women in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, by entity, as at 31 December 2017

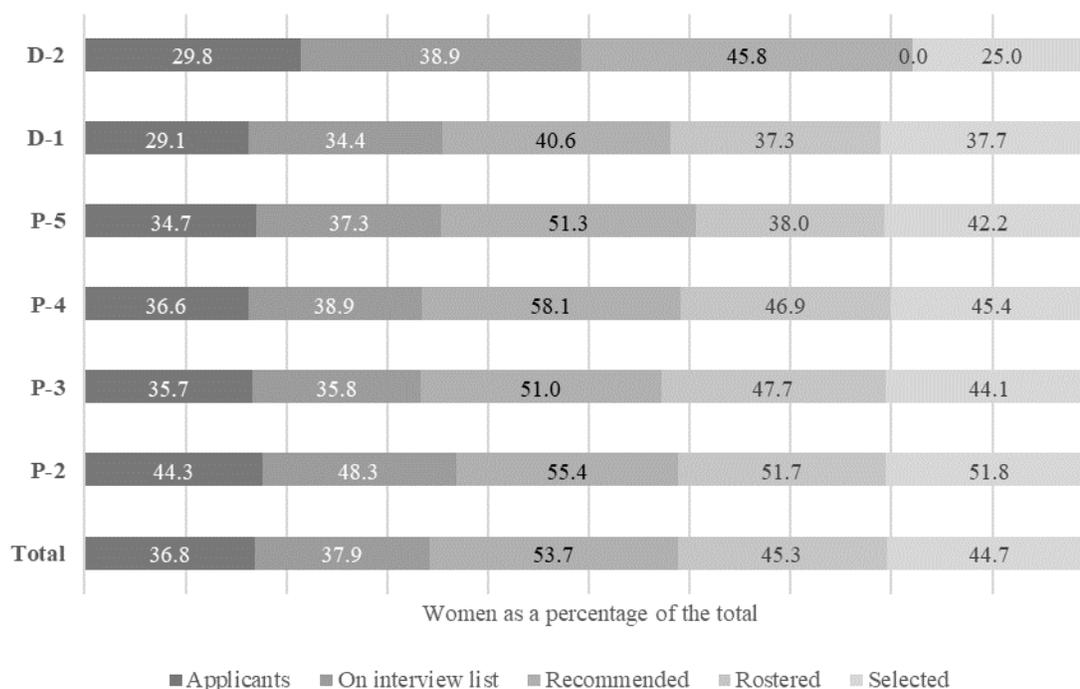
<i>Women (percentage)</i>	<i>No. of entities</i>	<i>Entities (percentage of women)</i>
≥ 50	7	UN-Women (80.2), ICJ (55.9), UNSSC (55.0), UNWTO (52.3), UNESCO (51.2), UNFPA (50.9), UNICEF (50.3)
40–49	18	UNAIDS (49.9), PAHO (49.2), UNRWA (47.0), IFAD (46.1), IOM (45.9), WIPO (45.7), UNDP (45.4), WHO (45.3), ITC-ILO (45.2), UNHCR (45.2), ILO (44.5), United Nations Secretariat (42.7), WFP (42.6), UNJSPF (42.5), IMO (42.4), FAO (42.2), UNFCCC (40.8), ITC (40.5)
< 40	11	WMO (38.3), ITU (37.9), ICSC (37.5), UNU (37.1), UNITAR (36.1), UNOPS (34.5), UNIDO (33.5), IAEA (29.6), UPU (27.4), ICAO (29.8), UNICC (18.6)

24. In 18 entities, the overall representation of women was between 40 and 49 per cent, while in 11 entities – compared with 13 entities in the previous report – that figure was below 40 per cent. Increases were achieved at entities such as FAO, ITC and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The entities with the lowest representation of women predominantly had mandates in technical fields, illustrating the persistent occupational segregation within the United Nations system.

III. Career life cycle: representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in staff selection, appointments, career advancements and separations from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017

A. Staff selection process

Figure 1
Percentage of women at each stage of the staff selection process in the United Nations system, by level, for the period 1 January 2016–31 December 2017¹¹



1. Targeting women applicants

25. Women comprised 36.8 per cent of the applicants for positions in the Professional and higher categories, indicating that more must be done regarding outreach to encourage more female applicants. Despite making up a low proportion of applicants, women comprised a subsequently higher proportion of those long-listed and an even higher proportion of those recommended. The proportion of women increased as they moved through the selection process, suggesting that women who applied made up a more robust candidate pool compared with male applicants. That is in line with research, which suggests that women tend not to apply for jobs unless they meet all or most of the qualifications.¹² Despite that pattern, during the reporting period, women ultimately comprised less than half of all selections made and were selected in the smallest proportions at the D-2 level.

¹¹ Staff selection data was not provided by FAO, ICSC, IMO, IOM, ITC-ILO, UNICC, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UNRWA or UNWTO.

¹² “Why Women Don’t Apply for Jobs Unless They’re 100% Qualified”, in *Harvard Business Review* (2014). Available from <https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified>.

26. To attract more women, gender-inclusive language tools are available, such as GenderTerm,¹³ a searchable gender-inclusive lexicon of UN-Women, available in English, French and Spanish, and the Guidelines for gender-inclusive language¹⁴ of the United Nations Secretariat, available in all six official United Nations languages. ILO and UNOPS have removed from recruitment profiles all questions relating to salary history, number of dependants and family status.

2. Temporary special measures

27. Reaching gender parity within the renewed time frame is unlikely without implementing temporary special measures to address obstacles and gain access to possible talent pools. The most current administrative instruction on special measures for the achievement of gender equality (ST/AI/1999/9) mandates that vacancies in the Professional and higher categories at those levels where gender parity had not been met, “be filled, when there are one or more women candidates, by one of those candidates”, when “her qualifications are substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates”.

28. In 2019, the Secretary-General sent a memorandum to all members of the Senior Management Group to confirm the ongoing relevance of and renewed accountability for the implementation of ST/AI/1999/9. When the qualifications of one or more women candidates match the requirements for the vacant post and the entity recommends a male candidate, a written analysis and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Furthermore, heads of entities have a primary responsibility to implement the special measures and are required to report on progress achieved.

29. In total, 57 per cent of surveyed entities reported having special measures in place for the attainment of gender parity. An example from the survey by UNHCR is the appointment of the female candidate when two or more fully meet the requirements of a position until parity is reached at that grade level. While policies were largely reported to be in place, over a third of surveyed entities reported a lack of implementation of special measures as one of the top three impediments to achieving gender parity at the P-4 level and higher. Further special measures could include ensuring that women make up at least 50 per cent of candidates at the interview and shortlist stages. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in recognition of the specific context where women have not had equal opportunities to gain access to education, has amended requirements for National Officer posts accordingly.

3. Mitigating bias

30. It is critical that groups reviewing applications be diverse and trained on unconscious bias. Hiring managers should be trained on mitigating bias in job application processes, including job design and vacancy announcements. Fifty-five per cent of surveyed entities reported offering unconscious bias training to hiring managers. In total, 81 per cent of entities reported that their staff selection policy stipulated gender diversity in interview panels, while 67 per cent required gender diversity in review bodies.

¹³ “GenderTerm”: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/genderterm>.

¹⁴ “Guidelines for gender-inclusive language”: <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>.

B. Appointments

Table 6
Distribution by gender of new appointments of staff in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, by location (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017)

Level	Headquarters			Non-headquarters			Total		
	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)
USG	23	26	53.1	9	3	25.0	32	29	47.5
ASG	14	10	41.7	19	11	36.7	33	21	38.9
Subtotal	37	36	49.3	28	14	33.3	65	50	43.5
D-2	58	39	40.2	50	11	18.0	108	50	31.6
D-1	121	82	40.4	119	92	43.6	240	174	42.0
Subtotal	179	121	40.3	169	103	37.9	348	224	39.2
P-7	1	1	50.0	1	0	0.0	2	1	33.3
P-6	7	4	36.4	13	3	18.8	20	7	25.9
P-5	363	255	41.3	419	261	38.4	782	516	39.8
P-4	625	549	46.8	844	574	40.5	1 469	1 123	43.3
P-3	507	612	54.7	875	724	45.3	1 382	1 336	49.2
P-2	286	502	63.7	348	419	54.6	634	921	59.2
P-1	35	83	70.3	12	20	62.5	47	103	68.7
Subtotal	1 824	2 006	52.4	2 512	2 001	44.3	4 336	4 007	48.0
Total	2 040	2 163	51.5	2 709	2 118	43.9	4 749	4 281	47.4

31. Overall gains were registered compared with previous reporting periods, with the proportion of women appointed in the Professional and higher categories increasing from 45.7 to 47.4 per cent. At the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels, there have also been significant gains, with women for the first time comprising the majority of Under-Secretary-General appointments at headquarters locations during the reporting period. However, women comprised only a third of non-headquarters appointments at the ungraded level.

32. Since the previous reporting period, the same number of entities (25) registered at least 40 per cent women among new appointments. Of the 11 entities with lower than 40 per cent, 8¹⁵ were among those with the lowest representations of women. That status will likely continue unless opportunities created through new appointments are better capitalized upon, such as by improving outreach, mitigating bias in selection, implementing targets and holding managers accountable for hiring decisions.

33. Several entities, such as UN-Women and UNDP, have internal human resources dashboards. WFP has developed targets for appointments for international and national staff and has developed a gender-monitoring dashboard that goes beyond demographics by disaggregating gender data by grade to inform recruitment decisions

¹⁵ ICSC, ICAO, IAEA, UNICC, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNOPS and UPU.

and assist country directors in achieving parity targets by highlighting areas in need of attention.

C. Career advancements¹⁶

Table 7

Distribution by gender of career advancements of staff in the Professional and higher categories on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, by location (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017)

Level	Headquarters			Non-headquarters			Total		
	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)	Men	Women	Women (%)
D-2	26	13	33.3	16	6	27.3	42	19	31.1
D-1	56	36	39.1	48	52	52.0	104	88	45.8
Subtotal	82	49	37.4	64	58	47.5	146	107	42.3
P-6	1	2	66.7	7	1	12.5	8	3	27.3
P-5	137	116	45.8	161	108	40.1	298	224	42.9
P-4	214	242	53.1	231	189	45.0	445	431	49.2
P-3	108	166	60.6	152	122	44.5	260	288	52.6
P-2	27	65	70.7	27	24	47.1	54	89	62.2
P-1	1	10	90.9	1	2	66.7	2	12	85.7
Subtotal	488	601	55.2	579	446	43.5	1 067	1 047	49.5
Total	570	650	53.3	643	504	43.9	1 213	1 154	48.8

34. As with the previous reporting period, career advancements at the P-1 to P-4 levels continued to be at, near or above gender parity. However, this was largely owing to higher proportions at headquarters locations, which exceeded those at non-headquarters at every level by on average over 10 percentage points. The one exception was the D-1 level, where women's career advancements at non-headquarters level (52 per cent) significantly exceeded that of headquarters (39.1 per cent). Although there is still progress to be made, non-headquarters locations achieved notable improvement overall since the previous reporting period, when women staff comprised 36.8 per cent of all career advancements in the Professional and higher categories, increasing 7.1 percentage points.

35. Women staff comprised at least 40 per cent of career advancements in the Professional and higher categories in 27 entities, and more than 50 per cent in 13 entities. Of the nine entities with the lowest proportions of career advancements, four were among those with the lowest representations of women.¹⁷

1. Staff movement

36. Certain staff rules and regulations limit the movement of staff between grades and staff categories, such as prohibiting staff from applying to more than one grade

¹⁶ Career advancements refer to increases in grade level during the reporting period compared with staff grades as at 31 December 2015. IOM is not included in career advancements as data were only provided as at 31 December 2017. There were no career advancements to the P-7 level during the reporting period.

¹⁷ ICAO, UNICC, UNIDO and UNOPS.

higher or General Service staff from applying to Professional level posts, or mandatory breaks in service. These barriers limit candidate pools and career mobility, thereby hindering gender-balanced pipelines.

37. The system-wide strategy on gender parity recommends that United Nations system candidates be allowed to apply for positions where they fulfil the requirements. This is the case at FAO, where there are no barriers to a candidate's eligibility other than meeting the minimum criteria, which the organization has found to facilitate a merit-based career progression.

38. In September 2018, the United Nations Volunteers and United Nations Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding to standardize and simplify the process of recruiting Volunteers to the Secretariat by lifting all eligibility restrictions to take up staff appointments.

2. Career development

39. Fifty-five per cent of surveyed entities reported inadequate career development for mid-level staff as one of the top three impediments for achieving gender parity in the P-4 and higher categories. Leadership training not only mitigates bias in recruitment and selection processes but also supports the advancement of staff to managerial positions. It can also be leveraged to target underrepresented groups. Sixty-five per cent of surveyed entities reported that they regularly offered such training, while 45 per cent of entities conducted training specifically for women. Forty-three per cent of surveyed entities reported providing mentoring programmes for staff. Importantly, both men and women mentors are needed to provide broad networks. While training is a useful tool to provide specific support, it must be provided in tandem with dedicated measures to address bias and other systematic barriers that women face in career development.

40. EMERGE, the programme for emerging women leaders co-created by 11 United Nations entities,¹⁸ is an example of an interagency initiative aimed at strengthening leadership competence of high-potential mid-level female staff. The senior women talent pipeline aims to increase the number of women in peace operations by building a pool of readily deployable female candidates at the D-1 and D-2 levels for United Nations peace operations.

¹⁸ ILO, ITU, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOG, UNSSC, WHO and WIPO. See <https://learning.unog.ch/node/9019>.

D. Separations¹⁹

Table 8
Distribution by gender of reasons for separation in the Professional and higher categories of staff on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017)

<i>Reason for separation</i>	<i>Men (total)</i>	<i>Women (total)</i>	<i>Women (percentage)</i>	<i>Reason as a percentage of total separations (men)</i>	<i>Reason as a percentage of total separations (women)</i>
Abandonment of post	3	0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Abolishment of post	34	17	33.3	1.6	1.0
Agreed termination	109	86	44.1	5.0	4.8
Appointment expiration	872	774	47.0	40.1	43.6
Death	22	6	21.4	1.0	0.3
Dismissal for misconduct	5	1	16.7	0.2	0.1
In the interest of the organization	19	11	36.7	0.9	0.6
Inter-agency secondments	30	26	46.4	1.4	1.5
Inter-agency transfers	123	106	46.3	5.7	6.0
Resignation	452	484	51.7	20.8	27.3
Retirement (early and mandatory)	485	250	34.0	22.3	14.1
Summary dismissal	4	0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Termination-health	11	12	52.2	0.5	0.7
Termination-unsatisfactory service	4	2	33.3	0.2	0.1
Total	2 173	1 775	45.0	100.0	100.0

41. The following three reasons for separation accounted for 85 per cent of separations of female staff and 83 per cent of separations of male staff:

(a) **Appointment expiration.** This was the most common reason for the separation of women and men, but accounted for 43.6 per cent of women's separations compared with 40.1 of all men's, reflecting a higher likelihood of contract insecurity for women;

(b) **Retirement.** This accounted for only 14.1 per cent of separations of women, compared with 22.3 per cent of men, indicating that men are more likely than women to finish their careers at the United Nations.

(c) **Resignation.** This accounted for a larger proportion of women's separations – 27.3 per cent, compared to 20.8 per cent for men. Despite the lower representation of women among the Professional and higher categories, they comprised 51.7 per cent of all resignations during the period.

Exit interviews

42. The system-wide strategy on gender parity recommends that exit interviews and job satisfaction surveys be mandatory and regularly administered to all personnel.

¹⁹ Separations data not provided by FAO, ICSC, IMO, IOM, ITC-ILO, PAHO, UNICC, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UNWTO and WMO.

43. While 71 per cent of surveyed entities reported that they held exit interviews, only 20 per cent of these reported that they were mandatory. Furthermore, 43 per cent of surveyed entities reported that exit interviews were held for non-staff personnel.

IV. Organizational culture

A. Flexible working arrangements

44. While workplace flexibility has broad benefits to individuals and organizations, it is of particular importance to advancing gender parity given its usefulness for helping women manage their professional and personal commitments – as women are still disproportionately responsible for the majority of caretaking duties – and for encouraging men to assume greater responsibilities at home. The latest instruction on flexible working arrangements (ST/SGB/2019/3), issued in April 2019, states that “while there is no right to flexible working arrangements, such arrangements are in line with the efforts of the Organization to be responsive and inclusive and achieve gender parity, and therefore should be viewed favourably as a useful tool by staff and managers alike, where exigencies of service allow.”

45. A report by the United Nations Secretariat showed that telecommuting was the most frequently used flexible working arrangement and that its usage increased consistently in the period 2012–2017.²⁰ Of the 4,123 staff who availed themselves of such arrangements in 2017, 58 per cent were women and 42 per cent were men, illustrating the importance of workplace flexibility for both sexes. Usage was least common at the Director level and above, as well as in Field Service categories.

46. Surveyed entities reported that the concerns of management regarding flexible working arrangements remained one of the greatest impediments to increasing its usage and acceptance. The integration into enterprise resource planning systems of requests for such arrangements is useful for gathering data, understanding usage and identifying possible resistance. ILO has included the approval process for both regular and ad hoc teleworking in its enterprise resource planning system and regularly monitors data.

47. In total, 70 per cent of surveyed entities with field-based staff reported that flexible working arrangements were available to staff in the field. However, some noted they were not promoted or encouraged and could be better adapted to field realities. In 2018, UNHCR introduced such an adaptation by creating a special compressed work schedule for all high-risk duty stations to mitigate the effects of hardship and psychological stress and allow reunion with family members. The arrangement allows five days of time off for every 10 weeks worked, alleviating the burden of excessive working hours when local staff, in view of the operations’ exigencies, are working beyond the established working hours.

B. Family-friendly policies

1. Parental leave and broader care needs

48. The unequal distribution of care work, supported by gender-disparate parental leave policies, is one of the main obstacles to gender equality in the workplace. Standardizing a gender-neutral parental leave of six months, where parental leave (maternity/paternity/adoption/surrogacy) is equal in length, is a key recommendation

²⁰ See “Flexible Working Arrangement (FWAs), 2017 Utilisation Report”, available at https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/2017%20FWA%20utilisation%20report%20-%20Final_0.pdf.

of the system-wide strategy on gender parity as a means of mitigating the “motherhood penalty”, where women’s career advancement is diminished by having children, while helping men play an active parental role and supporting work-life balance for all.

49. Parental leave policies across the United Nations vary. To expand the standard 16 weeks of maternity leave, six entities²¹ have supplemented this with an additional eight weeks of special leave with pay to bring it to six months. Furthermore, non-gestational parental leave has been extended to 10 weeks at WFP and to 16 weeks at UNICEF. UNHCR has extended the additional eight weeks of special leave with pay to adoption and surrogacy leaves, once the standard 10 weeks has been exhausted. UNDP introduced an additional period of special leave with full pay, with a maximum of two months added to maternity leave for staff members serving in D and E duty stations.

50. Adoption and surrogacy leaves remain the most varied. In total, 95 per cent of surveyed entities offered at least eight weeks of adoption leave. Only 38 per cent offered at least eight weeks of leave in cases of surrogacy.

51. Staff members have diverse care needs beyond parental responsibilities, including ageing parents, siblings or partners and/or family members with disabilities, for which additional leave and flexibility can provide valuable support. Twenty-four per cent of surveyed entities reported that they offered additional leave or support to personnel with disabilities or staff members who had dependents with disabilities, including WFP, which offered staff five days of leave annually to attend to the special needs of their children.

2. Breastfeeding/bottle-feeding

52. Similar to parental leave, inclusive breastfeeding policies support work-life balance, the reintegration to work and equitable parenting, which in turn aid women’s career advancement and progress towards gender parity. The recent policy on breastfeeding ([ST/SGB/2019/1](#)) reflects certain improvements, including to provide that nursing mothers of infants under two years of age shall be entitled to daily time off to express milk and/or breastfeed their infant during working hours and shall be allowed to bring their breastfed infants to work and take regular breaks throughout the workday.

53. Most United Nations entities have breastfeeding policies in place, and over a quarter of surveyed entities offered additional time off for multiple infants. Thirty-eight per cent of surveyed entities reported having a breastfeeding policy that applied equally to non-lactating parents who bottle-fed their infants. Less than a third of entities reported providing an appropriate breastfeeding facility at all locations.

3. Childcare

54. In total, 24 per cent of entities reported offering onsite childcare facilities to staff. Among these, FAO, IFAD, WFP and UNESCO have some of the most developed programmes, ranging in capacities (from 30 to 60 children) and coverage of care (from three months to eight years old).

²¹ UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and WHO.

C. Standards of conduct

1. Discrimination, harassment and abuse policies

55. Discrimination, harassment and abuse are structural issues related to historic power imbalances and abuse of power, which can stem from or be exacerbated by gender inequality and other forms of discrimination. Significant power disparities in a workplace relationship add to the risk of misconduct.²² At the same time, one of the most effective ways to change organizational culture and mitigate gender inequalities is through the leaders of the organization.²³ Women's representation in the workplace, particularly in management, disrupts power distribution along gender lines. An inclusive and diverse workforce paired with a non-discriminatory organizational culture are also key to achieving a workplace that empowers women and models gender equality.

2. Addressing sexual harassment

56. In November 2017, the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system was established, bringing together senior officials from over 40 United Nations entities and resulting in the following common tools:

(a) **United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment.** Sets a minimum standard, including components on formal and informal reporting, prevention and support to affected individuals, and makes reference to protection from retaliation.

(b) **Model Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment, at United Nations System events.** Communicates standards of conduct for internal and external audiences, including how attendees can make a complaint if they experience or witness sexual harassment at events organized or sponsored by the United Nations.

(c) **“ClearCheck” screening database.** A critical system-wide tool to avoid hiring and rehiring individuals whose working relationship within the United Nations system ended because of a determination that they had perpetrated sexual harassment.

(d) **Common guide on sexual harassment prevention and response for managers.** Includes a checklist of measures to take, possible signs of sexual harassment to watch out for and principles to follow when being approached with a complaint.

57. In the United Nations Secretariat, the Secretary-General has established a 24/7 “Speak up” helpline for personnel to speak confidentially with trained individuals. Moreover, the quality of investigations has been improved through the introduction of specialized training on sexual harassment investigations, a protocol with specific time frames for the rapid conclusion of investigations, and a dedicated team of six female investigators has been recruited and is fully operational.

58. Greater awareness and visibility of these systemic issues are key to increasing momentum for change, as seen by global movements like #MeToo. The recently adopted ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) reflects that momentum. In total, 95 per cent of the surveyed entities reported that messages had been sent to staff or other relevant partners on zero tolerance of sexual harassment,

²² See A. Smith (Society for Human Resource Management), “Reduce Summer Interns’ Vulnerability to Harassment”, 26 April 2018.

²³ See United States of America Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Performance and Accountability Report: Fiscal Year 2016* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

and 81 per cent reported that new training on sexual harassment had been offered in the past three years. Furthermore, 81 per cent of surveyed entities had accountability mechanisms in place to ensure the practice of zero tolerance. In addition, 57 per cent indicated that statistics on misconduct had been made available to all staff through the intranet, staff messaging and in townhall meetings. Several entities reported expanding psychosocial support services for victims of sexual harassment and awareness-raising campaigns, such as the “Say no to sexism” initiative by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

59. In 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution [73/148](#), for the intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment. It was the first resolution of the Assembly on sexual harassment.

D. Institutional support for reaching gender parity

60. While leadership is pivotal, changing and improving organizational culture requires cooperation and shared ownership at all levels. The United Nations Office at Geneva has established a gender steering board to provide guidance to managers in support of gender-related work. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have established a gender champions group, drawing on staff across all units and levels to help monitor and guide gender parity objectives.

61. Staff engagement is part of an inclusive approach to navigate organizational change and action plans and to guide institutional support. In total, 81 per cent of surveyed entities conduct staff-wide surveys on organizational culture and work-life balance. Only one entity reported that it conducted an annual staff survey, while 44 per cent conducted staff surveys every two years, and 28 per cent surveyed staff sporadically. A further 48 per cent of surveyed entities included consultants in their staff surveys, and 52 per cent reported that it included interns in staff surveys. In total, 81 per cent of surveyed entities made findings available to staff.

1. Gender focal points

62. A network of over 200 gender focal points and focal points for women in the United Nations Secretariat plays a crucial role in guiding efforts and sharing knowledge to advance gender parity across the United Nations system. Gender focal points provide valuable support to managers, reduce gender bias in recruitment, advocate for gender equality and work-life balance policies and monitor and report on progress made.

63. Despite the importance of gender focal points, only 60 per cent of surveyed entities reported that such a position had been appointed for all their offices, departments and missions, irrespective of the Secretary-General’s bulletin ([ST/SGB/2008/12](#)), which states that focal points shall be appointed in each department, office, regional commission and mission. On a positive note, however, almost all entities reported that gender focal points had regular access to senior management to discuss gender parity efforts.

64. The surveyed entities reported that the three major challenges that gender focal points faced were competition with primary duties, insufficient time to perform focal point duties and lack of resources to carry out functions and networking. It is concerning that 70 per cent of gender focal points reported having inadequate time and financial resources. Only 45 per cent of surveyed entities reported that gender focal points were given access to up-to-date staff selection data to review gender parity progress by level and department.

65. Gender focal points further reported that the biggest challenges to implementing the system-wide strategy on gender parity were backlash from staff members and lack of buy-in from senior managers.²⁴ Another challenge was the ability of entities to secure the necessary budget to achieve the recommended initiatives. Furthermore, gender focal points reported that the four main impediments to achieving gender parity at the P-4 level and higher were inadequate career development for mid-level staff, lack of accountability for hiring decisions, issues related to organizational culture and lack of special measures.

2. Rewarding progress

66. Showcasing achievements in gender parity helps galvanize champions, sustain change and share effective action. WMO has introduced an award for gender champion of the year, and UNIDO, in its gender equality mobilization awards,²⁵ recognize outstanding efforts in prioritizing gender-responsive behaviour. IMO has introduced champions of flexible working arrangements, and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has included gender-smart goals in staff work plans, which are assessed in performance appraisals.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

67. Momentum around the established goal of 50/50 gender balance set by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been catalysed by the system-wide strategy on gender parity, which established a road map for achieving parity at the senior levels by 2021 and across the system at all levels by 2028.

68. The overall representation of women in the Professional and higher categories in the United Nations system increased from 42.8 per cent on 31 December 2015 to 44.2 per cent on 31 December 2017. While encouraging, there was a continued negative correlation between the representation of women and seniority: in the Professional category, only at the P-1 and P-2 levels were women represented at 50 per cent or higher. Recent gains made at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels are starting to change that trend.

69. Examining trends for the period 2007–2017, it is apparent that progress has not been consistent, with frequent plateaus and even regressions. Without the gains made between 2016 and 2017, the most senior levels would have been in danger of ending the decade as they had started in terms of the representation of women.

70. The representation of women in the field, particularly in peace operations, remains a major challenge. With current and future planned downsizing, as well as staff rules and regulations that do not explicitly recognize the goal of gender parity, it is likely that these already low numbers will in fact regress. While women comprised 48.5 per cent of staff in the Professional and higher categories at headquarters locations, they constituted 39.8 per cent at non-headquarters locations and only 31.7 per cent of senior leadership at non-headquarters locations.

²⁴ See supplementary information available at <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/status-of-women-2019-annex-10-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3206>.

²⁵ See “Awards for UNIDO staff taking the extra step to prioritize gender equality and gender-responsive behaviour”, available at <https://www.unido.org/news/awards-unido-staff-taking-extra-step-prioritize-gender-equality-and-gender-responsive-behaviour>.

71. The analysis presents a picture of slow progress towards change, yet at the same time it demonstrates that tremendous gains are possible, even in one year, when senior leadership makes concerted efforts and prioritizes change. Simultaneously, declines in some staff categories and long-term trends show that more attention needs to be paid not only to achieving, but also sustaining progress.

B. Recommendations

72. **Efforts towards gender parity must continue through a comprehensive range of actions to address the impediments to reaching that goal, and to ensure accelerated and sustainable change in achieving equal representation in the United Nations system. It is vital to challenge perceptions and highlight the benefits of gender parity for the Organization as a whole.**

73. **In that regard, and in accordance with relevant and applicable procedures, all senior managers should be held accountable for the implementation of the prescribed measures, as explained in the system-wide strategy on gender parity, to attain the objective of gender parity within the shortest feasible period, including clear targets and timelines. Accountability mechanisms, such as performance appraisals as well as regular monitoring and reporting, are essential to ensuring objectives are respected and that progress is steady.**

74. **To visibly demonstrate commitment to gender parity, senior management should continue to make concrete commitments, such as by joining the International Gender Champions.**

75. **Global staff surveys and obligatory exit interviews can help to assess the bearing of organizational culture on the status of women in the United Nations system. Therefore, these tools should be used systematically and regularly to better understand the reasons behind separations and sharp decreases in the representations of women, notably between P-2 and P-3 levels and P-4 and P-5 levels, and findings should inform policy development and implementation.**

76. **In every Professional and higher category, women continued to comprise less than half of applicants. Concrete and transformative actions by entities are needed to enhance candidate pools, enforce accountability for selection and address biases in policies and attitudes that affect the selection and retention of women. This, among others, should include:**

(a) **Allowing personnel to apply for positions where they fulfil the requirements;**

(b) **Implementing temporary special measures, accompanied by accountability mechanisms to ensure their consistent uptake;**

(c) **Promoting an enabling work environment;**

(d) **Making targeted outreach to increase women applicants;**

(e) **Conducting leadership training, which could be strengthened through interagency collaboration;**

(f) **Introducing inclusive mentorship programmes that provide opportunities for staff collaboration at all levels.**

77. **To mitigate unconscious bias, interview panels should be gender balanced and diverse; hiring managers and staff should be trained to tackle unconscious bias, and, if possible, gender focal points should inform the selection process prior to selections being made.**

78. Temporary special measures for addressing gender imbalances are particularly useful in accelerating progress. While many United Nations entities have such measures in place, they are rarely reflected in staff selection policies, leading to weak implementation and accountability. For successful implementation, temporary special measures should be fully integrated into staff selection policies, and include the following measures:

- (a) Mandatory selection of qualified female candidates for posts where parity has not been achieved;
- (b) At least 50 per cent female candidates on shortlists;
- (c) Written justification from senior managers for the selection of male candidates for posts at levels in departments and offices where parity has not yet been attained.

79. Mobility policies should not assume that certain staff members – such as persons with disabilities or staff with dependents and/or a spouse – do not wish to take part in staff rotation or work in duty stations, but instead should mitigate specific challenges to maximize opportunities for all staff members. This should include:

- (a) Scheduling managed mobility exercises to coincide with average school breaks;
- (b) Providing opportunities for spousal employment at all locations;
- (c) Providing comprehensive information about duty stations, including information on available health and education services, to assuage concerns for prospective applicants.

80. With specific regard to the representation of women at non-headquarters locations, entities should continue efforts towards improving working and living conditions in the field, including those related to infrastructure and security. Tailored flexible working arrangements and other work-life balance policies suitable for field settings should be developed and piloted. Inclusive consultations with staff are recommended to ensure feasibility. Standards of conduct should also be in place and regularly monitored and reported upon.

81. United Nations entities should strengthen implementation of work-life balance policies and measures by equipping managers with the skills and tools necessary to manage a flexible workforce, including the need to encourage trust and discourage stigma, providing clear parameters for the use of flexible working arrangements and monitoring to ensure its application in a consistent manner.

82. Maternity, paternity, adoption and surrogacy leave policies should be replaced with one standardized parental leave policy of six months to promote equal caregiving and should be independent of any time needed for pre- and post-delivery medical needs. Furthermore, entities should:

- (a) To the extent possible, expand parental leave coverage to personnel on long-term non-staff modalities;
- (b) Address the broader care needs of staff members and provide additional leave and flexibility when possible;
- (c) Provide appropriate time off for parents to nourish their children and ensure the availability of facilities specially designed for breastfeeding;

(d) Consider providing reimbursements for a percentage of day-care costs, which could also be extended to cover associated costs for caring for ageing parents and/or dependents with disabilities;

(e) Provide flexibility so that parents can choose to use education grants either for pre-school or for post-secondary education.

83. Although policies often indicate that temporary appointments are to be used to backstop extended leaves, many entities fail to ensure sustainable budgetary resources to make this implementable, such as by including leave coverage as a percentage of staff costs. Not having funds secured for replacement coverage serves as a deterrent for hiring managers to hire staff in their childbearing years. Therefore, budgetary resources should be reserved accordingly.

84. The streams of work of the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the above-mentioned good practices of the Secretariat, should be continued and fully utilized to, inter alia, monitor implementation and improve the systems of reporting and coherence of the systems and structures of United Nations entities to address sexual harassment.

85. Entity policies should align with and expand upon the United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment and should strengthen their accountability mechanisms and investigative measures, to uphold a zero-tolerance policy in which no one is exempt from sexual harassment consequences.

86. While it is important that entities continue to enhance policies, procedures and structures to better prevent and address sexual harassment, cultural change is needed. This is promoted through activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and programmes that increase diversity and inclusion and promote a respectful workplace.

87. Gender focal points and focal points for women should be appointed in each office, department and mission of the United Nations, particularly in peace operations and in the field, where gender focal point representation is the lowest or non-existent, in order to better integrate the field into gender parity efforts as well as strengthen and facilitate the mandate of UN-Women to monitor and report on implementation.

88. Moreover, the terms of reference for gender focal points and focal points for women should be updated and streamlined, under the leadership of UN-Women, to enhance inter-agency efforts to reach gender parity across the United Nations system. Gender focal points should have adequate levels of seniority and responsibility, access to staff selection and representation data and an appropriate allocation of dedicated time, financial resources and training to carry out their essential functions. The designation of men as gender focal points should be encouraged.

89. Entities should continue to coordinate and collaborate with UN-Women on the basis of its mandate and should utilize its substantive guidance and tools, including the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System, to enhance and successfully implement practices and policies to advance gender parity.

90. For senior level positions in the United Nations system, Member States are encouraged to nominate qualified female candidates for due consideration as part of the competitive selection process.

Annex

Distribution by gender of staff in the Professional and higher categories, on permanent, continuous and fixed-term appointments, at all locations, by entity, as of 31 December 2017

Entity	P-1		P-2		P-3		P-4		P-5		D-1		D-2		UG		Subtotal		Women (%)
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
FAO	28	42	52	112	159	187	336	214	239	76	58	21	26	9	12	3	910	664	42.2
IAEA	2	8	57	53	233	113	331	138	237	51	29	13	5	1	6	1	900	378	29.6
ICAO	0	1	19	17	44	30	127	44	63	22	17	2	5	0	0	1	275	117	29.8
ICJ	0	0	10	10	5	14	5	8	3	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	26	33	55.9
ICSC	0	0	2	1	2	1	5	4	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	0	15	9	37.5
IFAD	2	2	15	28	41	48	40	45	62	25	14	4	5	2	2	1	181	155	46.1
ILO	4	8	50	71	98	121	210	169	214	106	47	26	14	10	6	4	643	515	44.5
IMO	0	1	7	18	17	20	25	9	21	10	9	5	7	1	1	0	87	64	42.4
IOM	16	8	85	108	156	147	141	103	54	31	32	13	2	2	1	1	487	413	45.9
ITC	4	3	18	22	30	24	29	12	19	6	3	1	0	1	0	1	103	70	40.5
ITC-ILO	0	1	2	5	6	6	14	11	10	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	34	28	45.2
ITU	3	4	28	28	62	50	69	40	49	20	18	1	2	1	5	0	236	144	37.9
PAHO	0	1	18	16	35	49	109	102	27	22	10	5	2	0	0	0	201	195	49.2
UN	1	8	460	593	1 963	1 631	2 060	1 420	1 056	611	344	163	108	56	79	44	6 071	4 526	42.7
UN-Women	0	1	6	34	19	66	20	88	22	78	3	18	1	5	1	2	72	292	80.2
UNAIDS	0	0	10	19	17	25	38	46	72	59	21	13	8	5	2	0	168	167	49.9
UNDP	1	5	84	136	283	271	445	356	320	203	117	88	43	24	11	3	1 304	1 086	45.4
UNESCO	12	22	81	130	155	178	126	116	94	44	22	23	5	11	7	3	502	527	51.2
UNFCCC	0	0	38	27	48	39	33	18	10	7	6	3	2	0	1	1	138	95	40.8
UNFPA	0	1	19	28	56	77	110	89	89	94	33	34	11	4	0	2	318	329	50.9
UNHCR	0	1	180	230	595	452	480	367	162	134	80	51	16	16	3	1	1 516	1 252	45.2
UNICC	1	0	6	1	47	12	23	7	12	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	92	21	18.6
UNICEF	2	6	108	166	514	541	645	660	371	297	60	45	13	17	3	2	1 716	1 734	50.3
UNIDO	1	0	12	10	38	24	37	27	53	16	19	4	2	1	1	0	163	82	33.5
UNITAR	0	0	3	2	7	4	2	2	9	5	1	0	0	0	1	0	23	13	36.1
UNJSPF	0	0	1	1	21	13	25	16	6	10	5	4	2	0	1	1	61	45	42.5
UNOPS	0	0	30	24	116	72	92	41	51	20	18	6	13	4	1	2	321	169	34.5

Entity	P-1		P-2		P-3		P-4		P-5		D-1		D-2		UG		Subtotal		Women (%)
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
UNRWA	0	0	9	6	26	44	50	46	24	16	13	4	10	1	1	1	133	118	47.0
UNSSC	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	6	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	9	11	55.0
UNU	0	0	9	4	9	9	7	8	7	2	6	3	4	0	2	0	44	26	37.1
UNWTO	1	5	1	2	2	3	5	7	4	6	2	0	2	0	4	0	21	23	52.3
UPU	0	0	6	6	27	9	15	5	12	5	4	1	3	0	2	0	69	26	27.4
WFP	1	1	68	79	318	220	186	148	166	121	67	40	31	16	5	1	842	626	42.6
WHO	3	7	40	84	181	189	425	365	394	272	146	75	30	11	10	13	1 229	1 016	45.3
WIPO	1	4	19	43	81	82	95	76	64	38	34	16	11	2	7	2	312	263	45.7
WMO	0	0	12	15	17	17	39	29	38	10	9	2	7	3	2	1	124	77	38.3
Total	83	140	1 565	2 129	5 432	4 791	6 399	4 842	4 040	2 427	1 254	685	393	204	180	91	19 346	15 309	44.2