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From the desk of the Focal Point

Dear Colleagues,

The past few months have been an increase in activities focusing on the promotion and advancement of women's rights and gender policies. A number of the major inter-governmental bodies dealing with these issues have held meetings, including CEDAW, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality.

International Women's Day, on the 8th of March, was also an occasion for discussion by noted high-level figures in the United Nations, particularly on the issue of women and managing conflict. At a panel discussion on this issue, the Deputy Secretary-General called once again on Member States to put forward women candidates for positions in peacekeeping operations at all levels.

The President of the General Assembly pointed out that women and girls continue to bear the greatest burden of armed conflicts - equality and respect for their human rights were intertwined with peace. And, the President of the Security Council emphasized that women are still grossly underrepresented in the areas that the Security Council deals with, and that women's contributions to peace and security remain undervalued.

I am pleased to report to you, in its resolution S/RES/1325 (2000), the Security Council requested a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. The preparation of this study will be a collective inter-agency effort, coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. It is hoped that the study, when completed, will provide guidance on incorporating gender mainstreaming into peacekeeping operations and maximizing the role of women in these processes.

Best regards,
Fatma Ashour

AROUND THE UN . . .

CEDAW

The 24th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 15 January to 2 February 2001. The Committee reviewed the reports of Burundi, Egypt, Finland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, and Uzbekistan. The next session will take place in July 2001. With the People's Republic of Korea being the latest country to ratify or accede to the Convention, the number of States parties is now 167. The Optional Protocol to the Convention entered into force on 22 December 2000 and to date there are 66 signatories and 19 State parties to the Optional Protocol.

Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality (IAMWGE), 27 February to 2 March 2001

The fifth Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination convened in New York. It was attended by representatives of the UN system agencies and organizations and UN departments. The agenda included the overview of on-going activities on gender mainstreaming in programme budgets; tools and indicators for gender impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation; mainstreaming of a gender perspective in Common Country Assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; gender and financing for development; and women, peace and security.

The meeting also held a one-day seminar on approaches and methodologies for gender mainstreaming. The workshop highlighted the role of the United Nations at the cutting edge in the development of gender mainstreaming approaches and methodologies providing role models for the Member States as well as identifying new challenges to gender mainstreaming, particularly in relation to accountability for gender mainstreaming. It also reviewed progress since the IAMWGE meeting on gender mainstreaming held at ILO, Geneva in 1997.

The meeting endorsed the terms of reference for the task force on women, peace and security that has been working on the elaboration of a draft action plan for implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325. The task force will finalize the draft action plan and coordinate the input from the IAMWGE participants for the Secretary-General's report which was requested under paragraph 16 of the resolution. This will be a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. The draft outline of the study which was also approved by IAMWGE includes: impact during conflict; gender dimensions of peace process; women's role in post-conflict peace building and recommendations. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues is coordinating the study.

The meeting also welcomed the work done by the task forces on other areas and the respective agency task managers, including gender mainstreaming in programme budget processes (OSAGI); tools and indicators for gender impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation (ECLAC); gender and financing for development (ILO); and gender and information and communications technologies (ITU). There will also be a workshop on gender, governance and poverty eradication taking place in Vienna in April 2001. UNDP is the task manager.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The 45th session of the CSW was held 6 to 17 March 2001 and a resumed session 9 to 11 May 2001. The session adopted five resolutions: on the situation of Palestinian women; release of women and children taken hostage; discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan; mainstreaming a gender

perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system. The Commission also adopted its multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2002-2006, the system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women and the narrative part of the proposed work programme on gender issues and the advancement of women 2002/2003.

The session focused on the following thematic issues: women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS and gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Agreed conclusions were adopted on the both themes as an input of the CSW to the Special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June 2001 and the World Conference on Racism to be held in Durban, 31 August - 7 September 2001.

First Woman of Merit Award presented to the Special Adviser on Gender Issues

On 7 March 2001, Ms. Angela E.V. King, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, was presented the first ever Woman of Merit Award by the NGO Committees on the Status of Women based in New York, Geneva and Vienna. The NGO Committee instituted the award to honour women in the UN system that have been of particular support to other women and who have facilitated the process of elevating women's status through their work at the United Nations. The NGO Committee stated that Ms. King "has been an outstanding source of support to us all - ever visible and supportive to efforts that are often not easy to implement."

International Women's Day, 8 March 2001

At Headquarters, there was a special discussion held in the morning under the theme "Women and Peace: Women managing conflict". The statements were made by the Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Louise Fréchette, Mr. Harri Holkeri, the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Volodymyr Yel'chenko, President of the Security Council, and Ms. Angela E.V. King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The event was organized by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality together with DPI.

Ms. Fréchette said in her opening statement that there was recognition that no strategy would work unless it involved women, and that empowering women was a development policy that works. Mr. Yel'chenko referred to the Security Council statement of that same day calling for full implementation of resolution 1325 and urging national governments to develop concrete measures and set timetables to secure equal representation of women at all levels in conflict prevention and resolution.

Ms. King said that the first challenge was to have women in leadership positions; the second, that women's skills must be integrated into all operations and the third,

the need to build a research base on women in peacekeeping operations. Ms. King also accepted a scroll of petitions for women and peace with 150,000 signatures and 30,000 postcards from the representative of International Alert.

In a second panel chaired by Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Interim Head of DPI, the panellists were: Elisabeth Rehn, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Felicity Hill, Executive Director of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Asma Jahangir, Millennium Peace Prize Recipient and Theresa Kambobe, a UN Volunteer working in the East Timor peace support operation.

An afternoon panel discussion was organized by the Group on Equal Rights for Women and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) with the theme "50/50 in the United Nations". The Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Fréchette was the guest speaker. Other panel participants included the Permanent Representative of France, Mr. Jean-David Levitte; the Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa, Ms. Jeannette Ndhlovu; the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Angela E.V. King; the Interim Head of DPI, Mr. Shashi Tharoor; and the President of GERWUN, Ms. Marcia Brewster. Ms. June Zeitlin, the Executive Director of WEDO, acted as moderator.

Ms. Fréchette said in her statement that one big challenge in the Secretariat was that of employing and retaining enough women in middle management. Many women still encountered a glass ceiling somewhere halfway up the professional ladder. Ms. Fréchette called for managers to be sensitive to the need for more women and to the needs of women.

H.E. Ambassador Levitte gave an overview of the recent legislative changes for bringing *parité* into the French electoral system through the introduction of gender quotas in the political parties' polling lists. Ms. Ndhlovu described the efforts and policies that South Africa has recently put in place in order to achieve better gender politics in the country. And Mr. Tharoor reaffirmed DPI's commitment to maintain the 50 per cent that it had already achieved. In her remarks, Ms. King said that many of the innovations of today's working conditions, such as flexible work schedules, may be traced to the impact women have had on the world of work. She also called for programme managers to encourage and facilitate the career advancement of General Service staff through managed reassignments, more challenging work plans and job descriptions, or stints as staff in peacekeeping operations.

WEDO has launched a project "50/50 by 2005: Get the balance right!" committed to reaching a critical mass of women in every country in both appointed and elected decision-making positions and in all international bodies. The project is based on the governments' decision in the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to "take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making".

Millennium Peace Prize for Women

The Millennium Peace Prize was developed as a joint initiative by UNIFEM and International Alert to reverse the perception that women and girls are passive victims of conflict. The awards specifically honours the vital role that women play in peace building and the indispensable contributions they have made to resolving and preventing conflicts. The awards were made on 8 March 2001 to Flora Brovina from Kosovo, Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani from Pakistan, the late Veneranda Nzambazamariya from Rwanda and to three NGOs: Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres from Colombia, Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency from Papua New Guinea and Women in Black.

A Special welcome to...

Ms. Mary Ann Wyrsh of the United States of America, who has been appointed the new United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. She assumed her post on 1 April 2001.

Ms. Wyrsh was named Deputy Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in March 1998 and has served as the acting Commissioner since November 2000. In that position, Ms. Wyrsh managed the day-to-day operations of more than 30,000 INS employees worldwide. The recently appointed High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, said that the new Deputy High Commissioner's responsibilities include the function of controller; responsibility for information systems and technology; management of human and financial resources; and the supervision of communication and information system.

A welcome also goes to **Ms. Regina Amadi-Njuko** of Nigeria who has taken up the post of ILO Regional Director for Africa at the level of Assistant Director-General in October 2000; and to **Ms. Doris Muck-Bertrand** of Austria who has joined the Joint Inspection Unit in February 2001 as the only woman inspector and the second ever to be elected.

Mr. Adama Dieng, the new Registrar for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Michael Sheehan of the United States who has been appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Logistics, Management and Mine Action in the DPKO.

Congratulations to the new D-2 women in the Secretariat: **Ms. Monique Corvington**, Director of Conference Services at UN Office at Geneva; **Ms. Annick De Marffy** who is the Director for the Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea in OLA; and **Dr. Sudershan Narula** who is the new Director of Medical Services.

Farewell and best wishes to...

Mr. Julio Camarena-Villaseñor, Chief of Common System and Inter-Agency Policy Unit in OHRM, has taken up new duties as the Director of Human Resources Management in UNIDO in Vienna as of 1 April 2001. Mr. Camarena came to the UN in 1993 after serving as the Executive Officer for the Regional Bureau in Latin America and the Caribbean in UNDP.

For the past six years, Mr. Camarena has served as the Chair of the Task Force on Work/Life Issues, an inter-agency group whose mandate is to incorporate individual family issues into working life. He was instrumental in presenting the option for sick leave to be used as family leave to the Fifth Committee. He has also brought these issues to the attention of the Deputy Secretary-General who has pledged a great deal of support to work/life issues. Although we wish him all the best in his challenging position, Julio will be sorely missed in the Secretariat.

Recognition to...

Mr. Roy Laisley, former Chief of News Services and Editorial Section of DPI, who has been commended by one of his female staff members for facilitating a very gender sensitive working environment. The staff member was eight months pregnant when interviewed for the post which she was later selected for. She told Network that she was granted one month's leave without pay to secure proper day care for the infant as well as a possibility for flexible break times for breastfeeding. This manager's sensitivity to gender concerns came along with a requirement for professional standards for all his staff members.

We are sure that many other women and men managers throughout the Secretariat are equally ensuring a similar enabling environment for women and men staff with family responsibilities. Network applauds them and encourages them to continue.

NETWORK TO THE TOP

Network is glad to share with you an interview with Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The interview was conducted by Rasna Warah, Editor of Habitat Debate and Diana Lee-Smith, Gender Focal Point in Habitat in Nairobi.

Q: What do you see as the main obstacles to women's career advancement in a male-dominated organization?

A: I think the main obstacle is the attitude across the board to the policy of women's advancement. Progressive thinking among all staff, particularly

supervisors and managers, needs to be streamlined so that all can share this vision and be convinced about its merits. It is still not clear whether everybody is convinced on this question. Therefore, there is overt and subtle resistance. There is also a lack of serious effort to look for women to fill positions. I think the greatest obstacle at the moment is that of attitude, particularly in the middle management levels.

Q: How can women break the glass ceiling? How must sexism be dealt with?

A: Through education and persuasion. Sexism is not something we should take too personally because people are victims of their social conditioning; the way they were brought up and cultural attitudes. It will take time to break cultural prejudices and structures. But we are working for an ideal cause, which means we cannot give up. So advocacy has to continue.

Q: What are the basic female qualities that give women an advantage over men when working in a big organization?

A: My personal position on these matters is that women are women and men are men - they are unequal equals, if you will. I have led my life as a woman - I work as a woman, I think like a woman, I feel the way a woman feels. I will never be a man. The same can be said for men. I think these differences are a source of strength. Women bring special qualities to the workplace just as men do. It is a combination of these two qualities that will improve the workplace. Women are generally more straightforward. Women are much more open because they are not clever in concealing their feelings. With women, you know exactly where you stand. They make poor politicians as a result, but normally you can tell whether they agree with you or not, or even whether they are happy or sad. Male colleagues are much more subtle and sophisticated when it comes to these matters. Therefore, women bring in a more transparent atmosphere in the workplace and this can only be a plus, especially in large organizations.

Q: Does having women in leadership positions make a difference in an organization and if so how?

A: I think it does, particularly if the women themselves are gender-aware. It cannot be taken for granted that every woman top manager realizes that there are gender imbalances. For example, women in appointed positions may not realize that they are benefiting from the progressive efforts of women who came before them - that they are beneficiaries of the work done by our grandmothers and the women's movement which started a long time ago. If women are not aware of this contribution, they are not likely to make much of a difference in addressing gender imbalances.

Q: What message would you like to address to women who are planning careers in the UN system?

A: The UN is a very interesting place to work. Here you can make your contribution, no matter how small, to the betterment and advancement of humankind. This can be very gratifying. However, the bureaucracy in a big organization like this one can be a downside. You will also find that while the UN's work is progressive, not everyone working for the UN is progressive. Some women may be unlucky and find that their managers are gender-insensitive. My advice to women is to persevere through self-confidence, commitment and honesty. I think if a woman has all that, the UN can be a very rewarding place to work.

Q: In your opinion, what should an organization do to reach gender balance? What specific action plans do you recommend?

A: There are some things that should be fought structurally. For example, an organization such as Habitat, which is heavily weighed in favour of engineering sciences, architecture and urban planning, tends to exclude women automatically because fewer women are trained in these fields. You can't put women in positions simply because they are women. Inside the organization, my own plans are to encourage more women to apply for jobs. Nairobi is not always attractive to some women as they face obstacles, such as lack of security and the fact that their spouses cannot easily find jobs here. But as Jesse Jackson says, " If you run, you can lose, but if you don't run, you are guaranteed to lose." So if you don't apply for jobs in the first place, you are already out of the picture. Women should apply and register their interest.

On the other hand, let's face it, not all women are good performers on the job. We cannot idealize women. Some women may be non-performers - they may be looking for favours and privileges without delivering the work. My advice to women is to rely on their merit rather than on favouritism. Merit will protect you, whereas if you are the beneficiary of a favour, you will lose when the benefactor leaves. I don't want to support meritocracy for its own sake, but merit is a part of building confidence among women.

Q: How would you make the work environment more participatory in order to establish good team spirit?

A: I interact very closely with my staff, through, for example, the Staff Association and the Gender Task Force. I have an open door policy, so any member of staff can walk into my office and give me advice or tell me their opinions or grievances. I want to become an insider in the organization as a way of making an independent assessment of the situation and to see how best I can improve the situation.

Q: You are a recently widowed single mother and have been given a huge responsibility of managing a UN organization. How do you cope with these competing demands?

A: As you know, I have four children and recently my husband passed away. That's a double shift for any woman. But I think women are brought up and culturalized to be jugglers. That helps. Definitely, it can take a toll on anyone. In my case, I lost a husband who was very supportive. He was a diplomat, which meant he had a stable job. The burden of taking care of children alone weighs heavily on my shoulders. But these are life's realities so you simply have to face them. You can't change the situation, but I am doing the best I can.

News from around the UN system

Collective agreement on sexual harassment in ILO

The International Labour Office and the ILO Staff Union signed a collective agreement on the prevention and resolution of harassment-related grievances on 26 February 2001 in Geneva. The agreement covers all forms of harassment (including mobbing/bullying and sexual harassment) and the informal resolution of harassment-related grievances; resolution by dialogue process (involving the services of an Ombudsman); or resolution by adjudication (Joint Panel).

The agreement has defined sexual harassment as follows: **"Any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in a workplace or in connection with work, which makes a protected person feel humiliated, intimidated, discriminated against or offended. The distress caused by the act or series of acts may be intentional or unintentional. Sexual harassment can be coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence or affect the job, career or status of a protected person. It can also be manifested when one or more persons submit a protected person, at any level, to offensive behaviour or humiliation on the basis of that protected person's sex or sexuality, even though there may be no apparent impact on the career or employment of the protected person concerned."**

The document lists the following forms of sexual harassment among others:

1. Deliberate and unsolicited physical contact or unnecessarily close physical proximity;
2. Repeated sexually-oriented comments or gestures about the body, appearance or life-style of a protected person;
3. Offensive phone calls, letters or email messages;
4. Stalking;
5. Showing or displaying sexually explicit graphics, cartoons, pictures, photographs or internet images;
6. Questions or insinuations about a protected person's private life;
7. Persistent invitations to social activities after the protected person has made clear they are not welcome; and
8. Sexually explicit jokes or propositions.

The prohibition on sexual harassment in the ILO agreement covers behaviour at the workplace or at social functions arising out of work, during travel or missions undertaken in connection with work or during field work.

Women in decision-making: reflected in selected UN Advisory and Expert Bodies

The representation of women in the different UN advisory and expert bodies is interesting as a recent Network survey shows. You can see from the table below, the number of female members in the following bodies, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Board of Auditors, International Civil Service Commission, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for Former Yugoslavia, Joint Inspection Unit, and UN Administrative Tribunal, is 12.2 per cent out of the total 90 members.

Gender distribution of the membership of United Nations Advisory/Expert Bodies as of 1 April 2001

Body	No. of women / %	Total number of members
ACABQ	3 / 18.8	16
Board of Auditors	- / 0	3
UNAT	2 / 28.6	7
ICSC	2 / 13.3	15
JIU	1 / 9.1	11
ICJ	1 / 6.7	15
ICTR	1 / 11.1	9
ICTY	1 / 7.1	14
Total	11 / 12.2 %	90

ACABQ - Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

UNAT - UN Administrative Tribunal

ICSC - International Civil Service Commission

JIU - Joint Inspection Unit

ICJ - International Court of Justice

ICTR - International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

ICTY - International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia

Women ambassadors in Geneva

As of February 2001, there are 30 women Ambassadors resident in Geneva accredited to the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. The following countries (20) have women representatives to the United Nations: Bolivia,

Botswana, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, FYROM, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Ireland, Kenya, Libya, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zambia. In addition, the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity is a woman. The following countries (9) have women representatives accredited to the World Trade Organization: France, Grenada, Guatemala, Latvia, Lesotho, St. Kitts and Nevis, Slovakia, Thailand, and the United States.

(Source: UNOG Information service)

ON THE SPOT - Departmental Focal Points

Network starts a new series of interviews focusing on the work and role of departmental Focal Points with Ms. Mary Chamie, Departmental Focal Point for Women in DESA. (The terms of reference for the departmental Focal Points are authorized under ST/SGB/1999/19).

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has two departmental focal points for women and two alternates. Mary Chamie, Ruth Engo, Akiko Ito, and Christine Shaw represent different disciplines in the economic and social fields, however, they work together in support of the USG/DESA, Mr. Nitin Desai, in fulfilling the achievement of gender equality in the Department. They serve as ex officio members of departmental placement and promotion panels for staff in the Professional category and above and departmental panels advising on special post allowances for staff in all categories. They also advise women staff within DESA on issues affecting their career development or conditions of service. Network interviewed Mary Chamie and solicited her views on the role she plays in these departmental matters.

Q: What are the most interesting aspects of serving as a departmental focal point?

A: The element of surprise. All kinds of issues arise that make you think differently as a representative of a group rather than simply presenting your individual point of view. Representation requires a more holistic approach and involves looking at the overview - the entire office situation, goals of the United Nations, views of others, both men and women. It is important to understand the process and to learn when it is and is not appropriate to intervene.

Q: What methods do you use to identify the special interests and needs of women in the department?

A: The focal points use a variety of methods to identify staff needs. First, we discuss views among ourselves as focal points and among others within DESA. Then we try to enlarge the understanding of gender issues in two dimensions: the inclusion of men in the process and recognizing and addressing women's role in gender. We look at what women and men do to create issues that require institutional solutions. These are the human dimensions of gender.

Q: How do you think women view the advancement of women?

A: The bias of gender is cultural and must be approached on a different level. For example, there is a general cultural understanding that men are leaders, dynamic and take-charge types; whereas women are not. Many, both women and men, believe that if a woman is successful, someone is behind her pushing buttons. Also, there are many women who have problems with women supervisors because they see them as being unqualified and being unfairly promoted.

Occasionally women will come to the focal points and say "I am a woman and I did not get promoted". At that point the focal points try to make it clear that the first step is to look at the process, and not to assume that every woman was denied promotion because of gender bias.

As focal points, we try to concentrate on early intervention - prevention, rather than proving the case afterwards. Care should be taken to ensure that women are properly evaluated, given challenging goals and opportunities, and that they have good communication with managers and with other colleagues. Mentoring in the department is informal, unofficial and always available. Since it is a voluntary service, I believe it should stay informal.

Q: What do you think of training available for women?

A: I believe that women find management training very helpful since they learn the principles of process and administering ideas. These are skills that are mutually beneficial to men and women and produce common goals. In my personal opinion, gender training sometimes reinforces the image that women are helpless. Women should be effectively integrated into main training programmes instead of being dealt with separately.

Irrespective of the organization, it is a basic fact that the system works for those who are in it. Men have been in the organization for a long time so they have relatively few problems. The system, however, does not yet know how to deal effectively with women. That's why it is important to get the system to accommodate all people and then allow it to function at maximum efficiency.

Q: As focal point, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

A: I cannot say that I have any significant accomplishments as an individual. However, as a symbol, departmental focal points are flags - we remind our colleagues of the need to ensure that women and men are treated fairly in the system and remind them of the reality of implementing the goals of the Organization. I must admit that we carry these flags, at times, in the face of hostility and unfriendly behaviour from some staff. And, I have learned a valuable lesson on how to negotiate under antagonistic circumstances.

Q: How can we ensure that the Special Measures remain intact during the human

resources reform process?

A: Gender mainstreaming has been extremely successful. In 1985, there was no woman Section Chief or above that level in my area. That picture has now significantly improved.

I believe we must insist on clear, objective criteria as a built-in process to ensure mainstreaming continues as we transfer from the special measures to broader UN policy. However, the regular monitoring and reporting are critical aspects of the system that must be maintained.

Q: What policy would you like to see implemented for general service women?

A: I would like to see secretarial posts open fully to women and men. The world is changing and 50/50 goals should apply to all occupations in the United Nations. I believe that there should be a general service mainstreaming programme to focus on the inclusion of men in female-dominated GS occupations and women in male-dominated occupations like Security and Trades and Crafts.

The United Nations is a place to try out new ideas and new principles. Equal appointments and a fair system lead to a highly productive mix of people with common goals and challenges, as well as privileges.

One of the reasons for the great divide that seems to exist between GS and P women is the poor exchange of information. In DESA, we tried to bring professional and general service women together to each tell their stories. The lack of effective and meaningful communication has created an artificial barrier between the two groups of women. There is a great deal of room to understand each other's concerns and problems and to help each other achieve the goals that we have set.

Statistics

Gender distribution of staff at the professional level and above in the Un Secretariat as of 28 February 2001

	All staff			Geographical		
Level	M	W	% Women	M	W	%Women
USG	32	3	8.6	19	3	13.6
ASG	31	4	11.4	14	4	22.2
D-2	92	20	17.9	57	17	23.0
D-1	217	90	29.3	123	76	38.2

P-5	547	249	31.3	304	154	33.6
P-4	1126	522	31.7	422	250	37.2
P-3	958	604	38.7	326	280	46.2
P-2	341	304	47.1	171	167	49.4
P-1	7	9	56.2	-	-	-
Total	3351	1805	35.0%	1436	951	39.8%

Source: Human Resources Planning and Management Information System Service.

Small notes

Gender quotas in the European Union

The European Women's Lobby called for action in its press release on the International Women's Day 2001. According to the statistics of the organization women represent an average of 18.06% of decision-makers in the EU institutions: European Parliament 26.8%; European Commission 25.0%; Economic and Social Committee 17/1%; Committee of the Regions 14.9% and the in the European Council 6.5%.

Never before has an attempt to introduce gender quotas within the European Union context been successful. On 18 January 2001, the European Parliament voted and approved a proposal which would introduce a quota of 40% of women and men in the decision-making bodies of the European Union as well as at the national level in the different electoral systems. Ms. Nicole Fontaine from France is the current president of the European Parliament.

In the EU members states, only Belgium has so far applied gender quotas in the polling lists of the political parties: one third of the candidates need to be women.

As mentioned earlier, the French Ambassador, Mr. Jean-David Levitte spoke about the new gender quotas in France in a panel discussion organized by the Group on Equal Rights for Women and WEDO on International Women's Day. The French constitution has been changed to adapt to new legislation which was implemented for the first time in the municipal elections in March 2001. All political parties must introduce equal numbers of men and women candidates on their polling lists in all general elections. State funding for those political parties, who do not fill the requirements, will be reduced as a penalty.

(Sources: www.womenlobby.org, www3.europarl.eu.int/omk/)

New OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues

The Organization for Security and Cooperation for Europe (OSCE) adopted an action plan for gender issues on 1 June 2000. The plan was established to ensure

the OSCE commitments concerning equality in rights and equality of opportunity for women and men are taken into account by participating States and in the practical work of the OSCE institutions and field missions.

Within its own institutions, positive action will be taken to promote the nomination and appointment of women candidates. All participating States are called upon to nominate qualified women for future openings, particularly for field activities and visible positions such as head of mission. The OSCE Secretariat will issue gender statistics of OSCE staff.

The plan confirms that the OSCE institutions and field activities commit themselves to preventing discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. All staff will be informed about the "Professional Working Environment Policy" through materials or training. Guidelines on gender awareness will be developed for mission members.

The plan gives out details for training programmes for different target groups on gender matters: all senior staff; human rights officers and NGO liaison officers; local non-governmental sector and local staff members in the field missions; and police monitors and police officers.

For more information please see www.osce.org.

Of interest

Electronic Human Resources Handbook on the Intranet

OHRM has launched an electronic version of the Human Resources Handbook which is now available to all staff under the Intranet at UN Headquarters. The Handbook expands on some of the subjects found in the current Personnel Manual, which has been accessible only to staff in Executive and front offices. The references found under Gender Equality are now linked to other human resources topics. You can find a number of administrative issuances on staff development, performance appraisal, appointment, placement and recruitment, SPA, mission service, retention/employment of retirees, consultants and individual contractors and sexual harassment.

The following basic documents on gender equality are listed:

1. Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat (ST/SGB/1999/9. and ST/IC/1999/48);
2. Policies to achieve gender equality in the United Nations (ST/SGB/282);
3. Special measures for the achievement of gender equality (ST/AI/1999/9);
4. Departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat (ST/SGB/1999/19).

To access the Handbook please refer to one of the following websites:

- http://intranet/hr_handbook
- http://intranet.un.org/hr_handbook
- http://157.150.196.1/hr_handbook

The Special Adviser on Gender Issues visits the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)

At the invitation of Mr. Guéhenno, the head of DPKO, Ms. King visited the mission from 28 April to 2 May 2001. The purpose of the visit was to assess the degree to which gender perspective has been incorporated within UNMIBH's programme of activities, particularly in light of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); to review women's representation in staffing; and to gauge whether the work environment was supportive of women's full participation in the work of the mission.

During her visit, Ms. King met with managers and staff members as well as agency officials from OHCHR, UNDP, IOM and ICTY. She gave a briefing to approximately 150 women staff members of the mission on the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and on the UN's policies for reaching gender balance.

FLASH FLASH FLASH

First woman Assistant Secretary-General appointed in the United Nations honoured

The Deputy Secretary-General delivered a lecture in Helsinki on 20 March 2001 at an event honouring the first woman appointed Assistant Secretary-General in the UN Secretariat in 1972, Ms. Helvi Sipilä of Finland. In her lecture Ms. Fréchette noted the improvements made in women's representation since the 1970s increasing from 15 per cent to almost 40 per cent. " We need to take more determined action, we need a change of mentalities and attitudes towards women, if we want to achieve real equality and build a better future for all the girls and women of the world."

Ms. Sipilä's career in the UN began in 1960 as the Finnish representative in the Committee on the Status of Women. She represented her country in the General Assembly's Third Committee, and was elected chair of that Committee in 1971. She was appointed UN Assistant Secretary-General responsible for matters concerning women, elderly, disabled and youth matters in 1972.

CD Rom on gender and humanitarian assistance

Our colleagues in OCHA have informed us of a new CD Rom "Gender and Humanitarian Assistance Resource Kit". An inter-agency sub-working group on gender and humanitarian assistance has produced the CD Rom which contains

analytical documents, policy statements, guidelines and checklists, tools for planning and training. For a preview, please see the website: www.reliefweb.int/library/IWD/index.html.

Work/family matters

For contacts and information for spouses accompanying wives and husbands abroad, please see the following web sites (Source: www.womanabroad.com):

- www.realtimes/lycos.com/renews/19980619_jobhunt.htm
- www.expataccess.com/social/studs/studs.htm
- www.terracognita.com/WJ_Male.html
- www.thesun.org

You can read Network on-line at www.un.org/womenwatch/network

Contributions from readers

Network regularly receives requests from different duty stations and field offices of UN agencies to receive copies and to be put on our email list. Thank you for your continued support.

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

Read Network on-line at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpnetworks.htm>

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