

*Improvement of the status of women  
in the United Nations system  
IANWGE February 17, 2011  
Focal Point for Women, UN Women*



Data source A/65/334

# Overview of Presentation

- + WHAT WE DID:
- + *LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR GENDER EQUALITY;*
- + *ADVOCACY* – Consistently Raised its level: SG's Policy Committee and Change Management Committee; Inter-Agency Meetings; ICSC,SG's new year address – Shifts focus also to Middle Management Levels; Public Presentations and on technology – user friendly articles and stories
- + *MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:* 8 Reports: Progressively adding indicators: Appointments, promotions and separations - UN System; Representation of Women by Grade Categories and Entity; SG Recommendations; *POLICY* : Expert Group Meetings - Gender Strategy – 2008; Work-Life Policy and Practice: 2010
- + *FACT SHEETS AND PROJECTIONS PER AGENCY:*
- + *TOOLS - SURVEYS:* FP System and FWA - from different perspective: FPs, Staff and Executive Officers; Scorecard, Indicators in Compacts and Action Plans;
- + *TRAINING* – Mainstream the perspectives in Training Courses by en mass participation as a strategy
- + *AREAS STILL REQUIRING ATTENTION:* Impediments to achieving gender balance identified by the UN system
- + *CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES*– Accountability; Work Life; Sponsor effect;
- + *FEEDBACK FROM ENTITIES*
- + *THE WAY FORWARD – YOU TELL US : HOW CAN WE BEST SERVICE YOU*

# Legislative Basis

- + **Charter of the United Nations** (Articles 8 and 101)  
The Charter of the United Nations (Articles 8 and 101) stipulates that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in every capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.
- + **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (Articles 2 and 23)  
States that there can be no distinction or discrimination on the basis of gender.
- + **Beijing Platform for Action** (Para 193) requests the United Nations to Implement existing and adopt new employment policies and measures in order to achieve overall gender equality, particularly at the Professional level and above, by the year 2000.

**As a standard setting organization, the United Nations has a particular responsibility to achieve the equal representation of women within its own system. It must lead by example.**

**“Example is not one way to lead; it is the only way”**

# Commitments by the General Assembly to Gender Parity

Date Adopted	Resolution	Goal for Representation of Women	Target Date
11 Dec. 1986	41/206	30% posts subject to geographic distribution	1990
21 Dec. 1990	45/239	35% posts subject to geographic distribution, particularly in senior policy-level and decision-making posts	1995
		25% posts ranked D-1 and above	1995
1 Feb. 1996	50/164	50/50 in managerial and decision-making positions	2000
31 Jan. 1997	51/67	50/50 gender distribution at all levels	2000
6 Feb. 1998	52/96	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	2000
8 Feb. 2001	55/69	50/50 in senior and policy-making levels	The very near future
19 Feb. 2004	58/144	50/50 for SG appointed special representatives and special envoys	2015
10 Feb. 2005	59/164	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	The very near future
07 Feb. 2007	61/145	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	NA
14 Feb. 2008	62/137	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	NA
4 Feb. 2009	63/159	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	NA
18 Feb. 2010	64/141	50/50 reaffirmed for all posts	NA

# Appointments and Promotions of Women

## A Comparison: 2005-2007 and 2008-2009

	Appointments			Promotions		
	2005-2007 % Rep of W	2008-2009 % Rep of W	% Change	2005-2007 % Rep of W	2008-2009 % Rep of W	% Change
UG	25	28.6	3.6			
D-2	28.2	26.3	-1.9	N/A	25.4	
D-1	34.9	27.9	-7	33.6	31.2	-2.4
P-5	31.7	28.6	-3.1	36.7	38.2	1.5
P-4	36.2	36.4	0.2	44.2	46.7	2.5
P-3	43.9	44.3	0.4	52.7	50.6	-2.1
P-2	57.8	60.3		62.8	51.5	
All Levels	40.8	45.2	4.4	44.8	44.8	0
Conclusion	Increase overall Decrease P-5 to D-2 levels: especially stark at D-1 level			No increases in overall percent of promotions of women Decreases at D-2 level		

# Separations of Women

1 January 2008-31 December 2009

- + Women accounted for 42.6 percent of all separations
- + Senior levels registered lower proportions of separations of women:
  - + At the UG level, women accounted for only 13.5% of all separations : far lower than their representation in the UN System - 27.8%
- + Professional levels registered higher proportions of separations of women:
  - + E.g. At the P-3 level, separations of women accounted for 45.1% of all separations: women represent 44.1% of the overall professional population at this level.

Suggests that in terms of separation (or retention), women are lower risk hires at senior levels than men AND the risk is inversely proportional to level.

Possible explanations: youthful exploration of careers and/or inability of system to retain. WE DO NOT KNOW

Level	Separations of women (%) of total separations	Representation of women (%)
UG	13.5 (11 women)	27.8 (70 women)
D-2	21.6 (42 women)	26.0 (149 women)
D-1	26.5 (120 women)	29.2 (543 women)
P-5	28.1 (357 women)	32.3 (1900 women)
P-4	34.9 (867 women)	37.8 (3344 women)
P-3	45.1 (1384 women)	44.1 (3484 women)
P-2	60.4 (1300 women)	57.4 (1944 women)

# Change in the representation of women by entity

Between 2007 and 2009,

- + 20 entities increased their representation of women – increases range from 0.4% to 19.5% :

FAO, ICAO, ICJ, IFAD, ILO, IMO, ITC, ITC-ILO, PAHO, UN Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNRWA, UNU, WFP, WIPO, WTO

- + One agency registered no change (UNOPS)

- + Nine recorded a decrease in the representation of women – decreases range from 19.7% to 0.5%:

IAEA, ICSC, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UPU, WHO, WMO

One entity, ITU, did not submit data.

## ***Accountability and Action:***

***The smaller the unit of accountability the better i.e. Specific entity vs UN System, Department vs. Agency; Division vs. Department***

# Representation of Women by Entity and Level

Percentage of Female in the P and above categories in the organizations of the United Nations system, Continuous and Fixed-Term Contracts, 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2009  
(ANNEX 1 of GA report A/65/334)

D2 - UG	Agency	P5 - D1	Agency	P1 - P4	Agency
100.00	ITC	50.00	ICSC	58.54	ICJ
100.00	ICJ	48.87	UNFPA	56.96	IMO
60.00	ICAO	42.79	UNICEF	56.02	IFAD
50.00	PAHO	41.67	UNITAR	55.84	UNESCO
44.44	UNFPA	41.18	UNJSPF	54.69	UNFPA
44.44	UNICEF	39.66	PAHO	53.66	UNAIDS
42.86	IMO	38.07	UNDP	52.98	UNICEF
38.46	IFAD	36.81	UNHCR	51.11	WIPO
36.84	UNHCR	36.74	ILO	50.00	UNRWA
35.29	ILO	36.16	WFP	48.94	UNDP
33.33	UNJSPF	35.93	UNAIDS	48.43	ILO
20.89	UNDP	34.53	UNESCO	46.91	PAHO
28.26	WFP	33.33	ITC-ILO	46.19	WHO
27.27	UNAIDS	30.09	WHO	45.76	ITC-ILO
27.14	WHO	28.74	UN Secretariat	45.45	WTO
25.00	UNESCO	27.66	IFAD	42.86	UNITAR
25.00	UNRWA	25.86	IMO	42.20	UNHCR
23.51	UN Secretariat	25.00	UPU	42.11	UN Secretariat
22.58	FAO	24.06	WIPO	41.65	WFP
19.23	IAEA	23.53	ITC	40.19	ITC
15.38	WMO	21.05	UNRWA	37.95	FAO
12.5	WIPO	21.05	WMO	36.28	ICAO
12.50	UNIDO	20.65	FAO	35.94	WMO
0.00	ICSC	18.37	UNOPS	33.96	UNJSPF
0.00	ITC-ILO	18.02	UNIDO	33.33	ICSC
0.00	UNITAR	16.67	ICJ	31.10	UNIDO
0.00	UNOPS	14.44	IAEA	26.92	UPU
0.00	UNU	11.67	ICAO	26.52	UNOPS
0.00	UPU	0.00	UNU	25.64	IAEA
0.00	WTO	0.00	WTO	21.62	UNU

ITU - NO DATA



# Impediments in achieving gender balance

Twenty-seven of the 31 UN entities responded to the Focal Point survey on impediments for the achievement of gender balance at the P-4 to D-2 levels: They cited:

- + inadequate accountability, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms;
- + lack of special measures for gender equality;
- + weak integration of focal point systems;
- + weak implementation of flexible working arrangements; insufficient outreach;
- + low numbers of qualified women applicants.

**Good practices reported by some entities to address these impediments are given later in this presentation.**

**However, information sharing can be made more timely and effective**

# Gender Strategy

An effective gender balance strategy

- + provides a positive framework to propel progress at an institutional level.
- + anticipates areas and activities of organizational action with a bearing on the improvement of gender balance and the status of women in the organization.

# Elements of a Gender Strategy for the Equal Representation of Women

- + Advocacy and awareness (Communication strategy)
  - + Policy
    - + Targets;
    - + Special Measures for Gender Equality – Staff Selection/Promotion
    - + Retention and Rehire
    - + Career Progression : Succession Planning
    - + Facilitative Environment : Safe environment/Grievance Redress/ Harassment incl Sexual and Abuse of Power; **Work Life Support; Training; Sponsorship and Mentorship;**
    - + **Networks - system of Focal Points and other informal networks**
- NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE STAFF SELECTION AND TRANSPARENCY: NEITHER PROGRESS NOR PARITY THROUGH SYSTEMS AND BUSINESS AS USUAL
- + Monitoring and accountability mechanisms
    - + Regular and public reporting (SG Report on Improvement of the Status of Women)
    - + Surveys
    - + Scorecard
    - + Insertion of indicators in other accountability tools (e.g .Compacts with SG, Human Resource Action Plans)

Dedicated Budgetary and Human Resource Support - Units executing gender mandates cannot be housewives of the system, overworked and under-resourced (i.e. as individuals or units without congruent budgets).

# Gender Strategy

## What We Know

- + In a 2006 report on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (A.61/318), the Secretary General identified several causes of the slow advancement of women including lack of a gender strategy; **An effective gender balance strategy provides a positive and multi-level framework to propel progress at an institutional level, also with boldness.**
  
- + **Trends and good practices**
  - + In 2009, 17 entities reported having gender balance strategies; 13 did not.
  - + In 2007, 15 entities reported having gender balance strategies; 4 did not.
  - + ILO, UNESCO, UNCHR, UNRWA, and UNDP mentioned gender strategies as good practices..
  
- + **What More We Need to Know/Do?**
  - + Systematize the availability of the strategies to all;
  - + 13 entities have no gender strategies - why not?
  - + Adequately resource the strategies including with a NETWORK of focal points
  - + Monitor implementation of the strategies

# Communications, Awareness, & Advocacy

## What We Know

### + Effective gender balance strategy needs:

- + Tone at the Top (TT) - Public, consistent and constant communication of commitment
- + A communications and advocacy plan preferably endorsed by the highest level

## Trends and good practices

- + Entities providing examples of good practice in communications and advocacy: UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, the UN (SG and the DSG have sent letters to all heads of departments and offices requesting them to take steps to promote gender balance and improved work life balance – also gender balance reference in beginning of year address; Communication Plan endorsed by the Change Management Committee which designated Work Life as priority theme for 2010)
- + Network of Focal Points in organizational units is key;

## What More We Don't Know/Do:

- Mapping of allies and target groups
- + Designation of High Level Champions
- + Incorporation of consistent messaging in institutional training courses

# System of Focal Points

## What We Know

- + The General Assembly resolution, in 64/141 (para. 20), called upon the United Nations system to achieve the goal of gender balance and *designate focal points at the highest levels*.
  - + 18 of the 30 entities (FAO, IAEA, ICAO, ILO, IMO, the International Training Centre, ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, the Pension Fund and the Pension Committee, the United Nations Secretariat, UNRWA, UNU, WHO, WIPO and WMO) had gender focal points.
  - + The number, level and independence of FPs and the network vary between entities. Several entities raised concerns about the voluntary nature of their gender focal points, noting that the workload signified by their mandate and functions is incommensurate with the voluntary designation of responsibilities.
  - + Terms of Reference of a network formally promulgated : essential to endow legitimacy and effectiveness
- + A 2010 Survey on the Working of the Network of Focal Points in the Secretariat where the network found:
- + The network was highly valued: notably, for its role in sharing information, strengthening relationships and providing safe places;
- + Heavy work load and lack of support from management and staff; Demand to better networking expanding also to UN entities

## What More We Need to Know/Do

- + Create and maintain wider stronger networks; Better use technology to exchange info and ideas;
- + Formalize the networks where they are not yet formal;

# Special Measures

## What we know

- + CEDAW article 4 articulates temporary special measures : it sets the standard, to which the UN ought also to adhere.

**Special measures** : are catalytic measures specifically intended to accelerate progress towards gender balance *and appear necessary to accelerate progress*;

- + range from staff selection system provisions directly impacting the recruitment and promotion of women, to less direct measures that positively affect the organizational culture such as training targeting women's leadership; **Exist on the books but lack in implementation**;
- + **Trends and Good Practices:** Fifteen of the United Nations system entities reported having some form of special measures to improve the status of women (IAEA, ICSC, ILO, ITU, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, the United Nations Secretariat, UNRWA, WHO, WIPO, UPU and the World Tourism Organization); Two (IFAD and FAO) noted that they expected to institute them.
- + Examples of special measures include: UNHCR where recruitment is mandated to have a ratio of 3:2 of female to male at all levels until gender parity is achieved, UNOPS with binding special measures to select equally qualified female candidates until the 45 per cent to 55 per cent parity rate is reached
- + The United Nations Secretariat promulgated special measures on gender equality in 1999. The staff selection system as implemented, however, seems to have all but nullified their mandatory nature and/or accountability for their implementation.
- + **What More We Need to know/do:**
- + Collect and systematize information on potential and actual special measures applicable in institutions; strengthen their formulation and use;
- + TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF PACKAGE AS PART OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

# Monitoring and Accountability

## What We Know

- + Accountability requires public reporting of progress by level for the organization as a whole, for large entities, and by organizational unit within an entity.
- + Existing Instruments: Employed in varied manner across entities : Monitoring Reports (e.g. SG Report), Gender Scorecards, Surveys, Performance Appraisal Indicators

## Trends and Good Practices:

- + 4 entities (UNHCR, UNRWA, WHO, and UNDP) mentioned monitoring and accountability as good practices.
- + **Use of Gender Scorecard dropped:** In 2010, 7 entities reported employing a gender scorecard; another 4 intend to; In 2008, 9 entities reported employing gender score cards while 7 planned to introduce them.
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## What More We Need to Know/Do:

Institutional targets – institutionally and by organizational unit ;

Institute robust REAL TIME monitoring systems – post facto evaluation means opportunity is lost to the individual;



# Work Life Integration Policies

**What we know:** Gen Y expectations (younger generation), burdens of care of Gen X (middle age) and imperatives of competitiveness everywhere, but especially with aging populations. As the workplace environment becomes less facilitative to work life integration, the 2 year old and 82 year old look more attractive

- + Enhanced work life integration and flexibility increases productivity, job satisfaction, retention and most importantly worker engagement, while reducing stress. i.e. more is accomplished with less. But it requires attitudinal change – move away from command and control of people to trust and output control but without added levels of scrutiny. **TRUST and FLEXIBILITY – the great motivator**

**Trends and Good Practices:** Most entities have at least one work life integration option; 7 entities introduced telecommuting arrangements; 3 introduced compressed work schedule options. During the same period, the number of entities offering a scheduled break for learning declined by four. The option of staggered working hours remained unchanged and continues to be offered in 22 entities.

- + Work life balance was reported as a good practice by ILO, IFAD, ITU, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNRWA, and UNDP

## What We Need to Know/Do:

- + Measure the true extent of policy implementation;
- + Gauge and address unintended consequences – e.g. stigma; differential rate of advancement of women and men compared to those using flexibility
- + Target men for use and advocacy of the policies

# Other gender-related policies

- + 27 entities reported having policies to prohibit discrimination and harassment; 21 noted that they had an ethics office.
- + 18 indicated that they had special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; and 2, PAHO and UNIDO, noted that while they did not have a policy, similar protections were accorded by their code of conduct.
- + Twenty-four entities reported having policies for conflict resolution and against retaliation, respectively. UNESCO reported that a policy against retaliation was under formulation.
- + With regard to parental issues, 25 indicated that they had a policy that granted parental leave, but as special leave without pay.
- + In addition, almost all of the entities, with the exception of the World Tourism Organization and WIPO, reported having an adoption leave policy.
- + Twenty-five indicated that they also had a breastfeeding policy.

## Notable Initiatives: Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB)

### + Work-Life Balance

- + Identified Staff Well-Being (SWB) as an overarching theme, including work-life balance, staff mobility, and staff counselling (CEB/2009/HLCM/HR/43)
- + Proposed two sets of SWB standards:
  - 1) Flexi-time and mandatory time off after duty travel; parental, compassionate and home leave; career development programmes; compensation of overtime for GS Staff; access to services of Staff Counsellor, Ombudsperson, and Mediator; stress management as well as staff outreach support programmes
  - 2) Part-time work, compressed work weeks, job sharing and telecommuting; dual Career and Staff Mobility programmes; child care and sports facilities; compensation of overtime for all staff

# Initiatives toward Gender Parity: CEB (Continued)

## + Spouse Employment

- + CEB Human Resources Network was briefed on July 2010 by the United Nations Dual Career and Staff Mobility (DC & SM) Programme, and the corresponding report (CEB/2010/HLCM/HR/30/Add.1) recommends a 3-prong strategy:
  - 1) The provision of information on work permits to UN system staff and their families
  - 2) Negotiation with individual host states for facilitated access to work permits for spouses/partners and pursuit of multilateral solutions to increase spouse/partner access to work permits such as a strong UN General Assembly Resolution
  - 3) Action in partnership with national diplomatic services

# Initiatives toward Gender Parity : International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)

- + Discussed gender balance and feasibility of establishing inter-agency roster of qualified women applicants at its sixty-eighth session in March/April 2009
- + Encourages entities to improve gender balance by taking advantage of the high number of impending retirements over the next 5 years
- + Underscores importance of workforce planning, talent gap analysis, and skills inventories in addressing problems of recruitment and retention of women
- + Encourages the organizations to implement outreach initiatives, targeted recruitment, policies for work/life balance, flexible working arrangements (FWAs), career coaching and development, and management skills/leadership development
- + Highlights investment in staff development and development of an internal candidate pool

# Good Gender Practices in the UN System

- + **UN system entities reported gender balance initiatives and good practices in the following areas:**
  - + Gender strategy and action plans: ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNRWA
  - + Communication and advocacy: UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR
  - + Monitoring and accountability: UNDP, UNHCR, UNRWA, WHO
  - + Staff recruitment, selection, and development: UNHCR, UNRWA, UNESCO, UNDP
  - + Work-life balance: ILO, IFAD, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNRWA
  - + Spouse employment and family-friendly policies: ILO, UNRWA
  - + Information sharing: UNDP, UNHCR
- + **The following slides outline a number of these good practices**

# Good Practices: International Labour Organization (ILO)

- + Adopted 2010-2015 Action Plan for Gender Equality including:
  - + Gender parity in senior posts, gender equality in management and leadership training programmes, strengthening of a gender-sensitive and family-friendly workplace, and telecommuting

# Good Practices:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- + The action plan for gender parity, sets out a range of measures for its achievement at senior management levels (D-1 and above) by 2015, in the areas of:
  - 1) Recruitment: Identify relevant female professional networks through which Director posts are advertised, strongly encourage women to apply for P-5 level and above, ensure gender balance on selection panels, apply a one-to-one gender hiring ration for P-5 staff, ensure a hiring ration of three women to two men for Director posts, require short lists to include at least two female candidates
  - 2) Training and mentoring: Develop and implementing a management programme for female staff at the P-4 and P-5 levels, support the establishment of informal networks of senior staff, conduct induction training course on gender awareness, include gender awareness in the leaderships and change management programme.
  - 3) Retention and work-life balance: Support initiatives such as the local expatriate spouse association and exit interviews for women at the P-5 and above levels.
  - 4) 13 additional gender-related measures



# Good Practices: International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

- + Piloted compressed work schedule arrangements (i.e. working 10 days in 9) within certain divisions including HR;

# Good Practices: International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

- + Introduced Telecommuting

# Good Practices:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- + Set goal to reach gender parity by 2010 at all levels, utilizing the following strategies:
  - + Recruitment and posting
  - + Staff development
  - + Performance management
  - + Promotions
  - + Work-life balance
  - + Increased awareness and accountability

# Good Practices:

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

- + Human Resources Gender Policy & Implementation Strategy (2008) sets out a number of targets and mechanisms to achieve parity by 2015, in particular at the senior management level. Interventions include:
  - + Targeted recruitment
  - + Specialized training courses and procedures for dealing with discrimination and harassment in the workplace
  - + Gender focal points appointed in HQ and Field locations
  - + HR gender actions plans for offices
  - + Gender scorecards
  - + In the process of developing a staff well-being framework involving FWAs and family-friendly policies
  - + Succession planning to focus on developing high potential female staff

# Good Practices:

## United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- + UNDP's Gender Parity Action Plan (2009-2011) of March 2009 promotes a positive organizational culture, setting out strategic direction to:
  - + Integrate gender parity
  - + Establish an informal Inter-agency Gender Parity Network to promote better interagency cooperation
  - + Publish regional workforce bulletins to communicate changes to gender-related policy
  - + Develop outcome indicators to track the implementation of the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and Gender Equality and Diversity Unit/Office of Human Resources measures:
    - + Talent sourcing
    - + Staff capacity
    - + Enabling environment

# Good Practices: World Health Organization (WHO)

- + Currently has systems in place to monitor and measure gender equity goals
- + The sixtieth World Health Assembly resolution (WHA 60.25) in 2007 requested the Director-General of WHO to take forward a number of specific gender equity goals and implemented ongoing evaluation and reporting strategy

# Summary of Recommendations of SG's Report

## **S.G.Recommendations:**

The report makes nine recommendations for the entities of the UN system to accelerate progress in the representation of women. Briefly these include, inter alia:

- + Harmonization of relevant policies affecting the representation of women in the UN entities;
- + Sharing of good practices to increase awareness of options and implementation strategies;
- + More rigorous implementation of staff selection policies, including affirmative action;
- + Implementation, with active involvement of the head of the entity, of articulated gender strategies and action plans for enhanced representation of women;

# Recommendations contd.

- + Targeting of each grade level individually regarding appointments to accelerate progress, including outreach programmes to find women candidates, implementation of special measures for gender equality that mandate the selection of an equally or better qualified woman candidate, and mandatory inclusion of one third of qualified women candidates in short lists;
- + Targeting of each grade level individually at increasingly senior levels in promotions to accelerate progress, including implementation of special measures for gender equality that mandate the selection of an equally or better qualified woman candidate, and mandatory inclusion of one third of qualified women candidates in short lists similar to those for recruitment;
- + Increased efforts to enhance retention of qualified women with demonstrated competent career records including conducting of anonymous and systematically analyzed exit interviews which identify areas for organizational attention;
- + Active promotion of Flexible Work Arrangements and a work/life balance approach by Senior Managers;
- + Strengthening of the Network of Focal Points for Women throughout the entities of the United Nations system.



# SG Recommendations

## In Sum

- + Senior leadership sponsorship
- + Enhanced monitoring and accountability
- + More rigorous implementation of existing policies including special measures for women and flexible work arrangements (FWAs)

# EMERGING ISSUE: WORK LIFE INTEGRATION

- + EGM November 2010 – Report on website
- + Flexibility as a concept is not new to the UN: it already exists in many forms and in many entities. It is more than just the FWA options. *So, it is more about implementation, which is often reluctant and grudging.*
- + Maternity, paternity, sick/personal days and emergency leave are already entitlements and part of a culture of flexibility.
- + Therefore, more than a radical change – what is needed is a realignment of understanding and practice and broadening of implementation, especially of the specific Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)
- + Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) available to UN staff :
  - Staggered working hours
  - Compressed work schedules: ten working days in nine
  - Scheduled break for external learning activities
  - Work away from the office (telecommuting)
  - Job Share (but often limited to host country nationals due to visa issues)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Survey of Executives

### *Work/Life or Dual Centric vs. Work-Centric*

“Dual-centric” employees equally prioritize their work and personal lives, and they are equally likely to be women and men

- + A 2008 study\* of executives at 10 multinational companies asked: In the past year, how often have you put your:
  - + Job before your personal or family life?
  - + Personal or family life before your job?
- + The study revealed that:
  - + People who place the same priority on work and their personal/family life have the *highest ratings for feeling successful at work*
  - + 42% of work-centric people versus only 26% of dual-centric ones experience *moderate or high levels of stress*
  - + 56% of work-centric people report they find it *difficult* or *very difficult* to manage work and personal life demands compared to only 31% of dual-centric people

\*Source: *Leaders in a Global Economy* (Families and Work Institute, Catalyst, and The Center for Work and Family- Boston College)  
<http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/dual-centric.pdf>

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Managers

- + Surveys of managers at large corporations reveal that:
  - + Over 90% of managers say it does not require more time to manage people on FWAs
  - + Nearly 90% report no negative impact on their ability to supervise
  - + Over 65% say managing FWAs enhanced their management skills

Source: *Corporate Voices for Working Families* – [www.corporatevoices.org/publications/workplaceflex](http://www.corporatevoices.org/publications/workplaceflex)

# The Case for Flexibility: Surveys and Studies

## Surveys of Human Resources Professionals

- + According to a 2009 study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM):
  - + *Two-thirds* of HR professionals believe that the implementation of flexible work arrangements positively impact:
    - + Employee morale, job satisfaction, engagement and retention
    - + The quality of employees' personal/family lives
  - + 85% of HR professionals reported that in the next 5 years, telecommuting would likely be more commonplace for organizations than it is today. In companies with telecommuting employees:
    - + Productivity increased in 32%, stayed the same in 63% and decreased in 5%
    - + Absenteeism increased in 5%, stayed the same in 53%, and decreased in 42%
- + Source: *Workplace Flexibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Society for Human Resource Management (2010): [www.shrm.org/research](http://www.shrm.org/research)

# Surveys

## FWA Staff Survey: 2010

- Top reasons for staff FWA requests: work efficiency (55 per cent), personal/family related reasons (46 per cent), commuting issues (43 per cent), and childcare responsibilities (40 per cent).
- Staff interest in options: telecommuting (52 per cent), compressed work schedule (42 per cent), staggered working hours (41 per cent), and scheduled break for external learning activities (32 per cent).
- The majority of survey respondents (67 per cent) have not requested any FWA options during the past 12 months.
- The main reasons for not requesting are concerns about perceptions of managers (25 per cent) and concerns about impact on future career opportunities (20 per cent).

**What is the situation in other UN entities?**

# UN Survey of Executive Officers

- + Positive findings are consistent largely consistent with other survey results

FWA:

Increases job satisfaction

Increases staff motivation

Neutral on increased productivity

- + Obstacles to EO's approving FWA requests

Job requirements not conducive to telecommuting

Value face to face interaction

Less responsible staff may work less

- + Research shows that these obstacles can be overcome with team planning and improved performance monitoring

## Areas of Focus for Improved Work Life Fit Expert Group Recommendations

- + Organizational culture - trust and respect constitute the foundational elements: You trust and respect my work-life needs and I will trust and respect your organizational needs: *UN could do more in this area*
- + Flexible work arrangements – organizational means to manifest culture of flexibility: *UN has the basic policy package and many UN employees are already working flexibly (formally or informally) – needs mostly to broaden and strengthen implementation*
- + Career path flexibility – flexibility to synchronize and meet larger life needs over a career path e.g. burdens of care: *UN has partially achieved this but more needs to be done, especially given demographic and generational attitudinal shifts*



# Emerging Issue - The Sponsor Effect

The research done by Center for Work-Life Policy uncovers that women still are not breaking through the glass ceiling because they fail to get the necessary sponsors to advocate their career advancement.

# What are the key findings of the Sponsor study?

- + Men advance disproportionately, outdoing women : Women don't ask, they don't think that hard work will reap success, and they underestimate the value of the sponsor effect as a strong career benefit.
- + The reluctance of women in connecting with a sponsor is based on their fear to engage powerful men as allies. The sponsorship of an older man to a younger female executive can be misconstrued as a sexual liaison and pose greater risk to both parties.
- + Women are faced with judgments from other parties as they reach the top of the corporate or political ladder. If they are married with children, their sponsors view them as less dedicated and less flexible. On the other hand, ambitious single women are perceived by senior-level men as strange and threatening.
- + Men are able to nurture relationships with more sponsors than women because they shoulder less domestic responsibilities.
- + The global financial downturn has made it more difficult to find and retain sponsorship especially for women. More so, sponsors find it more challenging to extend their support to junior staff during a tough economy.
- + In leadership positions, appearance and looks matter. Women hardly obtain advice from sponsors on their executive style and appearance, while men easily give such advice to other men.

# What institutions can do with regards to sponsorship

Based on these best practices, to break the glass ceiling, effectiveness of sponsorship programmes increases by:

- Leading from the top
- Making sponsorship robust
- Paying attention to the pipeline
- Making sponsorship safe

# Some Feedback from UNEntities

Entities state that they appreciate, inter alia:

- + Comparable data for each entity
- + Easy access to relevant information from experts in the private sector, universities, NGOs– e.g. Expert Group Meeting on Work Balance Policies and Practice including Flexible Working
- + Being kept abreast of emerging issues e.g. Sponsor Effect
- + Advocacy material and tools can be used by almost all e.g. agency data on status of women, Myths and Facts paper on FWA.
- + Informative Focal Point website

# The Way Forward

## What do we know?

- + Data shows that progress toward gender balance is unacceptably slow.
- + UN system surveys have shown the impediments to faster progress.
- + Several Tools, policies and practices have been identified.
- + LET US DISCUSS – what would you like to see: Two or Three actions for the year? Your conception of our best role to assist you.

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