

Making parity a reality

ADVANCING GENDER PARITY ACROSS THE UN SYSTEM

Global Annual Meeting of UN Gender Focal Points

9-11 October 2023



ACCELERATE.ACTIVATE.ADVANCE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System at UN Women leads and coordinates the network of nearly 500 UN Gender Focal Points, which is key to system-wide coordination to reach gender parity and create enabling working environments for all throughout the UN. Each year, Gender Focal Points gather for their annual meeting. The theme of the 2023 Annual Global Gender Focal Point Meeting was **“Accelerate, Activate, Advance: Advancing Gender Parity Across the UN System”** and was held virtually from the 9-11 of October.

The meeting was organized in the context of the sixth anniversary of the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. At the outset of the meeting, H.E. Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General shared reflections on the status of efforts to achieve the Secretary-General’s priority of gender parity by 2028 and the progress made thus far. The event provided an opportunity for Gender Focal Points to engage with senior UN leadership, including members of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System (CEB Task Force). The CEB Task Force has identified the network of Gender Focal Points as key to mainstreaming and implementing its policies and tools.

As Gender Focal Points often are the first point of contact for victims/survivors of sexual harassment and key stakeholders in fostering organizational culture change, a workshop on upstander/bystander intervention was offered. This capacity-building session provided concrete tools for Gender Focal Points on how to navigate situations of harassment or discrimination, thereby strengthening their capacities to address sexual harassment. A session on addressing racism as a Gender

Focal Point was also provided as a follow-up from the previous year to build the capacities of the network to advance diversity and inclusion as part of their efforts to foster an enabling working environment.

The Global Annual Meeting provides a unique opportunity for Gender Focal Points from across the UN system to accelerate through reflection, to activate through peer-to-peer and inter-agency knowledge sharing, and eventually to advance gender parity in their respective entities. The meeting was attended by a high number of Gender Focal Points, with nearly 250 participants joining from across the UN system. As in previous years, UN Women recognized some Gender Focal Points for their outstanding achievements in implementing the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines that were produced by UN Women, in support of the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

Gender Focal Points are key agents of change to reach gender parity and create enabling working environments. UN Women further noted the efforts of the Gender Focal Points in contributing to the Secretary-General’s Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women and the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment, two important resources in accelerating progress towards gender parity. Through these resources and tools, as well as the Enabling Environment Guidelines and the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines, and skills developed from capacity-building sessions provided year-round, Gender Focal Points are well-equipped to support their leadership and entities to advance gender parity.

BACKGROUND: WHO ARE UN GENDER FOCAL POINTS?

Gender Focal Points are important advocates, advisers, and strategic partners to enhance gender parity and create enabling working environments within the United Nations system. Gender Focal Points work with key stakeholders, including the head of their department/office/mission, to fulfil their responsibilities related to the achievement of gender parity and equality. As stipulated by the Secretary-General's new Bulletin on Gender Focal Points in the Secretariat ([ST/SGB/2023/3](#)), the head of entity has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the entity has a Gender Focal Point and at least one alternate.

“Requests the entities of the United Nations, at both headquarters and non-headquarters levels, to continue to appoint gender focal points to provide support for the advancement of gender parity, led and coordinated by UN-Women”

UN Member States (A/RES/76/142)

The Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System at UN Women (hereafter 'the Office') leads and coordinates the system-wide network of Gender Focal Points, and provides strategic, analytical, and technical support. There are currently nearly 500 Gender Focal Points, from 60 UN duty stations, including 44 UN Country Teams. Gender Focal Points advocate for gender parity and use the tools and resources provided by the Office to liaise with leadership to address systemic issues of gender imbalance, harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power. They promote awareness of gender parity and equality, help develop policies, and uphold standards of conduct to advance gender parity and create enabling working environments. Such policies

range from flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies to promoting work/life balance, career development strategies, and gender-sensitive workplace safety and support systems.

Gender Focal Points carry out these responsibilities in addition to their regular work in the UN system. The Office provides support, guidance, and expertise on the implementation of tools and guidance documents designed to enhance gender parity, regularly organizes capacity-building sessions and opportunities such as webinars and maintains a dedicated hub for information exchange in the form of an Extranet for Gender Focal Points. The Office also provides tailored support and guidance for UN entities that have a lower representation of women in the UN system.

“Gender parity at the United Nations is an urgent need – and a personal priority. It is a moral duty and an operational necessity. The meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making increases effectiveness and productivity, brings new perspectives and solutions to the table, unlocks greater resources and strengthens efforts across all the three pillars of our work.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

DAY 1

ARE WE ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE GENDER PARITY BY 2028?

9 October

Day 1: Key Takeaways in 2023

- o Secretary-General's Report on the *Improvement in the Status of Women in the UN System* was published in 2023.
- o 27 UN entities have reached gender parity by 2023, compared to 5 in 2017.
- o Launch of the first-ever UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment and enhancement of the UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity.
- o The Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of promoting an organizational culture that allows for flexibility, inclusion, and upholds standards of conduct and accountability.
- o The Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General reiterated the crucial role of Gender Focal Points and the importance of implementing the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations system as well as the Field-specific Guidelines.

Keynote Speech: Are we on track to achieve Gender Parity by 2028?

By H.E. Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet, Executive Office of the Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Courtenay Rattray, the Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, who oversees the implementation of the Gender Parity Strategy, delivered the keynote speech. He highlighted progress made in the last six years and ways to maintain and enhance gender parity achievements.

Under the Secretary-General's leadership, UN made some historical milestones. Gender parity has been achieved and sustained in senior leadership, including the Senior Management Group, among full-time Assistant-

and Under-Secretaries-General, as well as Resident Coordinators since 2020.

An unprecedented level of women are now serving in professional posts in the Secretariat, particularly in mid-management levels. Women account for 44% of international Secretariat staff, including 45% at P5 level and 44% at D1 level. The rise is also evident among Agencies, Funds and Programmes, there are currently 27 entities which have achieved parity amongst all staff - a significant increase from only 5 in 2017.



The Chef de Cabinet identified some contributing factors to these successes, including strong commitment from leadership to reach parity translated into building gender-sensitive architectures across UN entities and changes to the organizational culture, for instance by promoting the Administrative Instruction on Staff Selection which allows personnel to apply for positions more than one level above their current grade.

Despite this progress, the Chef de Cabinet also acknowledged that persistent challenges remain and there are areas for improvement. For example, women's representation is highest at entry levels and decreases steadily at the mid- to senior level. Women's

representation continues to be lower in traditionally male-dominated sectors and at non-headquarters locations, particularly in mission settings, where women make up only 34% of the field presence.

He concluded with stressing the importance of promoting enabling working environments and culture, and reiterated the crucial role of UN Gender Focal Points.

“Your role as the United Nations Gender Focal Points is crucial for achieving gender parity. Our progress has been underpinned by the expansion of the Gender Focal Point network from back in 2017 when the Secretary-General took office to today.”

Earle Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet

Welcome and Introductions

Presented and facilitated by Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor and Focal Point for Women in the UN System

Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor and the Focal Point for Women in the UN System, welcomed the Gender Focal Points and offered reflections on recent global events. She noted gender parity must remain a priority in the UN's work to ensure women are equally represented in all aspects of leadership and decision-making. Gender Focal Points play a key role in making parity a reality.

Ms. Pehrman referred to the responsibilities and tasks

“It is very important and urgent, now more than ever, to integrate gender parity in all of the UN's work.”

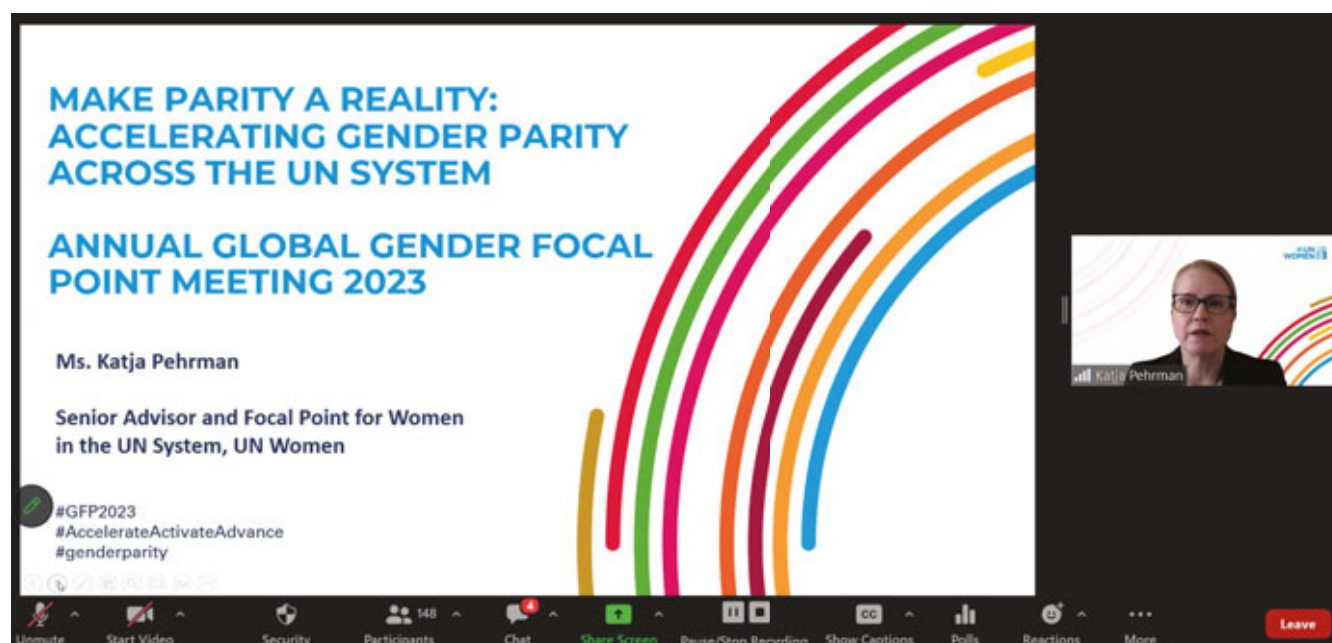
Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor and Focal Point for Women in the UN System, UN Women

required of Gender Focal Points and shared that the role requires not only knowledge and experience, but also clear guidance and direction. The updated Terms of Reference were promulgated in September 2023.

Ms. Pehrman underscored that gender parity remains a high priority for the Secretary-General as well as for UN Women. The year 2023 marked the sixth anniversary of the launch of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. She also expressed her gratitude to the Gender Focal Points who “have made tireless efforts to accelerate the progress towards gender parity” and invested invaluable work over the past years.

Ms. Pehrman referred to the recently published Secretary-General's *Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the UN System*. The report indicates that the representation of women has increased and most notably achieved parity at headquarters locations for the first time. Ms. Pehrman further elaborated that the report incorporates analysis on entity-specific implementation plans for achieving gender parity.

Reminding the Gender Focal Points of the importance of fostering organizational culture change, Ms. Pehrman spoke about three guidelines created by UN Women to support the Secretary-General's Strategy: The Enabling Environment Guidelines, Supplementary guidance, and Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines. They provide Gender Focal Points with guidance and recommendations, together with good practice



examples, on how to create enabling environments in various areas such as professional and personal life integration, family-friendly policies, standards of conduct and recruitment, talent management, and retention.

Furthermore, Ms. Pehrman referred to the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment that was launched in June 2023. She reiterated that the Knowledge Hub is a repository of resources, best practices, and tools on the UN system's efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment, which is part of the efforts of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment to enhance coordination across the UN system. Ms. Pehrman shared that she looks forward to continuing to work with Gender Focal Points and further developing the hub.

Participants were reminded of the first ever UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity which was jointly developed and launched by UN Women and UNDP in

2021. Ms. Pehrman thanked the Gender Focal Points and their Human Resources colleagues for the continued support in updating the data in a timely manner. The Dashboard is updated quarterly and provides up-to-date information on the representation of women and men by grade, entity, duty station, including UN Country Team, and age group for nearly 40 UN entities across the system.

Furthermore, she reported that the number of UN entities that have reached gender parity has increased from 5 in 2017 to 27 in 2022. This is a significant achievement; however, the rate of change is slow and uneven across the UN System with women continuing to be under-represented at the management and senior levels as well as in field locations.

Ms. Pehrman concluded her remarks by expressing her gratitude for the hard work of the Gender Focal Points to enhance gender parity and create enabling environments in the UN and around the world.

Resources and Tools: Communications and Advocacy Products

Presented and facilitated by Mahlatse Ramoroka, David Gawellek, Tarini Wijesekera, UN Women

The Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System serves as a resource hub to empower UN Gender Focal Points as changemakers in their entities. One important way in which the Office supports Gender Focal Points is through producing communications products that Focal Points can use in their advocacy for gender parity in their respective entities. The Office has produced a diverse range of products including reports, videos, factsheets, and podcasts to advance gender parity.

During the Annual Meeting, the Office presented a range of communications and advocacy resources, offering guidance on how Gender Focal Points can leverage these knowledge products to advance gender parity. Some of the communication products presented included the Enabling Environment and Field-specific Guidelines, the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment, and the UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity and the Extranet for Gender Focal Points.

Ms. Mahlatse Ramoroka presented the Enabling Environment Guidelines. She emphasized that gender parity is not only about numbers but also about changing organizational culture, which the guidelines promote as a pathway to achieving and sustaining gender parity. Ms.

Ramoroka then presented the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines, which were produced in response to increasing requests from the field where the parity gap is wider and most persistent.

Following the presentation of the guidelines, **Ms. Tarini Wijesekera** reminded the Gender Focal Points of the 20-minute walk-through video on the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines. She requested that the participants share this product with their entities and other colleagues within their duty stations.

Ms. Wijesekera also spoke about the "Making Parity a Reality in the UN" video series, which features 17 leaders from across the UN system wherein they highlight the importance of gender parity and creating enabling environments in regional, country, and field offices. She noted that "leadership commitment is necessary to reach gender parity, and the videos will further raise the profile of the Guidelines through the system and inspire action." Complimenting the videos, Ms. Wijesekera presented the booklet titled "How can we reach gender parity in the UN by 2028" that commemorates the fifth anniversary of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. The booklet showcases the achievements

of Gender Focal Points across the UN System in updating policies, improving work environments, and promoting greater inclusion and gender parity. It also features 70 good practice examples organized according to the Secretary-General's recommendations on gender parity, including areas such as setting targets, leadership and accountability, talent management, and creating enabling environments.

She then provided a demonstration of the enhancements to the UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity developed by UN Women in collaboration with UNDP. The Dashboard includes data from nearly 40 participating entities across the UN system and provides the latest available data on the representation of women and men in the UN by grade, staff category, age group and duty station. The Dashboard also showcases the Gender Parity Index, which is the absolute number of women or men needed to reach parity by staff category and duty station. The Dashboard enhances accountability and transparency by consolidating, monitoring, and tracking gender parity progress system-wide, as recommended by the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

During this session, three enhancements to the Dashboard in 2023 were highlighted: additional parameters have been added to present data on the representation of women and men by UN Country Teams (UNCT). These parameters now enable users to filter the data by UNCT and by entity, category and grade, providing the latest data for hiring managers at the time of recruitment. A helpful function which aimed to save time for data entry is also added. In addition, the Dashboard now includes new parameters on the

representation of women and men among Resident Coordinators, as well as nationality of personnel.

Mr. David Gawellek then referred to the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment. The hub was launched in June 2023 and developed as part of the efforts of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment. It is a vital tool which consolidates resources, tools, and best practices from across the UN system to address sexual harassment. The Knowledge Hub has been developed, funded, administered, and hosted by UN Women, as part of UN Women's co-leadership of the workstream on enhancing cooperation across the UN system in the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment. Mr. Gawellek provided a walk-through of the hub, showing how and where to find information. He expressed hope that the Knowledge Hub would be a useful tool in the Gender Focal Points' work on addressing sexual harassment.

Mr. Gawellek also presented the Extranet for Gender Focal Points, which provides a wealth of information and resources dedicated for use by Gender Focal Points. The Extranet was recently updated for easier usability. Mr. Gawellek provided a brief demonstration on how to use the Extranet. Mr. Gawellek expressed his hope that the many resources of the Extranet would benefit the UN Gender Focal Points "to advance and accelerate the joint efforts towards gender parity in the UN system."

In the following Q&A session, participants expressed their appreciation for the demonstration and resources provided. They also provided additional suggestions on helpful resources for the future, and what practices have and have not worked in their specific entities.

Walk-through of the Secretary-General's Report

Speakers: [Dr. Zoe Petkanas](#), [Ms. Jillian Foster](#)
Facilitator: [Ms. Shinobu Sasaki](#)

An overview of the [Secretary-General's Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the UN System](#) was provided by **Dr. Zoe Petkanas** and **Ms. Jillian Foster**. Thanks to the valuable inputs that Gender Focal Points provided through the biennial survey in 2022, the team analysed and prepared the *Secretary-General's Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in 2023*. The report was then used to inform the intergovernmental process of the UN General Assembly's Third Committee.

Dr. Petkanas and Ms. Foster began the presentation by thanking the Gender Focal Points for their coordination and support in collecting and compiling responses to the survey. Ms. Foster highlighted changes in the representation of women in the professional and higher categories, which increased from 45.3% to 47%. For the first time, women's representation at headquarters location reached 51.3%.



Dr. Petkanas went on to discuss the updated entity-specific implementation plans on gender parity for 2023-2024, noting some dominant trends among organizations: a focus on leadership and fostering accountability, collecting and analysing gender disaggregated data, and fostering an inclusive organizational culture. The speakers also identified key trends prominent in data from the report. Women's representation continued to be highest at entry levels, namely at P-1 and P-2. However, these numbers decline in middle and senior management positions. Gaps persist at P-4 and particularly at D-2 levels. Moreover, even though gender parity has been attained at headquarters locations, representation at non-headquarters locations continues to fall behind.

Dr. Petkanas presented an infographic on staff selection, showing that 100% of entities now require gender balance in interview panels, which is an increase from 68% in 2021. Similarly, 71% of the UN entities require gender balance in review bodies for selection decisions, an increase from 46% in 2021.

Ms. Foster presented an infographic on career development, showcasing a significant improvement in enhancing career advancement and development prospects for middle and senior-level women personnel. Half of the participants in the 2022 survey named inadequate career development opportunities as one of the main barriers to achieve parity at P-4 level and above; and in 2023 the number was lower (27).

Dr. Petkanas spoke about the importance of using exit interviews. Although 69% of the surveyed entities conduct exit interviews, only 32% have made them mandatory, which is one of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's Strategy.

Leadership and accountability are key to building support for gender parity, and in recent years, an impactful buy-in and active support at the senior level have been crucial in making progress towards gender parity. Dr. Petkanas and Ms. Foster noted that commitment of senior leadership to gender parity was mutually reinforcing with awareness raising, staff buy-in, collegial support, and capacity for organizational and cultural change.

The team then spoke about the importance of creating enabling working environments and the standards of conduct to adhere to, to create safe workplaces. Many entities currently use the tools developed by the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment to respond to sexual harassment.

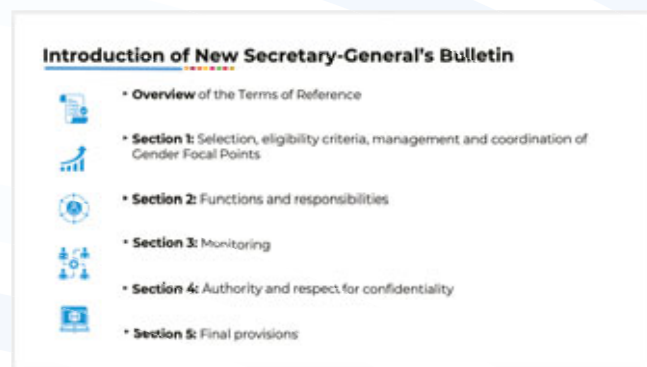
Dr. Petkanas stressed that parity still needs to be achieved in mission and field settings, where women make up only 34% of overall field operations as of June 2023. From 2021 to 2023, the number of heads and deputy heads of mission that have reached parity has decreased to 39%, while parity among resident coordinators has been reached and sustained since 2018.

The team concluded with recommendations for the future to advance gender parity. Recommendations are far-reaching and cover all pillars of the SG's Strategy.

The Secretary-General's new Bulletin on Gender Focal Points in the Secretariat – what has changed?

Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor and Focal Point for Women in the UN System

Ms. Katja Pehrman led a session on the Secretary-General's new Bulletin on Gender Focal Points in the UN Secretariat. She provided an overview of the Terms of Reference for the Gender Focal Points (ST/SGB/2023/3) with a reference to the changes from the previous bulletin (ST/SGB/2008/12). The promulgation of these Terms of Reference is a result of a multi-year consultative process.



Ms. Pehrman's remarks focused primarily on what has changed, including:

- The Secretariat entities used previously the term 'Focal Point for Women', while agencies, funds and programmes referred to '**Gender Focal Points**'. To harmonize the terminology across the UN System, 'Gender Focal Point' will now be used also in the UN Secretariat.
- The heads of entities have the responsibility for ensuring that **the entity has a Gender Focal Point and at least one alternate**. Large entities may have multiple Gender Focal Points and smaller entities may appoint a qualified staff member from the General Service and related categories.
- The Secretary-General's Bulletin recommends that Gender Focal Points **are appointed at the P-4 level and above**, as it is important to have access to senior management and leadership.

- The head of entity shall ensure that the Gender Focal Points can participate in **information sessions and capacity-building opportunities** that the Office of the Focal Point provides. The head of entity will also make sure that the Focal Points can dedicate sufficient time to the performance of the functions and responsibilities. This should amount to **20% of their official work time**. Functions and time allocations should be reflected in the **workplans of the Gender Focal Points**.

Ms. Pehrman emphasized the need for collaboration and mutual support between Heads of Entity and Gender Focal Points. Differing from the previous bulletin, **Gender Focal Points are no longer required to provide 'counselling' for personnel** but are responsible for providing information on avenues to address situations of gender-based workplace concerns, including harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power.

Ms. Pehrman underscored that Gender Focal Points are required to regularly monitor progress made towards achievement of gender parity goals. She also reminded participants of their responsibility to have access to all information necessary for the discharge of their functions, including access to statistics on gender balance and forthcoming vacancies and human resources policies and practices.

In the Q&A session, participants raised questions and suggestions related to the new eligibility recommendations. Ms. Pehrman clarified that Gender Focal Points should normally be appointed from among staff at the P-4 level and above. In determining the appropriate level of the Gender Focal Point and the number of alternates, the nature and size of the entity concerned should be taken into consideration. Large entities may have multiple Gender Focal Points and smaller entities may appoint an appropriately qualified staff member from the General Service and related categories.

How can we accelerate gender parity in mission settings?

Panel discussion facilitated by Ms. Lena Moll

- **Ms. Bridgette Che Fomunyam**, Deputy Chief of the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) Reporting and Analysis, MINUSMA
- **Ms. Geeta Kuttiparambil**, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Afghanistan
- **Mr. Abdulmoti Sheikh Ahmed**, Associate Training Officer, UNSOS
- **Ms. Oanh Mai Chung**, Best Practice Officer of UNMISS

Ms. Lena Moll facilitated a panel discussion with a specific focus on accelerating gender parity in the field, particularly in mission settings. The discussion provided Gender Focal Points with good practice examples and recommendations that reflect the diverse experiences in mission settings.

Ms. Bridgette Che Fomunyam, Deputy Chief of the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) Reporting and Analysis, MINUSMA

Ms. Bridgette Che Fomunyam credited her success in accelerating gender parity in mission settings to three key aspects:

- (1) Her ability to master her work environment has helped her to identify challenges and provide solutions to senior leadership;
- (2) Seeking help from colleagues and resources at UN Women; and
- (3) Importance of seizing opportunities when they arise. Ms. Fomunyam acknowledged that the journey of advancing gender parity has been challenging, however, she has stood by her unwavering efforts to bring women into field positions and increase gender parity in mission settings.

Ms. Geeta Kuttiparambil, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Afghanistan

Ms. Geeta Kuttiparambil shared the challenges she faced in her role representing UN Women in Afghanistan. The violation of human rights and women's rights has created a very challenging situation, and Ms. Kuttiparambil stressed the need for ongoing support, engagement and advocacy.

Mr. Abdulmoti Sheikh Ahmed, Associate Training Officer, UNSOS

Mr. Abdulmoti Sheikh Ahmed highlighted his successes as a Gender Focal Point with regards to tackling widely held cultural beliefs through a three-pronged approach.

1) The first aspect focuses on an awareness campaign, wherein Mr. Ahmed engages colleagues in informal dialogue about the importance of gender parity and the benefit it brings to the organization and wider community.

2) The second approach highlights role models who have achieved parity.

3) The final approach uses inclusive language and encourages colleagues to use inclusive and non-discriminatory terms based on an understanding of the major role language plays. Mr. Ahmed also referred to the importance of having men as allies for enhancing gender parity. He stressed the need for creating safe spaces for open dialogues and challenging previously held stereotypes or biases.

Ms. Oanh-Mai Chung, Best Practice Officer, UNMISS

Ms. Oanh-Mai Chung highlighted that she has prioritized efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping and field operations. She emphasized that women are critical operational actors in the context of community engagement, and information gathering and intelligence. Using data and building a gender parity database has been one of her top priorities. The database serves as an accountability mechanism that can be used to empower and showcase success as well as improve deficiencies.

Ms. Lena Moll closed with final remarks from the panellists, asking each participant to contribute one thing they wished they knew when they first began as Gender Focal Points. Ms. Oanh Mai advised Gender Focal Points to keep a hopeful outlook. She spoke from personal experience, noting that senior leadership was incredibly engaged with gender parity goals. Mr. Abdulmoti Sheikh Ahmed encouraged participants to keep working towards their gender parity goals, to be patient - eventually they will succeed. Ms. Geeta Kuttiparambil advised Gender Focal Points to find flexible ways to navigate the system, and challenge where necessary. She reminded participants that giving up was not an option. Ms. Bridgette Che Fomunyam emphasized the importance of Gender Focal Points empowering themselves through the capacity-building and resources offered by UN Women.

Remarks by UN Women’s Executive Director

Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women

Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women reflected upon recent milestones and challenges related to reaching gender parity around the world. She acknowledged and appreciated the excellent work and impact of the Gender Focal Points.

“Women’s equal participation in decision-making is essential to achieve gender equality, and we must not roll back on the progress in our own workplace.”

Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women

Ms. Bahous thanked the Gender Focal Points for their efforts to advocate for and work on creating enabling working environments and advancing gender parity with their leadership. The importance of the role of Gender Focal Points has become fundamentally important within

the context of implementing the Secretary-General’s Strategy. She went on to provide examples of the progress made to accelerate gender parity.

Ms. Bahous expressed her concern about the current rate of progress, observing that it will take up to 140 years for equal representation in positions of power and leadership in the workplace. Ms. Bahous described challenges related to gender parity, including “limited opportunities for career advancement, downsizing, limited budget climates, and the recurrent backlash and the consequent de-prioritization of the gender parity agenda”. She emphasized the need for continued joint efforts. Ms. Bahous called for strengthened partnerships with entity leaders for organizational change, and reminded Gender Focal Points that UN Women remains committed to supporting their efforts to accelerate gender parity.

Ms. Bahous closed by thanking the Gender Focal Points for their tireless efforts, and encouraging them to continue to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive working environments across the UN system.



DAY 2

MOVING FORWARD

10 October

Day 2: Key Takeaways

- o The Chief Executives Board Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN system will transition to the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in 2024.
- o The Secretary-General prioritizes urgent progress on preventing and responding to sexual harassment, reflecting the high priority of this issue.
- o Significant progress has been made under the CEB Task Force, including the development of a Model Policy and principles for a victim/survivor-centred approach.
- o The ClearCheck database has been widely adopted by many UN entities to prevent the re-employment of perpetrators. Various resources, such as the Code of Conduct and investigator's manual, have guided the system in adopting a victim-centred approach.
- o Key focus areas for the UN Executive Group on Sexual Harassment: providing a strategic platform for policy discussion and collaboration, ensuring accountability, engaging with stakeholders, particularly victims and survivors, and adopting a victim-centred approach.
- o Recruitment strategies, outreach, visibility, and cultivating inclusivity emerged as critical factors in attracting more women and retaining women in the organization. For example, social media is a useful avenue for promoting recruitment.
- o Role models and mentorship were identified as pivotal to encouraging women applicants and women's career progression to higher levels of leadership.
- o Challenges of gender representation and stereotypes lead to perceived scarcity of qualified female candidates. The lack of qualified female candidates can stem from a reluctance to step out of comfort zones and actively seek diverse talent pool.
- o Temporary special measures have contributed to enhancing gender parity. As of September 2023, the representation of women in the Field Services category rose from 27% in 2019 to 30%. In the Professional and above categories, the proportion of women increased from 44% in 2019 to 48%.
- o The key factor causing women to leave mid-level positions (P3 and P4) is the balancing act between career responsibilities and personal obligations, including childcare and caring for aging parents. It is important to offer flexibility to all, especially mid-level professionals, enabling them to manage their responsibilities effectively.

Moving forward: Transitioning from the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment

Facilitated by Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor and Focal Point for Women in the UN System

At the beginning of 2024, the Chief Executives Board Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN system will transition to the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment. The Task Force, established in 2017 with the objective to develop a unified approach across the UN system to address sexual harassment, has made significant progress including progress in investigations, a UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, and the Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment.

Ms. Katja Pehrman emphasized the importance of this ongoing work, citing data from the CEB Task Force 2022 Annual Survey which indicates an increase in formal reports of sexual harassment from 288 in 2021, to 329 in 2022. The data underscores that sexual harassment continues to be a gendered issue with power differentials, where in majority of the incidents, women are harassed by men, and often involve more senior individuals. Most incidents occur in the office environment, with a pattern of harassment against multiple individuals.

As the CEB Task Force is set to transition to the UN Executive Group, a key area of focus will be fostering an enabling working environment through victim-centred prevention and response efforts. Ms. Pehrman invited the leadership of the CEB Task Force to present their work, key areas of focus for the future, and information on how the Focal Points can take this work forward.

Ms. Kelly T. Clements, Chair of the CEB Task Force, and the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees at UNHCR

In **Ms. Kelly Clements'** video message, she expressed gratitude to the dedicated Gender Focal Points for their service and emphasized the strength of the network with the potential for significant impact throughout the UN system. As the Chair of the CEB Task Force, she announced the transition of the Task Force to the Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment at the end of 2023.

Ms. Clements assured the Gender Focal Points that this transition did not signify diminished focus, energy, or dedication by the UN system in addressing sexual harassment. She underscored the importance of eliminating harassment in the workplace, which

threatened the sense of belonging, respect, and safety for everyone in the UN. She further noted that the Secretary-General prioritized urgent progress on preventing and responding to sexual harassment, reflecting the high priority of this issue.

She highlighted the progress made since the establishment of the CEB Task Force in 2017, including the development of a Model Policy and principles for a victim/ survivor-centred approach. The ClearCheck database, which has been functional since 2018, had been widely adopted by many UN entities to prevent the hiring and re-hiring of perpetrators. Various resources, such as the Code of Conduct, Investigator's Manual, and training modules, have guided the UN system in adopting a victim-centred approach.

Ms. Clements acknowledged the crucial role of the Gender Focal Points in implementing these tools and initiatives. She applauded the creation of the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub, an online platform consolidating resources and tools to address sexual harassment. The annual survey on reporting of sexual harassment served as a barometer for the effectiveness of strategies, revealing sobering statistics from 2022, such as 95% of affected individuals being women and 97% of alleged perpetrators being men, emphasizing the severity of the issue of sexual harassment.

Acknowledging that many had confronted the realities of sexual harassment personally, Ms. Clements appreciated the commitment of the Gender Focal Points to creating a safer and more respectful work environment across the UN system. She called for continued engagement, innovative ideas, and advocacy as they embarked on a new journey with the Executive Group, expressing confidence that together, they will continue to make a difference.

Ms. Hannan Sulieman, Deputy Executive Director for Management, UNICEF and future Chair of the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the UN System

As the future Chair of the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment, **Ms. Hannan Sulieman** outlined the focus areas for the work, which include providing a strategic platform for policy

discussion and collaboration, ensuring accountability, engaging with stakeholders, particularly victims and survivors, and adopting a victim-centred approach. She mentioned that the terms of reference for the Executive Group were recently endorsed, and they are set to begin their work in January 2024.

Ms. Sulieman acknowledged the crucial role of UN Gender Focal Points in addressing sexual harassment, raising awareness, conducting gender analysis, providing training, and advocating for gender equality. She emphasized that they are essential in addressing policy gaps and facilitating a shift in power dynamics to ensure timely and quality support is available for victims.

Providing insights into UNICEF's initiatives, Ms. Sulieman discussed the underlying factors necessary for creating a safe working environment, such as reaching gender parity, earmarking budget for gender equality, adopting a zero-tolerance policy, and regularly conducting staff surveys to gather feedback and disaggregated data. She highlighted the importance of concrete and practical measures to address and prevent sexual harassment, emphasizing the need to end the stigma and shame faced by victims and survivors.

In conclusion, Ms. Sulieman called for collective efforts to enhance prevention and victim assistance, making these efforts more concrete and practical. She stressed the importance of working towards ending the stigma associated with reporting incidents of sexual harassment and creating a safe space for victims to come forward.

Ms. Jane Connors, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate and co-lead of the CEB Task Force workstream on victim engagement and support

Assistant Secretary-General Jane Connors began by expressing a preference for the term "victims' rights" over "victim-centred," emphasizing a focus on entitlement rather than 'a charitable approach'. She recapped the principles of a victim-centred approach, highlighting the importance of prioritizing the rights, needs, and wishes of the victim/survivor. Ms. Connors recounted the development and adoption of a range of principles in 2021 by the Chief Executives Board and the High-Level Committee on Management, intending to shift the focus from organizational reputation and alleged offender due process rights to prioritizing the rights of victims and survivors. The principles defined a victim-centred approach that respected rights, protected from retaliation, re-traumatization, and discrimination, and

provided robust support. She encouraged Gender Focal Points to actively push for the implementation of these principles in their entities in a proactive, robust, and strong manner.

Ms. Connors stressed the need to make the principles accessible to all, disseminated in multiple languages and versions suitable for persons with disabilities. She further applauded the efforts of those involved in the annual survey on reporting sexual harassment and encouraged Gender Focal Points to contribute to developing indicators measuring the implementation of victim-centred principles in each UN entity.

Ms. Connors further discussed the conclusion of the CEB Task Force's third phase of work and the transition to the Executive Group, detailing the groups objectives, including monitoring progress, developing indicators, and engaging with stakeholders, particularly victims. She acknowledged the sensitivity of engaging with victims and survivors and highlighted the role of Gender Focal Points in providing guidance on the available avenues of support without causing harm. Referring to the scenario-based training developed by IOM, OHCHR and CEB Task Force, Ms. Connors encouraged Gender Focal Points to participate in a training-of-trainers.

Ms. Aruna Thanabalasingam, Director, Administrative Law Division, the UN Secretariat

As explained by **Director Aruna Thanabalasingam**, ClearCheck has been operational since 2018 and is a highly secure online platform with a centralized database designed to share information among UN entities regarding individuals with established allegations related to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. The goal of the database is to prevent the hiring and re-hiring of such individuals within the UN System.

The database contains records of former personnel against whom allegations were substantiated, including those whose working relationships were terminated due to a determination that they perpetrated sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse. Twenty-nine (29) out of 31 CEB entities and 5 non-CEB UN entities, totaling 34 entities, participate in ClearCheck. The database has 756 recorded subjects, with 379,928 screening requests leading to 6,267 verification requests and a total of seven exact matches as of September 2023.

Ms. Thanabalasingam acknowledged the commitment of participating entities to utilize ClearCheck as part of their recruitment and screening processes. She

outlined the role of Gender Focal Points in actively participating in the recruitment processes to ensure gender parity is achieved and maintained in their organizations. Their involvement is crucial to the success of ClearCheck, especially in encouraging the active recording of necessary information in the database. Ms. Thanabalasingam emphasized that participation without active implementation diminishes the benefits of such a database. She urged Gender Focal Points to collaborate with their HR partners and senior leadership to ensure active participation and data entry into ClearCheck.

Ms. Thanabalasingam discussed the ongoing efforts to expand participation in ClearCheck. She further highlighted that the ultimate goal is to achieve 100% participation. There are plans to expand ClearCheck to include other forms of misconduct beyond sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and a pilot at the UN Secretariat is currently underway.

Workshop: Gender Focal Points as active bystanders/upstanders

Facilitator: Ms. Angela Locarno, Trainer, Right to Be

Bystander intervention is a powerful tool, when coupled with policies already in place to help stop and prevent harassment, it has the potential to play a crucial role in preventing harm, supporting victims, and addressing inappropriate behaviour. **Ms. Angela Locarno**, trainer from [Right to Be](#), a global NGO with the mission to end harassment, highlighted that while 79% of people said it improved the situation when someone intervened to stop harassment, only 25% stated that someone did intervene. Therefore, while bystander intervention is supportive and helpful, only a few people intervene.

When asked what reasons might lead participants to decide not to intervene:

- 82% stated they are afraid they may make things worse/get in trouble,
- 35% stated they do not know what to do, and
- 21% stated nobody else is doing anything.

Badie Fateh – Gender Focal Point UNDSS

During the Q&A session following the panel discussion, Badie Fateh, Gender Focal Point and trainings coordinator from UNDSS briefly discussed the activities conducted by the office in Syria as a good practice to be used by other focal points. He referred to the awareness sessions that are held on a monthly basis, emphasizing the goal of ensuring that everyone is aware of issues related to gender parity and preventing sexual harassment. The office coordinates with the staff to gather feedback through online surveys after each training. The anonymous feedback includes questions about the reporting mechanism for sexual harassment, providing insights into how staff members perceive and experience the system.

When asked what types of disrespect participants have experienced or witnessed at work:

- 80% stated intentionally undermining others,
- 72% stated refusal to acknowledge the contributions of others,
- 60% stated failing to greet or acknowledge certain people, and
- 36% stated excluding others, either verbally or by positioning the body to elude others.

Disrespect in the workplace can manifest in a number of ways, including, for example, not listening to or speaking over people, shaming or humiliating people through jokes, or in more extreme cases, inappropriate comments, and sexual innuendos. Disrespect in the workplace can be caused by several reasons, such as stress, communication style, not knowing or being sensitive to colleagues' experiences and both implicit and explicit

biases. Ms. Locarno defined bystander intervention as 'taking action to stop disrespectful behaviour when you see it happening', equipping participants with the tools to successfully intervene in the form of the 5D's.

Using interactive scenarios, Ms. Locarno helped solidify the five bystander intervention techniques, focussing on a victim-centred approach and providing a space for participants to discuss how they would approach or address certain situations as a bystander.

- **Distract:** take an indirect approach to de-escalate a situation,
- **Delegate:** get help from someone else,
- **Document:** write down and bring attention to what was witnessed,
- **Delay:** after the event, check in with the person who was disrespected, and
- **Direct:** speak up about the disrespectful behaviour when it is happening.

Panel Discussion: Making gender parity a reality in male-dominated sectors

Panel discussion facilitated by Ms. Lena Moll

The next panel focused on empowering Gender Focal Points to navigate traditionally male dominated sectors. The panel included a speaker from the aviation sector as well as Gender Focal Points working in safety and security and nuclear science. Panellists discussed how achieving gender parity requires systematic change in policies, practices and cultural norms within organizations and institutions, as well as education and early exposure. The importance of role models and role modelling in furthering gender parity was highlighted by all speakers.

Ms. Charlene Wilson, Inspector, UN Department of Safety and Security

Ms. Charlene Wilson provided a comprehensive overview of gender representation within the UNDSS, noting that the first woman in security was hired in 1975. Reflecting on her entry in 2000, when there were only 15 women working in the Department, and merely three in middle management, she underscored the progress made over the years. The representation of women stands currently at around 25% at DSS. Emphasizing the role of committed and supportive management, Ms. Wilson explained how gender parity considerations were incorporated into UNDSS's work. While discussing the successes she experienced and witnessed over time as a Gender Focal Point, Ms. Wilson also acknowledged challenges related to misinformation and perceptions about women in leadership roles, citing an example of a female colleague hesitating to take sick-leave for a medical procedure due to concerns about how this would be perceived by male colleagues.

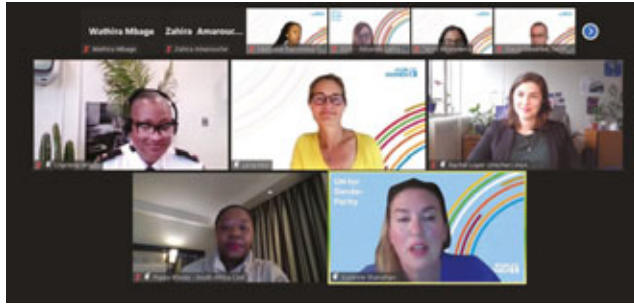
Recruitment strategies, outreach, visibility, and cultivating inclusivity emerged as critical factors in attracting and retaining women in UNDSS. She

highlighted the impact of social media in promoting recruitment, sharing details about a YouTube video featuring a diverse cross-section of the service. Role models and mentorship were identified as pivotal, with Ms. Wilson recounting her personal experience of being inspired by a supervisor and stressing the importance of women in leadership positions to motivate others. Ms. Wilson touched on efforts to encourage women to apply for promotions and assignments, leading to increased job satisfaction among women officers. Accommodations and policies, including flexible work arrangements, have been implemented, with a focus on creating a conducive environment for all. The diverse Gender Focal Point team was recognized as instrumental in fostering different perspectives and innovation.

Ms. Suzanne Shanahan, Chief, Enterprise Application Centre - Americas, Office of Information & Communications Technology

Ms. Suzanne Shanahan addressed the challenges and efforts related to gender representation in the Information Technology (IT) sector within the UN. She acknowledged the competitive nature of the IT sector and the shared challenges with the Department of Safety and Security (DSS), emphasizing the need for support and inclusivity for women. Reflecting on her 30 years of experience in the field, she highlighted the real phenomenon of imposter syndrome that women often face when being the only one in a specific industry.

Ms. Shanahan outlined the substantial workforce gap in the IT sector globally and the underrepresentation of women, despite a rising global demand for technology professionals. Challenges include a limited talent pipeline, low graduation rates for women in computer



science, and gender disparities in IT-related degrees. She discussed the efforts made by the UN to position itself as an employer of choice in the IT sector, offering equal pay, flexible work arrangements, competitive entitlements, and gender parity guidance.

To attract more women to the IT workforce, Ms. Shanahan emphasized leveraging social media, with job vacancies posted on multiple accounts and the inclusion of mandatory gender parity commitments and statements in job descriptions. She referred to a social media campaign, highlighting profiles of 'real women' in IT across the UN Secretariat, aiming to showcase the impact of women in diverse roles. An inclusive recruitment checklist was introduced, as well as collaboration with HR to improve outreach efforts, such as participating in job fairs, is ongoing.

Women within the organization face challenges in progressing due to the lack of open positions for women to move into and the quality of experience required for career progression. Ms. Shanahan acknowledged the persistent challenge of attracting female candidates to certain job functions in IT, despite extended vacancy postings and reposting, and raised concerns about the competitive and limited pipeline of female talent entering the field. Ms. Shanahan noted efforts to improve the gender balance within her office and highlighted the need for more mobility opportunities across the UN system to encourage the exchange of expertise.

Ms. Poppy Khoza, Director General, South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA)

Ms. Poppy Khoza, Director General of the SACAA, provided insights into the challenges of representation and stereotypes in the civil aviation sector. She addressed the issue of the perceived scarcity of qualified female candidates in certain roles within civil aviation. Ms. Khoza challenged the commonly used response that there are no qualified female candidates, labelling it as a "lazy answer" that stems from a reluctance to intensify

recruitment efforts, step out of comfort zones and actively seek diverse talents. She highlighted the impact of societal biases and stereotypes, suggesting that these biases, rooted in broader societal contexts, often lead to the underrepresentation of women in certain roles, especially in male-dominated spaces.

The Director General emphasized the need to address fundamental societal issues and systemic biases, suggesting that societal attitudes and biases are often carried into the workplace. She pointed out that CEOs and hiring managers may unknowingly perpetuate gender stereotypes based on the social and professional environments they come from. Ms. Khoza discussed stereotypes within civil aviation, such as associating the cabin crew with women and the pilots with men. She stressed the importance of normalizing diverse roles in civil aviation, including positions traditionally dominated by men, and advocated for changing societal norms from a young age.

As part of SACAA's efforts to address gender disparities, Ms. Khoza mentioned awareness campaigns, including gathering women pilots to act as advocates in communities, encouraging young girls to aspire to careers in aviation. She emphasized the significance of role modelling and the need to shift societal thinking to make it normal for women to lead major institutions, including civil aviation authorities and airlines.

Ms. Rachel Loper, Gender Equality Officer at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Ms. Rachel Loper, Gender Equality Officer at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), shared valuable insights into the agency's concerted efforts to achieve gender parity and provide support to women in the nuclear field. She underscored the significant progress achieved at the upper echelons of the organization, notably attaining gender parity at the Assistant Director General (ADG) level and securing 43% women in Professional and higher category positions. Ms. Loper referred to the agency's commitment to addressing challenges in middle management, reporting a commendable 16 percentage point increase in women at the P5 level over the past three years.

An innovative approach was highlighted through the agency's article series, which aims to showcase women in STEM and those with non-STEM backgrounds contributing to the IAEA's mission, with the goal of normalizing counter-stereotypical examples. The IAEA

has also implemented leadership development and mentoring programmes, acknowledging the pivotal role of mentorship in facilitating the career growth of women. Family-friendly policies, updated parental leave, and the establishment of a lactation room were mentioned as examples of efforts made to fostering a supportive work environment.

Furthermore, Ms. Loper emphasized the importance of long-term strategies, unveiling flagship programmes such as the Marie Curie Fellowship Program, which encourages women to enter the nuclear field, offering support for academic pursuits and internships, and the Lisa Meitner Program, which addresses mid-career professional development. The IAEA's approach reflects a global perspective, recognizing the challenges in building and sustaining talent pipelines for women in the nuclear sector. Overall, the agency's innovative and comprehensive programmes aim to foster gender equality by nurturing entry-level talent and supporting mid-career professionals in the dynamic field of nuclear energy.

Ms. Nazerke Sailaubekova, Programme Assistant, UN Office on Drugs & Crime

Ms. Nazerke Sailaubekova, Programme Assistant at the UN Office on Drugs & Crime, shared insights from UNODC's initiative, empowering women leaders in international Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT). The first workshop

was organized in 2019, with support from UN Women and has yielded success over the years. Ms. Sailaubekova highlighted the universal nature of challenges faced by women across various sectors, emphasizing key takeaways from the workshops. Leadership emerged as a crucial factor, stressing the importance of senior management's commitment to diversity, accountability, and creating a positive and flexible working environment. The role of male champions in breaking barriers and stereotypes and changing mindsets was also emphasized, not just as a gesture of support but as advocates for women. Like many of the other panellists, she acknowledged the significance of mentorship and shared experiences, encouraging women in leadership to extend support to those starting their careers.

Ms. Sailaubekova highlighted one of the tangible outcomes of these workshops—an establishment of a network of women in the AML/CFT fields. This network, facilitated by a professional development system, actively shares news, job opportunities, and encourages application, contributing to the increased representation of women in advisory roles worldwide. Networking, supporting one another, and actively promoting opportunities were identified as crucial components of advancing gender equality. Ms. Sailaubekova expressed hope for a continued success and growth of this initiative, reinforcing the importance of collaboration and mutual support among women in this specialized field.

Newsflash: A centralized financial mechanism for parental leave provision

Speaker: Ms. Kirsty Mollard, Human Resources Specialist, WHO

The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a central funding mechanism for backfilling parental leave absences in 2017 in conjunction with extending maternity leave from 16 to 24 weeks, ensuring business continuity during 4 to 6 months of absences. The mechanism was crucial in garnering support for progressive parental leave changes from leadership, technical units, hiring managers, and stakeholders. WHO expanded the fund to cover adoption and surrogacy leave, previously labelled paternity leave, and eventually all parental leave backfilling since the implementation of unified parental leave in early 2023.

The internal funding mechanism involves collaboration between HR, finance, and programmatic divisions. It is financed by a monthly payroll charge based on average forecasting, covering remuneration costs, with the exception of other accessory costs. The Fund's

benefits include monitoring replacement requests for operational planning, testimonials citing peace of mind, business continuity, well-being, and gender equality, and enhancing WHO's competitiveness.

Ms. Mollard acknowledged a perceived disadvantage for hiring units and HR in managing processes within fund constraints but emphasized the financial accountability and advantages from that perspective. The fund's existence positively impacts staff decisions on family planning within WHO. The unified parental leave policy aligns with equality goals, contributes to gender parity, and positions the UN common system as an employer of choice. WHO's success with this fund serves as an inspiration for other organizations to implement similar mechanisms, aligning with recommendations from the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) working group in 2022.

Panel Discussion: How do we attract and retain women in the UN system?

Panel discussion facilitated by Ms. Lena Moll

When asked the question 'what is the biggest challenge you notice in your organization around attracting and retaining women?', certain themes arose from the panel's responses. They included lack of career development, work-life balance challenges, and contract instability, among many more. Talent management and leadership came together to form an expert panel in this session to share good practices and answer questions on attracting and retaining women in the UN System.

Mr. Hong Kwon, Chief, Strategic Talent Management Service, United Nations Secretariat

The UN's commitment to gender parity is a fundamental aspect of its agenda, and **Mr. Hong Kwon** outlined some of the policies implemented to address historical imbalances. The UN launched a policy on temporary special measures in 2020, which focuses on addressing gender parity in selections and appointments where the representation of women is lacking. Temporary measures have contributed to improving gender parity, with statistics showing an increase in the representation of women in certain categories. As of September 2023, the representation of women in the Field Services category had risen to 30% from 27% in 2019. Similarly, in the Professional and above categories, the proportion of women increased from 44% in 2019 to 48% in 2023.

Mr. Kwon underlined the importance of outreach efforts to encourage qualified women to apply for job openings. The UN actively engages with women through platforms such as social media, a global network of women's associations, and the UN Talent Pool. The UN Talent Pool is a subscription-based tool that allows individuals to create profiles, providing demographic information. Job openings are then circulated to this pool, which enables recruiters and hiring managers to search and contact potential candidates. Additionally, Mr. Kwon referred to changes in the recruitment policy last year. The removal of restrictions that previously limited internal staff from applying to positions two levels higher aims to attract more women candidates, especially in field missions. Despite certain restrictions for staff moving from the General Services to the Professional category (G to P), the policy was well-received, and progress is being closely monitored.

Ms. Okusitina Bulavakarua, Chief of Human Resources Services, UNIDO

Ms. Okusitina Bulavakarua, Chief of Human Resources Services at UNIDO, addressed the issue of the "leaky pipeline" for women in the workforce, particularly highlighting the decline in women's representation as they progress to higher levels within organizations. She emphasized that statistics show a higher percentage of women at the entry level (around 60%), but the numbers decrease significantly as they move up the professional ladder. The key contributing factor identified for women leaving at the mid-level (P3 and P4) is the competing pressure between career responsibilities and personal obligations, such as childcare and caring for aging parents. Ms. Bulavakarua acknowledged the importance of offering flexible work arrangements for mid-level to senior-level professionals, enabling them to manage their responsibilities effectively.

In response to these challenges, UNIDO has implemented immediate strategies to retain mid-level professionals. This includes offering flexibilities such as support for having children, extending maternity leave, and providing options for remote work. Ms. Bulavakarua highlighted the importance of being flexible in supporting employees during crucial life events. Additionally, UNIDO is actively engaged in long-term strategies. The organization is conducting aggressive outreach efforts to attract more women at the entry level. Initiatives like the Young Professional Programs (YPP) are founded through a policy that mandates a significant portion of positions to be filled by women, contributing to building a strong baseline of entry-level female professionals.

Ms. Julianne Di Nenna, Senior Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, UNHCR

Ms. Julianne Di Nenna, Senior Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer at UNHCR, addressed challenges related to the organization's rotation policy, emphasizing its impact on women and their ability to establish families. The organization has witnessed a significant decline in women staying beyond a certain level due to this policy. External recruitment at higher levels, in response, poses challenges to career development and may negate the experiences gained by women within the organization.

To address these challenges, UNHCR has undertaken several initiatives. Internally, UNHCR has conducted outreach programmes, calling for women candidates and engaging them in career dialogues with senior managers.

One approach involves the use of employee resource groups. These groups bring together diverse women from around the world to highlight challenges, propose solutions, and provide dialogue on various issues. Ms. Di Nenna emphasized the importance of employee resource groups in building communities, reaching diverse voices, and influencing organizational policies. For instance, input from such groups led to the development of a policy which grants two-year duty station extensions for reasons related to disabilities, supporting caregivers and family responsibilities. Furthermore, Ms. Di Nenna encouraged the use of career fairs across the globe to reach diverse communities. Sending job vacancies to employee resource groups and actively involving women colleagues in the application process were highlighted as useful strategies to build a supportive community within UNHCR. Collaboration with UN Women and Gender Focal Points across UN agencies was also stressed as an essential aspect of creating a more inclusive environment for women across the United Nations system.

Ms. Rosemary Chinondo, Team Leader, Security Administration Team, Operations Support Unit, Department of Safety & Security (UNOV)

The Security & Safety Service (SSS) in Vienna has faced notable challenges with a view to the representation of women in security services. The department had difficulties in recruiting female candidates, partly due to restrictions on local recruitments and certain UN staff entitlements that were less lucrative compared to the job-related benefits offered by the host country. In 2021, with six vacancies for security officers, SSS Vienna took an active approach to address the gender gap. Temporary special measures were applied. Additionally, SSS revised job openings to use gender-inclusive language and highlighted the possibilities for career development and work-life balance, such as rotations in specialized areas.

To further encourage for more female candidates, SSS Vienna introduced outreach sessions in collaboration with Human Resources Management Service (HRMS). These sessions aimed at familiarizing potential candidates with the work of UNDSS, improving understanding of the organization's structure, raising awareness of job openings, and guiding applicants through the application

process. The outreach programme produced positive results, with a significant increase in the number of female applicants for vacancies. In 2021, SSS Vienna had three out of four female managers in its management team. Of the six vacancies for security officers, five were filled by female officers, marking a notable shift in gender balance.

SSS Vienna continues to use the outreach programme approach for future job openings, with the expectation that it will contribute to reducing the gender gap. The organization also launched a quarterly newsletter with a dedicated 'Gender Focal Point Corner' to foster continuous discussions on gender-related topics. Workshops are being organized to engage male colleagues in understanding and embracing gender parity strategies. **Ms. Chinondo** emphasized the commitment to ongoing initiatives and expressed the hope of achieving gender parity in the future. SSS remains dedicated to addressing the gender gap through proactive and inclusive measures.

DAY 3

ADVOCATING FOR GENDER PARITY

11 October

Day 3: Key Takeaways

- o An urgent need to recognize differences and facilitate positive change, such as committing to anti-racist actions and embracing the principles of inclusion.
- o Checking inner attitudes as a Gender Focal Point can help us to navigate negativity and transform it into productivity. Communicating clearly and without judgement is key to understanding resistance from others within the workplace.
- o To address racism at all levels - systemic, institutional, and structural - a comprehensive approach that includes advocacy on various aspects, such as interpersonal relations, communication, awareness, anti-racism dialogues, training, and language development is needed. Transparency, making use of data that captures racial diversity, such as staff surveys with racial identifiers on staff surveys is key. Senior leaders should be held accountable for administration of justice, ensuring diversity on panels, supporting victims, and creating safe spaces for members to engage in anti-racism conversations.
- o Engagement between Gender Focal Points is crucial.

Communicating and Making an Impact as a Gender Focal Point

Facilitated by Ms. Lena Moll

Ms. Lena Moll began the third day with a session on how to effectively communicate and make an impact as a Gender Focal Point. In communication, checking inner attitudes can help people find ways to move negativity and transform it into productivity. Additionally, having productive conversations in which people are

communicating clearly and without judgement is key to understanding resistance from people within the workplace. Finding reasons behind resistance or “no” can be crucial to taking steps towards achieving gender parity as a Gender Focal Point.

Addressing Racism as a Gender Focal Point Panel Discussion

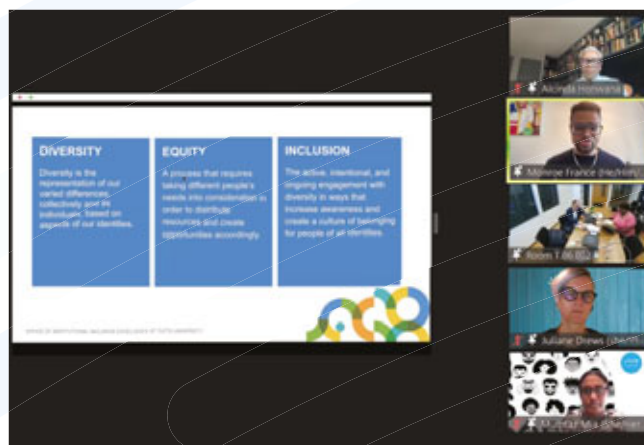
Facilitated by Mr. Monroe France, Vice Provost for Institutional Inclusive Excellence, Tufts University

Mr. Monroe France, Vice Provost for Institutional Inclusive Excellence, Tufts University, explained that the first step to enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion is to understand the concepts well and how they can be integrated into the workplace. According to Mr. France, we must collectively think about the persons or communities that we want to include and how we want to make progress, bearing in mind that the concepts of 'inclusion' or 'race' belong to specific frameworks of discourse.

The concept of "race", he explained, is a social construct, but it is also a part of our social and individual identity. While it is an important part of an individual's identity, it does not define someone's account of events, experiences, and identities. Nonetheless, recognizing someone's race is important because it acknowledges people's nuanced experiences, the presence of power dynamics and microaggressions for the concerned individuals. He stressed the importance and urgent need for institutions to recognize differences and facilitate positive change, such as committing to anti-racist actions and embracing the principles of inclusion as part of their institutional culture. When reflecting on inclusivity and diversity, it is essential to take an approach of intersectionality (i.e. the intersection of race and gender) given how intersectionality tends to exacerbate systems of oppression. Those who are in positions of power have an especially important role in creating change.

Dr. Alcinda Honwana, Director - Anti-Racism Team, United Nations Secretariat

Dr. Alcinda Honwana spoke to participants about addressing racism and racial discrimination through a wholistic approach that accounts for systemic, institutional, and structural racism. She followed this introduction with a three-pronged approach to addressing racism within institutions. First, advocacy that relates to interpersonal issues, communication, awareness, anti-racism dialogues, training and developing language. Second, transparency, specifically with regards to data is of utmost importance. Dr. Honwana reminded participants that access to data



and transparency within institutions is crucial in policy review and reform.

The third aspect is accountability - making sure that senior leaders are held accountable for the administration of justice, ensuring diversity on panels, victim support, or safe spaces for members to engage with anti-racism discourse. Dr. Honwana concluded by alluding to the importance of engagement between Gender Focal Points to address racism.

Ms. Muthoni Muriu, Senior Advisor, Diversity, Inclusion and Shared Leadership, UN Women

Ms. Muthoni Muriu spoke about her experience in advocating for change on anti-racism, calling it a multi-faceted approach. She dissected the reasons behind resistance to anti-racism or diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, noting that people resist because they feel threats to their morals, virtue, or privilege. She emphasized the need for cognitive empathy, or the ability to sense people's emotions coupled with the ability to imagine the reasonings behind such emotions. Ms. Muriu invited engagement and collaboration with colleagues to help deal with resistance, by making them feel included in the initiatives. She also accentuated the need for safe learning spaces that build empathy and awareness without placing the burden of education on marginalized employees.

Mr. Xavier Orellana, Senior Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist, IOM

Mr. Xavier Orellana spoke about his personal experience at the International Organization for Migration when developing a diversity internship programme to provide opportunities for ethnic minorities, especially from the Global South, to participate in otherwise costly and selective programmes. The need for diversity amongst

interns became clear after looking at data and realizing most interns were from the Global North, could afford to travel, support themselves, knew the language and had received coaching in universities. Additionally, Mr. Orellana spoke about instituting racial identifiers in staff identifying surveys to measure how the workplace experience is different for various racial and ethnic groups. He also underlined the need for discourse in the workplace to address masculinity, questioning privilege and the patriarchy, and to encourage more men to become allies.

Ms. Mumtaz Mia, Senior Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisor, UNICEF

Ms. Mumtaz Mia emphasized the importance of understanding where resistance to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives may come from and understanding the personal feelings often associated with new approaches or ideas. Ms. Mia suggested that the unasked questions are answered to find where the resistance lies. She underlined the need for building allies within workplaces and recognizing the complexity of anti-

racism work. Her work at UNICEF has caused her to look critically at the spaces in which colleagues support and interact with each other.

Ms. Juliane Drews, Co-lead Culture Transformation, UNAIDS

Ms. Juliane Drews provided her insights on how to use a position as a Gender Focal Point to advance racial justice. She provided examples on how we can empower both racially marginalized and gender discriminated populations. The importance of intersectionality cannot be understated –especially as women often experience marginalization on multiple levels due to ethnicity and gender. She spoke of the importance of using the role of the Gender Focal Point to gain a unique leverage point. Her work consistently considers addressing racism at an individual and structural level, because she believes in the importance of integrating anti-racist work in all decision making.

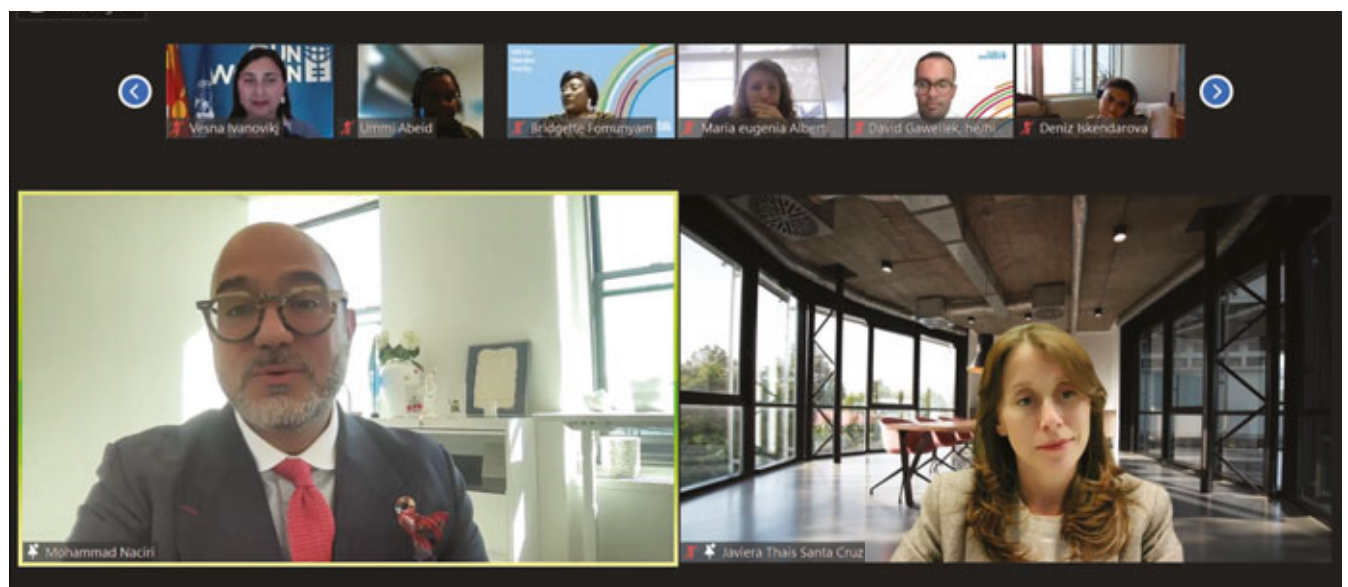
Recognitions for Gender Focal Points

Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Chief of Staff, UN Women

Gender Focal Points were recognized for their outstanding achievements in implementing the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines. Mr. Mohammad Naciri, the Chief of Staff of UN Women, acknowledged the achievements of Gender Focal Points in the following categories:

Special recognition

- Ms. Javiera Thais Santa Cruz, United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)



Professional and Personal Life Integration

- Ms. Rachel Loper, International Atomic Energy Agency
- Ms. Mariana Alegret, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Ms. Shihana Mohamed, International Civil Service Commission
- Ms. Faith O'Neill, International Labour Organization
- Ms. Kirsty Mollard, World Health Organization
- Ms. Catarina Edlund, UN Women
- Mr. Conor Tierney, International Organization for Migration
- Ms. Celine Ancelet, Ms. Maria Hadzic, Ms. Geraldine Gourves-Fromigue, Ms. Zeljka Colic and Ms. Ana Parrondo-Rodriguez, UN Secretariat
- Ms. Volatiana Andriatahina, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Standards of Conduct, Diversity and Inclusion

- Major Etonam Atsufe Nuapah, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- Ms. Ingeborg Daamen, United Nations Office in Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Mr. Silvan Scheiwiller, Secretariat of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
- Mr. Jeffrey Musa, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Ms. Vanessa Holtze and Ms. Anne Aulinger, UN Office at Vienna and UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- Ms. Muthoni Muriu, Ms. Marie-Elena John, Mr. Prasun Chakraborty, Ms. Maria de la Luna, Mr. Gabriel Tuan, Ms. Kabelo Botlhe Dikobe, Mr. Abul Hasnat Monjurul Kabir, Human Resource partners, Black Caucus, Youth Council, Staff Council, UN Women

Occupational Safety, Health and Wellbeing

- Ms. Megan Landeros and Ms. Arianna Privitera, Food and Agriculture Organization

Recruitment, Talent Management and Retention

- Ms. Maria Eugenia Albertinazzi, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Ms. Bridgette Che Fomunyan, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- Ms. Deniz Iskendarova, Ms. Deepti Choubey, Ms. Sabine Bauer, Ms. Marta Fernandez de Mazarambroz, Ms. Hema Kulalartne Kehelbaddarage and Ms. La Neice Collins, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Leadership, Accountability and Implementation

- Ms. Nazerke Sailaubekova, Mr. Oliver Gadney, Mr. Leopoldo Fernandez Herce, Mr. Fabrizio Fioroni and Ms. Zoelda Anderton, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Ms. Tracey Parsons, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
- Ms. Carlotta Rizzo, United Nations Global Service Centre
- Ms. Hanna Sands, United Nations Office in Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

“As you know, pushback against the gender equality agenda is on the rise. In this context, your wealth of wisdom and ideas are a great strength. I urge you to continue to be actively involved in this network and draw on the insights and experience of your peers as you are each other’s greatest resource.”

Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Chief of Staff, UN Women



Closing remarks and the way forward

Ms. Katja Pehrman closed the Annual Global Gender Focal Point Meeting by reflecting on the various sessions and good practices shared this year. She summarized some of the key messages and highlighted key actions that can be implemented to lead progress, especially in accordance with the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. Ms. Pehrman expressed her sincere gratitude to the Gender Focal Points for joining the meeting and enthusiastically participating and sharing their ideas and good practices. She also thanked the Gender Focal Points for their continued work and support towards enhancing gender parity.

Ms. Pehrman reminded the Gender Focal Points that they should have at least one deputy or alternative. Male colleagues should also be encouraged to join the network

to make parity a reality. In addition, Gender Focal Points at the UN Secretariat were encouraged to familiarize themselves with and widely disseminate the most recent Terms of Reference (ST/SGB/2023/3), which defines their role as Gender Focal Points.

Ms. Pehrman also reaffirmed her role in supporting the work of the Gender Focal Points and empowering them to continue as agents for change across the UN system. She also reminded the participants of the many available resources and communication products that can be used to take action and further advance their work.

ANNEX

Reports

- [Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General \(2023\)](#)
- [Infographic: Representation of women in the UN system](#)
- [UN Women's Status Report & Updated Implementation Plan 2023 - 2024](#)
- [Making Zero Tolerance a Reality: Peer-to-peer learning to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment in the UN system and beyond](#)
- [Enhancing Cooperation: Peer-to-peer learning to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment in the UN system and beyond](#)
- [Shaping the international agenda II: Progress on raising women's voices in intergovernmental forums](#)
- Gender Focal Points annual meeting reports: [2022](#), [2021](#), [2020](#), [2019](#), [2018](#), [2017](#)

Practical guidelines

- [UN Women webpage on the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System](#)
- [Enabling environment guidelines for the United Nations system and Supplemental guidance](#)
- [Make parity a reality: Field-specific enabling environment guidelines](#)
 - Summary of Key Recommendations for the [Organization](#), [Managers](#) and [all personnel](#)
 - ["In Brief": Summary](#) of the Field-specific enabling environment guidelines. Available in Spanish upon request
 - [Enabling environment in focus/intersectionality documents](#)
 - [Video presentation on the Field Specific Enabling Environment Guidelines](#)
 - [Video Series 'Making Parity a Reality at the UN](#)
 - [Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines in Arabic](#)
 - [Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines in French](#)

- [Gender Inclusion Practice Note: Designated Lactation Spaces for Nursing Parents](#)
- [Enabling environment in focus/intersectionality documents](#)
- [Guidance on Creating Inclusive Vacancy Announcements: Good Practice Examples from the UN](#)
- [Why gender parity?](#)
- [Mentoring as part of creating an enabling environment](#)
- [Exit survey model template](#)

Videos

- [Video Series 'Making parity a reality at the UN'](#)
- [Video Series 'Why LGBTQI+ inclusion is important to the UN and beyond'](#)

UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity

- [UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity](#)

UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment

- [UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment](#)

Podcast

- [Podcast Series: Flexible Working Arrangements](#)

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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