

TO: Heads of Departments and Offices
A: (see distribution list)

DATE: 3 April 2008

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

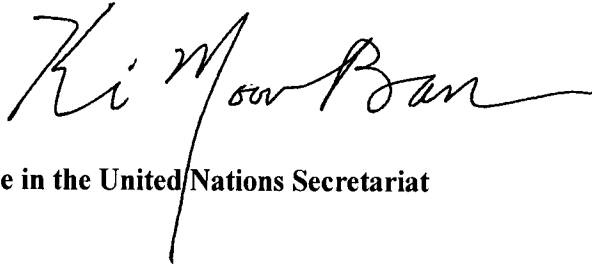
S/C DE:

FROM: The Secretary-General

DE:

SUBJECT: **Achieving gender balance in the United Nations Secretariat**

OBJET:



1. I would like to stress the high priority that I attach to achieving gender balance in the United Nations Secretariat. Despite numerous General Assembly resolutions calling for parity at all levels, progress so far has been woefully inadequate. I am disappointed that at some levels in the Professional and Higher categories, women's ratios have even regressed. The Secretariat is lagging behind other United Nations entities, including UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP. This situation must be rectified.
2. I am committed to lead the effort to change the situation and achieve the goal of 50/50 distribution within the Organization. This effort must have the unequivocal support of all Heads of Departments and Offices and programme managers.
3. To this end, I would like you to take the following steps:
 - (a) Use, to the extent possible, expected retirements at all levels but in particular at the D-1 and P-5 levels to increase women's representation, including by undertaking forward-looking workforce planning. Look also at a broader pool of candidates by considering qualified women from the wider United Nations common system.
 - (b) Embrace modern management methods and foster a healthy work-life balance, including by reviewing and enhancing the implementation of the policies for flexible work arrangements in your Department or Office. Flexible work arrangements are part of good management and a key tool for achieving gender balance.
 - (c) Fully implement new and strengthened terms of reference for departmental focal points for women to be issued shortly as a Secretary-General's Bulletin. If you presently have no focal point I urge you to designate one, in consultation with your staff. The focal points are an important resource for Department and Office Heads and I invite you to effectively use them in reaching your gender balance targets.
4. To further this commitment, I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to lead the development of a forward-looking gender balance strategy. It should articulate the most effective ways of reaching the goal of gender balance, including how best to achieve gender awareness, policy implementation, monitoring and analysis of progress and enhanced accountability.

5. As part of this strategy, I am endorsing the development of a “gender balance scorecard” to include statistics on gender representation, information on the use of flexible working arrangements; functioning of the gender focal point system; selection of women from the roster; and other relevant indicators as well as innovative measures taken to facilitate recruitment, promotion and retention of women. The scorecards will be reviewed by the Management Committee twice yearly as part of the assessment of performance and progress made by each Department and Office in reaching the gender targets outlined in the Senior Managers Compacts and in the Human Resources Action Plans (HRAPs).

6. I am mindful as well of my own responsibility to appoint more women, and on this I seek your support. To enable me to exercise my discretion on senior level appointments in a positive manner, I request that you provide my office with a list of at least three qualified candidates that includes qualified women for posts at the D-2 level and above. In those exceptional cases in which you are unable to include at least one qualified woman in the slate, please submit a written explanation, highlighting the efforts made to do so. In the same vein, I would like to ask you to continually suggest names for a standing roster of women eligible for senior appointments with the United Nations.

7. I hope we can all agree that in the long run a gender balanced environment in our Organization is good for the institution. I count on your full support and commitment, and those of your programme managers, to lead by example in the creation of a modern, versatile, and productive workforce, where men and women are able to contribute on an equal basis to serving this great Organization.

cc: The Deputy Secretary-General
Mr. Vijay Nambiar
Ms. Rachel Mayanja

Distribution list:

Mr. Nicholas Michel, OLA
Mr. Lynn B. Pascoe, DPA
Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, UNODA
Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, DPKO
Mr. John Holmes, OCHA
Mr. Sha Sukang, DESA
Mr. Shaaban Shaaban, DGACM
Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, DPI
Ms. Alicia Bárcena, DM
Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, OHRLLS & OSAA
Mr. David Veness, DSS
Ms. Inga-Britt Ahlenius, OIOS
Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, CAAC
Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, UNOV & UNODC
Mr. Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze, UNOG
Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP
Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, UNON & UN-HABITAT
Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, ECA
Mr. Marek Belka, ECE
Mr. Jose Machinea, ECLAC
Ms. Noleem Heyzer, ESCAP
Mr. Bader Al-Dafa, ESCWA
Ms. Louise Arbour, OHCHR
Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, UNCTAD
Ms. Patricia Francis, ITC
Mr. Antonio Guterres, UNHCR
Dr. Konrad Osterwalder, UNU
Ms. Carmen Moreno, INSTRAW
Mr. Carlos Lopes, UNITAR
Dr. Patricia Lewis, UNIDIR
Mr. Thandika Mkandawire, UNRISD
Ms. Carolyn McAskie, PBSO
Ms. Jane Holl Lute, DFS
Mr. Robert F. Benson, Ethics Office
Ms. Nora Galer, Office of the Ombudsman