



Network

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INTERVIEW WITH DR. ASHA-ROSE MTENGETI MIGIRO Deputy Secretary-General

Dr. Asha-Rose Mtengeti Migiro of the United Republic of Tanzania took office as Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations on 1 February 2007. She is the third Deputy Secretary-General to be appointed since the post was established in 1997.

Dr. Migiro, born on 9 July 1956 in Songea, Ruvuma Region, the United Republic of Tanzania, served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation from 2006 to 2007—the first woman in the United Republic of Tanzania to hold that position since its independence in 1961. Before that, she was Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children for five years.



As Foreign Minister, Dr. Migiro spearheaded the United Republic of Tanzania's engagement in the pursuit of peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region. She served as Chair of the Council of Ministers' meetings of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, a process that culminated in the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

Dr. Migiro was also Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation and President of the United Nations Security Council during its open debate on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region. As Chair of the SADC organ, Dr. Migiro coordinated SADC assistance to the democratic process, including elections, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as support for national elections in Zambia and Madagascar. At the time of her appointment, she was chairing an

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important SADC Ministerial Troika Meeting ahead of the national elections in Lesotho.

Prior to government service, Dr. Migiro pursued a career in academia. She was a member of the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, where she rose to the rank of senior lecturer. She headed the Department of Constitutional and Administrative Law from 1992 to 1994, and the Department of Civil and Criminal Law from 1994 to 1997. Her work was published widely in local and international journals.

Dr. Migiro served as a member of the United Republic of Tanzania's Law Reform Commission in 1997 and as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2000. She obtained a Master of Laws from the University of Dar-es-Salaam in 1984 and a Doctorate in law from the University of Konstanz in Germany in 1992.

Dr. Migiro is married to Professor Cleophas Migiro and has two daughters. In addition to English, she speaks Kiswahili, basic French and German.

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Letter from the Focal Point for Women

It is with much delight that we bring to you the last issue of Network for 2007 with news and information about gender issues. Throughout the year we have tried to inform you about issues affecting women on their journeys, in their diversified roles as family members and formal sector workers, and as individuals often challenged by poverty, war and domestic violence. With respect to the United Nations, we have sought to cover events that empower and inform women and decision makers to effectuate policy change. Accordingly, we now draw your special attention to the Expert Group Meeting held from 14 to 16 November 2007 wherein experts discussed and recommended good practice and policy to accelerate progress towards the General Assembly goal in achieving gender parity at all levels and in all occupational categories. This should have been achieved by the year 2000.

With respect to upcoming changes in the Organization, there will be a significant number of retirements until the year 2011, when 15.8 per cent of staff are expected to retire. In this context, please note the summaries of the survey on gender perspectives in retirement. It shows how men and women view retirement differently and how women can relieve stress from issues that might come from retirement.

Finally, and most importantly, we highlight Network's interview with Deputy Secretary-General Dr. Asha-Rose Mtengeti Migiro as she speaks about gender equality, as well as other related aspects such as mobility and spousal employment. The narratives of her experiences as she balanced her work, family, personal life and career may well provide much-needed inspiration. Anybody who has tried knows about the incredible challenges posed by the balancing act of family and career. Her story is no exception. She, in the eyes of most, has succeeded. She serves as an inspiration, not only because of her professional status in life, but because in arriving there she has not abandoned the broader constituency of women everywhere in their quest and struggle for gender equality.

To Dr. Migiro and all of those who have shared in our work for women in the United Nations and around the world, we give you our gratitude. With unity and focus we can achieve the empowerment of women and ultimately gender equality. When only men were largely empowered, we put man on the moon. We can only imagine where we would be if all women were empowered as well!

In solidarity,



Aparna Mehrotra

INTERVIEW WITH DR. MIGIRO

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Q: *How does your background as a professor and head of departments such as constitutional law and criminal law shape your perspectives—especially in dealing with your duties as the Deputy Secretary-General?*

A: I started as an academic at the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. Like many other academics of my time, I was active in defending peoples' rights at the community level and was already working closely with Parliamentarians on a wide range of issues such as marriage laws, land laws, human rights and children's rights. So, when I was offered to run for a seat in Parliament, I saw it as an opportunity—a chance to have a say in policies and decisions in these areas, a chance to help bring about change in the long term. Barely a month after I entered Parliament, I was appointed Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children, and five years later I was made Minister of Foreign Affairs.

While serving as Foreign Minister, I dealt with policy at the country level, bringing it to the global level. Now, I advocate at the global level while also maintaining involvement with my former work. As Foreign Minister, I dealt with different Governments, different countries, and it is almost the same now; we're dealing with Member States and other non-governmental interlocutors, but with a global agenda.

Today, as Deputy Secretary-General, I have a global platform—one that I will use to continue defending peoples' rights and fighting for better lives for men, women and children around the world.

Q: *What aspect of your work as Deputy Secretary-General do you feel will pose the most challenges?*

A: I took office approximately three months ago. Since then, I have been working on my priorities and responsibilities, focusing mainly on the areas of development and management issues—both internal to the Secretariat and within the broader United Nations system. In addition, I undertake other activities and duties, as given to me by the Secretary-General.

Coming from a developing country myself, development is the agenda that I hold close to my heart and will work on very passionately. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be the focus to which I shall divert much energy. With the MDGs come many

other issues, such as gender equality, the environment, humanitarian assistance, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. I will use the podium to advocate these, for they too are central to development.

Then of course is the whole question of reform—I believe reform is very important for advancing the development agenda. Reform is essentially about making the United Nations deliver more effectively through rational use of resources. This element is an important pillar of our work.

Q: *You were the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). What is your vision of the CSW based on your experiences both as Chair and now as Deputy Secretary-General?*

A: The CSW is charged with a number of issues related to gender equality. It is a forum to learn about strategies and structures implemented at the country level, and to use this to evaluate ourselves. It is an opportunity to discuss what is happening on the ground and what other Member States have done. Most importantly, I think it is a forum for cross-pollination.

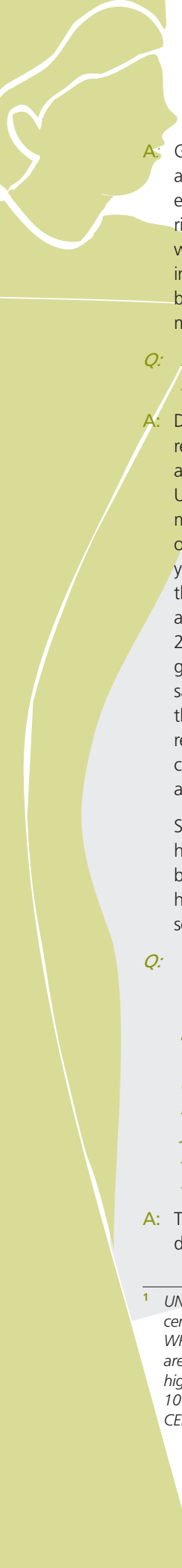
In addition, I was a former committee member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is yet another forum to advance the agenda for gender equality.

Q: *What is the UN's comparative advantage and what is its role in addressing gender issues?*

A: The United Nations has developed an important normative and policy framework to promote equality between women and men in all spheres of life.

At the 2005 World Summit, leaders declared that "progress for women is progress for all". They agreed that gender equality and human rights are essential to advancing development as well as peace and security. We live in an age which recognizes and upholds equality between the races and countries. It must also do the same for equality between the sexes. This was the reason that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not allowed to be named the Universal Declaration of Man—thanks in large part to Ms. Eleanor Roosevelt, a visionary champion for the dignity of all persons, men and women.

Q: *Gender is a broad theme. But, within it, why, in your view, is gender balance particularly important?*



A: Gender equality is about men and women and is absolutely imperative for sustainable development in its entirety. You cannot have either development or human rights for just one gender. When we talk about values, we must look at the particularities of men and women in a balanced manner. Behind the words “gender balance” lies the concept of empowerment. All persons must be empowered, including, of course, women.

Q: How is the United Nations itself doing in regard to gender balance in staffing?

A: Despite some recent positive developments in recruitment of qualified women, we are still far from achieving the goal of gender parity in the staff of the UN system. The truth is that were we to judge UN managers today on their performance on gender, few of them would get a passing grade. For the past nine years, the share of women staff in the Secretariat in the Professional and higher categories increased by an average of only 0.28 per year. Between 2004 and 2007, the proportion of women in most Professional grades in the Secretariat actually decreased. During the same period, there was close to a 20 per cent rise in the proportion of women leaving voluntarily before retirement age. Simple projections show that at the current glacial pace, we would achieve gender balance at the USG level in 2080 and at the D-1 level in 2048.

Some entities, such as UNITAR, ICSC, UNFPA and WFP have done well on gender balance among their staff,¹ but overall progress is desperately slow, especially at the higher Professional levels and in the field. We are now seriously exploring strategies to address this imbalance.

Q: The 2006 report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system reports that the analysis of the slowness in the advancement of women reveals organizational culture as being one prominent barrier to progress. Having been at the UN now for a few months, would you share your impressions with the readers—both the favourable and the less favourable—in this respect?

A: The Secretary-General's report analysed empirical data, human resources management policies and

procedures, and individual perceptions of staff members. I agree with its findings that concerted efforts must be made to change organizational culture to improve gender balance, including at decision-making levels. However, as I said on a different occasion, gender balance is not a “female” issue that has to be discussed only by women. It is not and cannot be only of, by and for women. It is an issue of inclusion, equality and fairness. We need to involve our male colleagues in this discussion and ensure that they too are accountable for the results, including the requisite organizational culture shifts where necessary.

Q: Based on your personal experience thus far, what would you ideally like to be done to achieve gender balance in staffing?

A: Managers at all levels must be bold, creative and ready to demonstrate that we mean serious business in reaching gender parity throughout the United Nations.

- That means making more innovative and determined efforts to recruit and retain qualified women.
- It means holding heads of departments and line managers accountable in a consistent way, and emphasizing women's representation at senior and decision-making levels.
- It means exploring temporary special measures of the type that have been used by some Member States to reach legislated gender targets.
- It means producing up-to-date, disaggregated statistics at all levels—and using them to full effect. Such statistics are essential to ensuring that targets are set and met, and to holding managers accountable.
- It means implementing work/life policies for both women and men, a condition for achieving balance in every sense of the word. Those policies include flexible working hours, telecommuting, workweek arrangements, job-sharing, and maternity and paternity leave.

As a colleague, a woman and a mother, I cannot stress these aspects enough.

Q: How best do you think an organization can communicate the value of a diverse and gender-balanced workforce, and does gender imbalance define the paradigm of how an organization is run?

A: Gender balance and work/life balance are imperative to our productivity, our credibility and our humanity.

Achieving gender equality is not an issue separate from others on our agenda. It goes to the heart of what our

¹ UNITAR with 57 per cent women (16 out of 28), ICSC with 53 per cent (8 out of 15), UNFPA with 50 per cent (210 out of 421) and WFP with 50 per cent (226 out of 456). Two other organizations are close to achieving gender balance in the Professional and higher categories: UNESCO with 46 per cent women (463 out of 1016) and UNICEF with 45 per cent (819 out of 1819). Source: CEB Data.

Secretary-General has set out to achieve—changing the work culture of the United Nations. Culture should include respect for humanity and promotion of gender equality. Yes, to some extent, gender inequality reflects lack of inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is an important organizational goal.

Q: The Secretary-General announced that he intended to achieve gender balance. How do you believe it may be most effectively realized?

A: The Secretary-General and I are determined to address the various causes of gender imbalance in staffing and to hold managers accountable for their performance on gender. We are taking a two-pronged approach to recruiting and retaining more qualified women—by reaching out more systematically and by implementing work/life policies more effectively.

At the highest managerial level, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is now a member of the Management Committee, the Senior Management Group and the Management Performance Board, thereby ensuring a gender perspective for their deliberations.

At the departmental level, new guidelines state that for any department failing to meet its target for the Professional levels and above, the department head is obliged to formally justify the proposed selection of a male candidate when a woman candidate is equally qualified. Also, new terms of reference will be developed for departmental focal points to ensure that they are listened to by senior managers, and can participate meaningfully in all processes that relate to gender balance.

There is also something to be learned from other UN and non-member UN partners. We must find positive experiences and examples to replicate and build on. We must draw on the lessons of successful external partners and agents of change. We are committed to creating a positive work environment for both women and men in the UN, a condition for achieving balance in every sense of the word.

Q: You mentioned work/life policies. How is the UN doing on flexible working arrangements and why do you see them as increasingly important?

A: The UN has beneficial policies on flexible working arrangements. These policies can be found in the Secretary-General's bulletin² and include four options:

staggered working hours, compressed work schedule, scheduled break for external learning activities, and work away from the office (telecommuting). These measures were promulgated to align the work practices of the Secretariat with those of many national civil services and other parts of the United Nations system by offering more flexible working arrangements. The objective is to promote a better balance between the professional and personal lives of the staff of the Secretariat, and to attract and retain the best and brightest. The younger staff are demanding flexibility, greater control of their time, and of their lives. And, with an ageing population and workforce, the older staff are demanding the same. The issues of eldercare are not marginal anymore. They are central.

It is important to remember that work/life balance is not just a women's issue. Working arrangements that permit work/life balance are important to men also. One of the reasons these measures are increasingly important is the demographic shift towards younger workers. OHRM³ predicts that almost 15 per cent of Secretariat staff⁴ will reach mandatory retirement age during the next five years; thus more young people will be joining the workforce. In order to attract and retain both men and women, the United Nations will have to meet their expectations to balance work and personal life.

With particular respect to women, it is true that in the current environment, flexible working arrangements including telecommuting are particularly important to the recruitment and retention of women in the workforce. Women still bear the majority of childcare and eldercare responsibilities. However, this burden must be shared by men and also by institutions. Without more appropriate burden-sharing at the family and societal levels, it will not be possible for each individual, male or female, to realize their full potential for leading a balanced, holistic life. We must make it possible for women and men to work and still fulfil familial duties. Furthermore, as they get older, many men regret not having spent adequate time with their children.

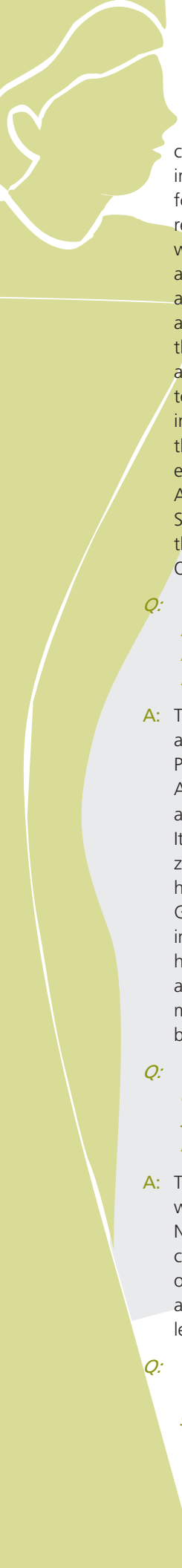
Q: Many staff do not seem to be aware of the use of flexible working arrangements. What can be done to improve this situation?

A: The problem is that these arrangements are under-utilized. As it says in the Secretary-General's bulletin,

² ST/SGB/2003/4.

³ The Office of Human Resources Management.

⁴ Secretariat staff under the 100 series with appointments of one year or more.



certain types of flexible working arrangements including telecommuting may not be possible for some jobs. Similarly, increased demands and requirements may lead to suspension of flexible working arrangements at certain periods, such as when an intergovernmental body serviced by a particular office is in session. The option to use all the flexible working arrangements should be the norm, and the situations where they are not applicable should be the exception. One possibility to bring about greater accountability would be to include the use of flexible working arrangements in the Human Resources Action Plans used to monitor each manager's achievements in various areas. Another best practice is to continue reporting in the Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system. Overall, monitoring is of utmost importance.

Q: The UN has suffered from a series of setbacks related to justice and abuse of power. What measures do you believe to be the most important in addressing this matter?

A: There is now a mandatory, system-wide, self-administered electronic training programme on Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority in the Workplace, which was announced in the Secretary-General's bulletin in 2005. It is designed to raise awareness of the Organization's zero-tolerance policy and to foster the creation of a harmonious working environment. The Secretary-General will issue a bulletin on the administrative instructions on the prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority early in 2008. Policies must be systematically modernized and updated and implementation must be strengthened.

Q: There has been much support for the creation of a new gender entity. What do you believe such an entity ideally requires to achieve its mandate?

A: The Secretary-General and I wholeheartedly agree with the suggestion of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence to replace several current structures with one dynamic UN entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment. Such an entity should mobilize forces of change at the global level and inspire enhanced results at the country level.

Q: The experience of several nations indicates that substantial progress in achieving gender balance, in both national legislatures

and institutions, is best achieved with the employment of temporary special measures, also noted in article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. What was your experience with this in the United Republic of Tanzania? What are your views on this matter?

A: Article 4 of the Convention specifically mentions special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. General recommendations 5 and 25 of the Convention also elaborate on the importance of special measures. My experience with the United Republic of Tanzania and special measures has shown that they are absolutely imperative and have been a very positive experience for the country and for most of Africa where they are implemented. Without special measures, society cannot overcome tradition. In the United Republic of Tanzania, women championed the cause of independence through civil action. In that struggle, women showed that they shared the same faculties and abilities as men.

After independence, however, the representation of women shrunk despite their significant and recognized participation during the effort for independence. In the governance structures and power-sharing after independence, women were excluded. The lesson was that unless the leadership institutionalized special measures for women, women seemed invariably to be left out of institutions.

In 1977, the United Republic of Tanzania established a new constitution with a constitutional provision mandating that 15 per cent of the participation of the single party had to be women. When the multiparty system was introduced, the constitutional provision was raised to 20 per cent.

There were also efforts to include women who would otherwise not be included in the party structure; the president could nominate women from NGOs, academia, and disabled or youth groups. This allowed women the opportunity to learn governance and better prepare themselves to be able to contest elections.

This was my own experience. If I had not been nominated to Parliament and worked in it, I would never have been convinced of my eligibility and competence to run for Parliament. However, the opportunity through nomination opened this door which prepared me to consider running and actually win.

I have no doubt in my mind that affirmative action is absolutely imperative to attaining gender balance. It

has worked and it will continue to work in the United Republic of Tanzania. Women become empowered and build their confidence, which in turn builds the confidence of society.

Q: If you allow us to become a bit more personal, what was your spouse's and other family members' reaction to your appointment as Deputy Secretary-General?

A: My spouse has been my inspiration and without him I could not have achieved the pinnacles to which I have arrived.

Q: What are the greatest challenges that you have had to face in combining career and motherhood?

A: My daughter was only two years old when I decided to go to Germany to pursue my PhD, which was also part of the requirements to enter an academic career. As you can imagine, it is not easy to leave a small child behind. I am lucky to have a husband who was very supportive. However, nothing compensates one emotionally for being far from your family and not seeing your children grow up. As Minister, I also had to spend long periods of time away from home which was another tremendous challenge. On the other hand, I also realize that my husband and extended family had to do without my company and solace. Therefore, they too had to sacrifice so that I could pursue my career.

Q: What central philosophy has guided your achievement?

A: Obviously, seeing the challenges that humanity continues to face, especially in my part of the world, is a strong motivation in my daily work. One important source of inspiration throughout my career has been the philosophy and vision of Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. He said that as a poor country, the United Republic of Tanzania could not afford to provide education for all. So those who had access to education should consider themselves privileged and should appreciate the sacrifice that is made for them to get an education. This duty to give back has guided me a great deal.

Q: What advice would you like to give to young women entering the UN system with regard to mobility, spousal employment, and how best to combine a career with family life? What general advice would you like to give women professionals in their struggle for advancement—in the workplace, in life, in general?

A: Finding the right balance between career and motherhood and between work and life is the toughest challenge I have faced, not least because you have to admit that you cannot achieve perfect balance. However, this should not make any person feel guilty. One must recognize that attaining objectives has its "price" so to speak! But this "price" has to be borne by females and males alike in partnership for their common good!

Q: What brings you the most joy and where do you get your inspiration?

A: The little I have been able to do with others that has been a building block for societal change.

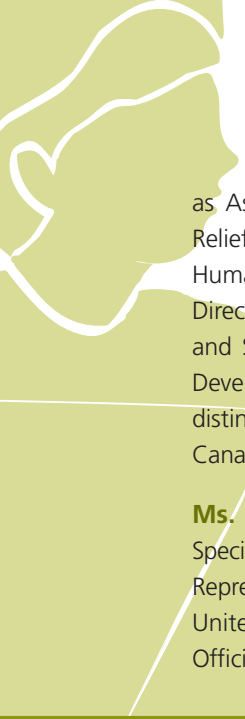
Q: There is a saying somewhere to the effect that dreams are the foundations of our future or that the future stretches only as far as our imaginations. So, were you allowed simply to dream—what would you dream changed in your functions, in your multiple roles, in your life?

A: I dream to see a situation where every human being is accorded dignity and respect because of being intrinsically human and being valued on such a basis. ■

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Ms. Angela Cropper (Trinidad and Tobago) for her appointment as Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). An outstanding leader and manager, she has attained extensive experience in environment policy, and worked for equitable usage of natural resources. She is on the advisory board of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) Task Force on Functional Cooperation, the Council of the United Nations University, the European Union High-level Panel on Sustainability, the Board of Trustees of the Stockholm Environment Institute and the External Advisory Group to the World Bank on the implementation of its forest strategy. She is also an independent state member of the Senate of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. She is President of The Cropper Foundation, a non-profit organization for sustainable development.

Ms. Catherine Bragg of Canada, who, in December 2007, was designated by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



as Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Ms. Bragg has served as Director-General of the Humanitarian Assistance, Peace and Security Programme in the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) since 2004. She has had a distinguished career in the Federal Public Service in the Canadian Government.

Ms. Bintou Keita of Guinea, who is the new Deputy Special Representative for Burundi, where she was UNICEF's Representative. Prior to this assignment, she was also the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Designated Official in Kigali, Rwanda. ■

FAREWELL ...

Ms. Jan Beagle (New Zealand), who has been appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as Deputy Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Ms. Beagle, who has served as the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management since October 2005, spearheaded a comprehensive human resources management reform strategy in "Investing in People". In her other senior positions in the Secretariat, she has made significant contributions to further changes in management initiatives in the UN Organization.

Special farewell ...

UNICEF mourned the **passing of Eve Curie Labouisse** on 26 October 2007. She was an avid humanitarian who supported the organization throughout her life. Known as the "**First Lady of UNICEF**", Ms. Labouisse travelled extensively with her late husband, former UNICEF chief Henry Labouisse, and encouraged UNICEF staff in difficult locations. Among other recognitions, such as being a war correspondent and renowned pianist, she is well known for her biography of her mother, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie.

On 27 December 2007, **Benazir Bhutto**, leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party, was **assassinated** in the Pakistani city of Rawalpindi, two weeks before the scheduled Pakistani general election where she was a leading opposition candidate. Bhutto was the **first woman elected to lead a Muslim State**, having been twice elected Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Security Council and the Secretary-General condemned the assassination. ■

AROUND THE UN ...

- An information meeting on **Women Leading for Livelihoods** (WLL) was held on 10 December 2007 at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. Participants included businesswomen, students, refugees, UNHCR personnel, staff from UNHCR partner organizations and local NGOs. UNHCR established WLL "**to promote the economic independence and empowerment of forcibly displaced women and girls around the world**". Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein of Jordan spoke via teleconference of the sufferings of female refugees, and of UNHCR's commitment to support them. Liv Arnesen, the polar explorer, shared her experiences and adventures to the North and South Poles, and gave inspiring messages about the significance of willpower and turning hardships into positive experiences. In relation to these, she further commented that refugee women must have the will to survive, and to start making positive changes in their livelihoods. During the information meeting, refugee women also talked about their painful struggles as refugees.
- **International Human Rights Day was marked on 10 December 2007.** It started the year-long celebration of the 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **The International Day of Disabled Persons was held on 3 December 2007**, with its theme of "decent work for persons with disabilities". Speakers were invited to illustrate that disabled persons are able to work and can benefit companies.
- **World AIDS Day was celebrated on 1 December 2007.** The Secretary-General spoke at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church at 50th Street and Park Avenue to make the global call to fight against AIDS. Member States strongly support the call to step up efforts towards the prevention, treatment and assistance for people infected with AIDS.
- The Internet campaign "**Say NO to Violence against Women**" was launched by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**) and **goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman**, global partners to end violence against women. The campaign started on 26 November 2007 and will conclude on 8 March 2008, International Women's Day. The highlight of the campaign is the system-wide UN Trust

Fund to End Violence against Women, wherein funds are granted to Governments and civil society responding to initiatives to overcome gender-based violence.

- The year 2007 is the 17th anniversary of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence**, which started on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ended on 10 December, International Human Rights Day. The 16 days of the international campaign is an effort combining various activities to end global violence against women. The theme of the 2007 campaign is "Demanding Implementation, Challenging Obstacles: End Violence against Women". **UNIFEM** spearheads several UN inter-agency campaigns.
- The Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Women's Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) participated in a high-level dialogue on the **national implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 in Latin America and the Caribbean**, held in ECLAC's headquarters in Santiago, Chile, last 19 to 21 November 2007. Professor Ilja Luciak presented a risk assessment of the region, Professor Ximena Jimenes showcased the Spanish-language online training course on resolution 1325, and UN-INSTRAW presented the Guide to the formulation of national action plans on resolution 1325. Member States in the region discussed challenges to develop and implement action plans on the resolution concerning women, peace and security in the countries involved.
- **The International Day for Tolerance was marked on 16 November 2007.** UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his message on the International Day for Tolerance, reminded the leaders of Member States of their commitments and their obligations to fight the growing global threats which create tensions leading to intolerance. He said, "We know that our best tools are cultural diversity, the work for sustainable development, and education for tolerance and peace. We know that our most powerful safeguards are a vigorous civil society, attentive to human rights, and a free and responsible media." Tolerance is crucial, but "the will must be stronger".

- **Expert group meeting: measures to accelerate the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system**


Between 14 to 16 November 2007, the Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women brought together a group of experts to evaluate the current status of women in the United Nations system to propose measures to accelerate gender parity and to establish a more gender-sensitive work environment across those organizations. The expert group meeting focused on six main areas of concern: special measures and affirmative action; informal barriers, working climate and organizational culture; work/life balance and flexible working arrangements; career progression; monitoring, reporting and accountability; and gender policies and strategies. A final report of the meeting can be read in <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagilfp.htm>.

In the private sector, the link between gender diversity and companies' financial performance has been well documented. Catalyst Research found that companies with a more balanced representation of women in their top management teams had a return on investment that was 4.6 percentage points higher or 35 per cent higher than companies with the lowest women's representation.⁵ McKinsey and Company's Women Matter research showed that gender diversity at the senior-management level has a positive impact on bottom-line results.⁶ Studies undertaken by The Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business of London Business School have found that the proportion of women and men in a team has a direct impact on team performance. Psychological safety of team members is optimal with 50/50 proportions of women and men in teams; motivation and efficiency were also positively influenced when each gender was represented in the same proportion.⁷ Research from the University of Helsinki showed that companies with chief executives or female board of directors have 10 per cent higher profitability regardless of the

⁵ *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*. Catalyst Research 2004.

⁶ *Women Matter: Gender diversity, a corporate performance driver*. McKinsey and Company 2007.

⁷ *Innovative Potential: Men and Women in Teams*, The Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business, London Business School, 2007.



sector.⁸ Furthermore, UNICEF's report *The State of the World's Children 2007* demonstrates how gender equality accelerates progress in all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how investment in women's rights will ultimately yield a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children.⁹ A multitude of research has documented the positive benefits to employers and employees of improving the status of women in the workforce.

Experts noted the opportunities and challenges of upcoming demographic shifts within the workforce. Most organizations are facing a disproportionately high number of retirements over the next few years. Such high levels of retirement present increased opportunities for the recruitment and promotion of women. In addition, the workforce is increasingly articulating its needs for work/life balance. Younger generations are demanding flexible working arrangements; an annual graduate survey of 16,000 people ranked flexible working arrangements as the fifth most important reason for choosing an employer.¹⁰ Changing global demographics means that people will have to deal not only with childcare issues, but also increasingly with eldercare for dependent, ageing parents.

Sharing an array of documented good practices, from the private and public sectors, the experts made various recommendations for the UN. All organizations were urged to develop and implement comprehensive and effective gender strategies along with an ongoing communication strategy that will ensure "buy in" from all stakeholders through awareness and explicit recognition of the importance of gender parity for organizational performance, especially at senior levels. Also, the experts noted that a gender-sensitive organizational culture is a prerequisite, requiring intensified and continuing training and advocacy by the Secretary-General and other executive heads, human resource management departments, gender focal points and senior managers. Management must lead by example.

⁸ Kotiranta, Kovalainen and Rouvinen. *Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA Analysis. Female Leadership and Firm Profitability*. No. 3. 24 September 2007.

⁹ *The State of the World's Children 2007*. UNICEF Publications. December 2006.

¹⁰ KPMG Awards '07 Case Studies.

- On 16 October 2007, the **United States Mission to the UN** hosted a panel, "**Rape as an Instrument of State Policy**". Panellists were representatives of civil society who spoke on rape in the conflicts of **Serbia, Darfur** and **Burma**. L. Dwelling, Joint General Secretary of the Women's League of Burma, described rape as "a tool of oppression targeting women and the communities to which they belong". While the stories shared differed with regard to the particularities of the country in which the violations occurred, many similarities existed among the three conflicts. In all three cases, rape was a strategy used to humiliate and intimidate entire communities of ethnic minorities. Rape took on a gendered form of ethnic cleansing. Panellists expressed the importance of attributing these atrocities to State parties. ■

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Professor Yakin Ertürk, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, gave her report to the Third Committee on 26 October 2007. She emphasized the **dangers of using culture to justify violence against women**. She stated, "Cultural essentialism in all its variations is based on several myths that need to be challenged if we are to move forward in the international human rights agenda in general and the elimination of violence against women in particular. These are: (i) depicting culture as immutable and static; (ii) depicting culture as homogeneous; and (iii) depicting culture as apolitical and detached from the material foundation of life". Engaging in a dialogue with multiple countries, she expressed gratitude for their support and earnest questions. She declared that the scale and brutality of sexual violence currently faced by women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- The General Assembly designated 25 November 2007 as the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, calling on Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to organize activities to raise public awareness of the problem (resolution 54/134 of

17 December 1999). Since 1981, women activists have marked 25 November as a day against violence. The date memorializes the brutal 1961 assassination of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on orders of Dominican ruler, Rafael Trujillo. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women condemning violence against women, and called for a system-wide campaign through 2015. The campaign is expected to revolve around activities related to global advocacy, UN leadership by example, and strengthened cooperation in the national and regional levels to support the goals of Governments, civil society and the private sector.

- The Human Rights Watch, an NGO organization which is dedicated to protecting human rights worldwide, issued a report on 18 December 2007 stating that progressive efforts undertaken by the Republic of Zambia to give antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS are hindered by the unequal status of women in the country. The combined failure of society and Government significantly incites high rates of gender-based violence, and abuse against Zambian women constitutes a major impediment. **The policies and programmes for HIV/AIDS treatment do not yet sufficiently recognize the link between domestic violence and women's rights and the ability to seek timely AIDS therapy.** ■

AROUND THE WORLD

- A recent study by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests steady progress for equality in women's wages. In **1979**, women working full time earned **63 per cent of what men received**. New statistics show that **women now receive 81 per cent as much as men**. However, in terms of **median weekly earnings, women earn only \$600 compared to the \$743 men earn**. Of significance is that wage differences vary with age. In the **age group 45 to 64, women make 73 per cent** as much as men, but in the **age group 25 to 34**, the percentage for women rises to **88 per cent**.
- **Gender parity in national Governments is still remote** for countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (**UNECE**). A recent UNECE report notes that women's representation at the national level is **still below 20 per cent in many countries**. This low representation is well below the minimum estimated benchmark of 30 per cent required to assure the critical mass necessary to ensure that women's agendas are not overtaken and lost by those of the main. Simultaneously, **it is noteworthy that Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia registered significant progress** with increases of more than 8 per cent.
- **Argentina** recently elected its **first female president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner**. Her husband, Néstor Kirchner, was previously President of Argentina. According to *The New York Times*, Ms. Kirchner stated that she felt "an immense responsibility for my gender". She is the second woman to be elected leader of a South American country. Last year, Chile also elected a female president, Michelle Bachelet.
- Education specialists in **Iraq** are deeply concerned about the increasingly **low attendance of girls in school**. In addition to the fear of violence, many families are keeping girls at home to help with household chores. Mustafa Jaboury, a spokesman for the Ministry of Education, claims that in the southern provinces, the **ratio of girls attending school has dropped from two girls/three boys to one girl/four boys**. Experts fear that were this trend to continue, it forebodes an enormous educational gap.
- Launched in November, the **United Women Front** is demanding more parliamentary seats for women in **India**. The nation's **first national all-women's political party** was founded by Suman Kant, a social worker and the wife of a former vice-president. As of 31 October 2007, the representation of women in India's Parliament was 8.3 per cent, ranking it 107th in the world. One of Ms. Kant's main priorities is to obtain a 50 per cent reservation of elected parliamentary seats for women. For many years, the demand of women's groups for one third of the seats has met with stiff resistance. Various versions of the Women's Reservation Bill have been waiting for parliamentary approval since 1996.

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- Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade bestowed the 2007 Africa Gender Award for promoting gender parity in Rwanda to its President, Paul Kagame. **Rwanda has the world's highest number of women in its parliament. Moreover, 30 per cent of Rwanda's senators and Government members are female.**
 - A seminar organized by the “**Sub-committee on equal participation of women and men in political decision-making**” of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was held on 9 November 2007 at the Latvian Parliament (Saeima) in Riga. The participants were informed about the status of women in Latvia's Parliament and Government, other Baltic States and the Nordic countries. Furthermore, the discussion focused on strategies employed in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden that have successfully encouraged women to participate in the politics of the respective countries. Finland stands out with a female president and a Parliament constituted of 42 per cent women. Compared to other European countries, **the Nordic parliaments have attained a higher representation of women.** ■

IN YOUR INTEREST... REPORTS

- **The Department of Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support—Department of Political Affairs (DPKO/DFS-DPA) formulated the Joint Guidelines on Enhancing the Role of Women in Post-conflict Electoral Processes (2007)** in order to provide advice on measures that could be utilized in future electoral processes in post-conflict environments to increase women's participation as voters, candidates and electoral officials (<http://www.womenwarpeace.org/taxonomy/term/25>).
- **Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567)** of 12 September 2007 responds to the Security Council's request to update, monitor and review the Action Plan of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the United Nations. Based on the responses

Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security

Security Council resolution 1325 provides the most important mandate for mainstreaming gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations. It recognizes the contribution of women to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, while acknowledging their specific needs and concerns regarding armed conflict and its aftermath.

The resolution also reaffirms women's roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, and highlights the need to strengthen their role in decision-making regarding conflict prevention and resolution.

At the heart of the resolution is the recognition that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, together with effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process, can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

Among other mandates, Security Council resolution 1325 calls for:

- The appointment of more women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in peacekeeping missions;
- An increase in the number of women serving in field operations, especially among military observers, civilian police, and human rights and humanitarian personnel;
- The inclusion of a gender component in field operations;
- The provision of training guidelines to Member States on the protection of women and gender mainstreaming;
- The incorporation of gender perspectives into peace negotiations and constitutional, electoral and judicial systems;
- The adoption of measures to protect women from gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual abuse; and
- The mainstreaming of gender in the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council.

of the various United Nations entities, the United Nations system made significant advances in the implementation of resolution 1325. The report identifies progress achieved since the first implementation review of the 2005-2007 Action Plan in the areas of conflict prevention and early warning; peacemaking and peacebuilding; peacekeeping operations; humanitarian response; post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; preventing and responding to gender-based violence in armed conflict; and preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel. The UN entities have reported increased political commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the peace processes; enhanced capacity-building (through staff training and development of new tools and methodologies); better institutional environments; improved leadership and advocacy; development of gender-mainstreaming handbooks and guidelines; and partnerships with national machineries for women. In addition, the report is also a collection and compilation of good practices and lessons learned and the identification of gaps and challenges in the implementation of resolution 1325. Lastly, the report identifies various recommendations and steps to be taken by the Member States, the United Nations system, the Secretary-General and the international community to further accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325, and improve the system-wide efforts in the area of women, peace and security. ■

RETIREMENT

"Women and a secure retirement: two steps forward, one step back"

—summary of an article by Carole Fleck,
AARP Bulletin Today

- Women have progressed in the job market in the last three decades. However, the issues they face, such as caregiving, may be detrimental to their future and to achieving a secure retirement. Moreover, the life expectancy of one third of women is 90 years, giving rise to the need to stretch their retirement income. Women who are in the job market would generally

have more opportunities to save adequately for retirement than stay-at-home mothers. Career women earn higher salaries and choose different options in childcare, and they have better access to financial systems like IRAs and 401(k) plans. Losing a husband poses a difficult situation for women because family income decreases. The Parents' Tax Relief Act was introduced in March 2007 to increase tax benefits for parents with children. It protects mothers who are taking a break from the workforce to raise their preschool children by earning Social Security credits.¹¹ Women advocates believe that the United States Congress needs to act on this measure so that women can enjoy a secure retirement.¹²

- **The Future of Retirement—The New Old Age: A Gender Perspective.** The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) with the collaboration of the Oxford Institute of Ageing published a 2007 research report entitled "The Future of Retirement—the New Old Age: A Gender Perspective", which reveals the responses of men and women to ageing and retirement. It explores three major retirement issues: work and retirement, families and communities, and attitudes towards health.

The HSBC 2007 global report covers four regions:

- Asia** (China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan);
- Europe** (Denmark, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and France);
- The Americas** (United States of America, Canada, Mexico and Brazil);
- Eurasia/Africa** (Turkey, Saudi Arabia and South Africa).

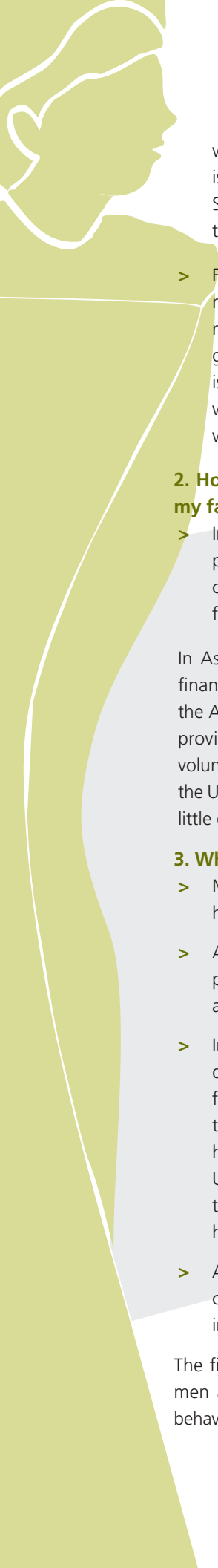
HSBC interviewed a total of 21,000 people between the ages of 40 and 79. Three main questions were asked:

1. When and why will I retire?

- > Across the regions, men want to work longer than women in the countries surveyed. The difference between genders is greatest in Eurasia/Africa, while the smallest difference between men and

¹¹ http://leeterry.house.gov/Legislation_Details.aspx?NewsID=1464

¹² "Women and a secure retirement: two steps forward, one step back", by Carole Fleck, *AARP Bulletin Today*, 5 October 2007.



women who want to work for as long as possible is in Europe. On the other hand, in the United States and Brazil, more women than men want to work for as long as possible.

- > From the people surveyed, the overwhelming reason why they retire is because they are reaching pensionable age. Another reason given for retirement for both men and women is disability, with more women stating this, but with the exception of men from the United States who are in their 70s.

2. How much and how often do I provide for my family and community?

- > In the countries studied, women provide more practical support to family and friends. Women clean the house, do household chores and care for the elderly.

In Asia, Eurasia and Africa, more women receive financial support from their friends and family. In the Americas, the extent to which men and women provide financial help differs. More men extend voluntary support to the community, particularly in the United States and Canada. Meanwhile in Europe, little difference exists between the genders.

3. What do I feel about my own health?

- > Most people surveyed are good at judging their health status.
- > As people age, they have more and more difficulty performing daily tasks, and women generally have a harder time.
- > In Canada and the United States, there are few differences between levels of health, but women fared a little better than men. The report reveals that in all countries, women exhibit less good health than men except for Canada and the United States, as well as women in their 70s in the United Kingdom who feel they have better health than men.
- > Among all the countries surveyed, only 8 per cent of Russian women reported that they were in good health.

The findings of the completed survey indicate that men and women have different expectations and behaviours regarding retirement and old age. However,

with old age, regional and country differences prove to be more significant than gender differences. Gender differences, with regard to attitude, exist, but men and women within each country have similar views. Furthermore, the difference between men and women with regard to behaviours and attitudes is greater in developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa than in European and North American countries.

A detailed report can be found at: <http://www.hsbc.com/1/2/retirement>

- **For UN pre-retirees: converting from G-4 visa status to United States permanent residency.**

One of the most important transitions in life is that of work to retirement. To be secure in retirement, careful planning is necessary. Former staff members who have been on G-4 visas have the option to change their visa status to permanent residency in the United States. Information circular ST/IC/2001/27 on visa status in the United States of America states the eligibility requirements for retired staff members on a G-4 visa:

- > UN retirees should have spent a minimum of 15 cumulative years in the United States on G-4 status;
- > They should have spent at least three and a half of the seven years prior to separation from service on G-4 status, with New York as the duty station.

The statute mentions that the application can be submitted within six months after retirement. However, it is advisable for retirees to apply for United States permanent residency and to submit their application **within 30 days after the date of retirement, because the legal status of UN retirees expires 30 days after retirement.** Once retirees apply for a green card, they have pending status in the United States until they receive such card. The green card is the well-known term for an Alien Registration Receipt Card. This plastic photo identification card is given to individuals who are legal permanent residents of the United States. It serves as a United States entry document in place of a visa, which enables permanent residents to return to the United States after temporary absences. The key characteristic of a green card is that it allows the holder to live permanently in the United States. Unless permanent residency is abandoned or the holder of the

green card violates certain criminal or immigration laws, the green card can never be taken away. Possession of a green card also allows permanent residents to work legally in the United States.¹³ Retirees cannot leave the country while waiting for their change of status unless they apply for an advance parole or travel permit. In the immigration context, advance parole may be granted to a person who is already in the United States but needs to leave temporarily, without a visa.¹⁴ With the advance parole, the pending immigration application will not be cancelled while he or she is away from the United States. Likewise, retirees can apply for a work permit if they would like to be employed while waiting for permanent residency. It takes approximately three months from the time of submission to obtain the advance parole and work permit. The applicant receives the green card approximately 12 months from the time of submission. ■

A list of guidelines, required supporting documents and application forms can be obtained from OHRM, Room S-505, extension 3-7044.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETINS

The Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/12, issued on 1 December 2007, establishes that the **HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Orientation Programme** is now mandatory for all staff in line with the policy on HIV/AIDS in the workplace (ST/SGB/2003/18).

The Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11, issued on 30 November 2007, establishes **the United Nations system-wide application of ethics for its staff members and those in the separately administered organs and programmes**. The bulletin mentions the principles of an Ethics Office which shall nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability, and enhance the internal and external credibility of the United Nations. Independence, impartiality and confidentiality are vital prerequisites. It states that each Ethics Office shall be headed by an Ethics Officer effective 1 December 2007,

¹³ <http://www.nolo.com/definition.cfm/term/96FA5F49-3002-4211-8234E2D263F6F1D2>

¹⁴ <http://www.nolo.com/definition.cfm/Term/D1831DF8-977D-417E-AD6458092E979F5E/alpha/AI>

who shall report directly to the Executive Head. It also lists the responsibilities of an Ethics Office, such as the development of training programmes on ethics issues, provision of guidance to staff on ethical issues, and working as a focal point for establishing staff awareness on ethical standards and expected behaviour. The bulletin also establishes the United Nations Ethics Committee (chaired by the head of the Ethics Office of the United Nations Secretariat), consisting of the heads of the Ethics Offices. ■

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women with AIDS face an increased risk of cervical cancer. UNAIDS reported that **women's access to antiretroviral therapy is starting to reduce AIDS mortality in the world**. Nonetheless, in countries like Zambia, women being treated for AIDS may die of cervical cancer unless they are treated and screened for it. HIV-infected women undergoing antiretroviral therapy also have abnormal cervical cells. Women in poor countries do not have access to cervical screening or treatment. Cervical cancer is a very common cause of cancer deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. The Centre for Infectious Disease and Research in Zambia (CIDRZ) provides clinical care as well as research and training of African and expatriate doctors. In one of their programmes, women are examined by nurses to check for precancerous cells. The results are provided immediately, allowing women to begin treatment without delay. ■

WORK/LIFE

A recent study finds that **flexible work/life, including telecommuting and job shares, is good for one's health and is clearly not only a women's issue**. "Perhaps it gives people the time to fit a healthier lifestyle into their everyday regimen or maybe it just enables people to better manage their time", said Professor Joseph G. Grzywacz of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine. Researchers examined health risk appraisals for a multitude of careers, ranging from warehouse workers to executives. The study found that if people have the ability to work from home and to compress workweeks, they are more likely to make healthier lifestyle choices, to exercise more and to sleep better, without sacrificing productivity or quality. ■



RECOMMENDED READING AND WEBSITES

***The New Working Woman's Guide to Retirement Planning: Saving and Investing Now for a Secure Future* by Martha Priddy Patterson**

The author explains that it is wise for women to save early for retirement, and to build a retirement income which provides for them and also nearly equals that of men.

***The African Gender and Development Index* http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/acgd/publications/AGDI_book_final.pdf**

A report developed by the Economic Commission for Africa's (ECA) African Centre of Gender and Social Development. The African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) is a comprehensive tool that maps the progress in Africa towards gender equality. It consists of the quantitative Gender Status Index and the qualitative African Women's Progress Scoreboard, which are instrumental in planning further development of gender equality in the African countries.

<http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org>

Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice: A Guidebook for Women's Human Rights Defenders is a tool for activists and organizations, and seeks to incorporate a gender perspective in the monitoring and documentation of human rights.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html>

This website contains the lists of names, text, audio and video of the 100 top American speeches in the twentieth century as reviewed by American scholars in public address, some of which were delivered by outstanding women: Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Women's Rights are Human Rights", delivered on 5 September 1995 at the United Nations Women's Conference in Beijing; Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm's "For the Equal Rights Amendment", delivered in August 1970 in Washington, D.C.; and Anita Faye Hill's speech on 11 October 1991, "Statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee".

<http://www.consultancyafrica.com/gender-issues>

Consultancy Africa Intelligence's "Gender Issues" focuses on the current gender-related issues in Africa through its monthly report and newsletter. It informs the readers on how Africa seeks to achieve gender equality in different fields.

INFO

You can find a monthly list of senior vacancy announcements (P-5 and above) at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>

You can read Network online at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/Network>

To receive hard copies of Network, please send an e-mail request to network-newsletter@un.org

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