



network

The UN Women's Newsletter, Vol. 8 • No. 1 • January, February and March 2004

From the desk of the Focal Point for Women

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to introduce this issue of network, the first one going to press since I resumed my duties, on 3 May 2004, as Focal Point for Women. We hope you find it of particular interest. It contains a summary of the study on the causes of the slow advancement of women in the Secretariat, as well as an interview with the author of the study, Dr. Hillary Harris. In addition, it contains a letter to staff by the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Rosemary McCreery, on the increasingly significant issue of spouse employment. Finally, and equally important, the newsletter begins with a farewell letter to all of you from Ms. Angela King, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. She retired at the end of April 2004, after a long and distinguished career at the United Nations. On behalf of all of the readers, I take the liberty to thank her very specially for her service to the cause of women, which is known to all who are familiar with it as a cause characterized by and requiring relentless struggle, persistence and perseverance.

In solidarity,

Aparna Mehrotra

Ms. Angela King



A farewell letter from the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

Dear Friends and Readers,

This is the last time that I shall be writing to you as Special Adviser for Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. After nearly 38 years in the Organization, I am leaving for a new life and new challenges. I have seen many changes—changes for the better—both qualitative and quantitative in terms of the de facto equality of women and men in the UN.

When I arrived here the day after Labour Day in 1966, there were few women at the Professional level: few D-1s, even fewer D-2s, and none at the Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General levels. The first woman to break the ceiling as ASG was Ms. Helvi Sipila, Finland's first woman lawyer and a redoubtable professional in her own right, with a background in public service, human rights and women's advancement. She was appointed ASG for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in 1972.

From the UN's inception, but more particularly since the 1970s, the General Assembly, the

Contents

A farewell letter from Ms. Angela King	1
Interview with Dr. Hilary Harris	3
Appointments of women to UN bodies	6
Congratulations to	6
Women in the news	6
Around the UN	6
In your interest ... policy matters	8
Gender news	8
In your interest ... reports	8
Women, peace and security	10
Network of departmental focal points and mission focal points	10
Reporting from the field: the status of women in MINURSO	10
Work/life issues	11
News flash	12
Web sites	12
Pictures from the Focal Point team and from the farewell party of Ms. Angela King	13
How to get a job at the United Nations	15
A letter from one of our readers	16

Commission on the Status of Women, the four World Conferences on Women and the Special Session, Beijing+5, and other UN bodies have routinely recognized the innate unfairness of condoning unequal opportunities for women inside an Organization professing fundamental human rights and equal opportunities for all people—women, men, youth and children—throughout the world.

We have come a long way towards the goal of reaching 50/50 women and men set first by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and then by the Beijing Conference and the General Assembly in 1995 during the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. Today, we have reached 37 per cent on overall posts with staff having contracts of one year or more, and 42.5 per cent on posts subject to geographical distribution. Progress was made in women's appointments to high-level and decision-making positions. The second-highest position in the Organization, that of Deputy Secretary-General, is held by a woman. There are women heading Secretariat entities, such as UN-Habitat, ECE, ESCWA, the Department of Management and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the UN system, over the last 10 or so years, women have headed WHO, UNHCR and WFP, and still head UNICEF and UNFPA. A woman is Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and another woman is Vice-President of the International Criminal Court.

These gains are in no small measure owing to the leadership of the Secretary-General, of many progressive programme managers, male and female, of the persistent advocacy by the Group of Equal Rights for Women in the UN, of changing attitudes, and of mechanisms such as my Office, including the Focal Point for Women, the Departmental Focal Points, the Special Measures for the achievement of gender equality and accountability mechanisms, such as the gender and human resources action plans. Another mechanism which is often forgotten is the

Group of Women Ambassadors, now numbering nine, but which numbered zero four decades ago. This Group, initially formed by Ms. Madeleine Albright, has spearheaded a number of initiatives, including encouraging gender sensitivity in peace missions and repeatedly proposing more women appointees as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in peace operations.

Despite this notable progress over nearly 40 years, much remains to be done. Gender stereotyping is still commonplace, with women staff not always considered on an equal footing to men for promotions, appointments, plum assignments, missions and special post allowances, for example. Flexi-time, which has been proven to enhance job satisfaction and productivity, is granted grudgingly and often with the lingering threat of less than fair appraisals. Harassment and abuse of power, including sexual harassment, are still not taken as seriously as we wish they should be. Although harassment is declared unacceptable, women's complaints are often still ignored or dismissed. The General Service staff, comprising over 60 per cent women, is virtually locked out of a progressive career path. Finally, we need to create a "critical mass" of women in policy- and decision-making and, thus, many more women need to be appointed to senior-level positions.

To overcome these obstacles, we need to implement a well-known set of formulae: strong commitment and leadership by example in promoting gender equality; real accountability with sanctions and praise; solidarity on the part of women in partnership with like-minded men; workable mentoring schemes at all levels and at all duty stations; compulsory gender-sensitivity training; advocacy and vigilance; and a great deal of coordination and teamwork. We are happy to learn that Ms. Elisabeth Lindenmayer, the newly appointed and first woman Deputy Chef de Cabinet, is responsible for women's issues. Responsible units have to work together. These include the

Office of the Secretary-General, OUSG/DM, DM/OHRM, OSAGI/Focal Point for Women and all Chiefs of Administration and Personnel.

At this point, in addition to Ms. Helvi Sipila, I would like to mention a few of the women who may have been forgotten, but who have stood out in the past in the long fight for women's rights in the Secretariat: Ms. Pat Tsien and Ms. Claire de Hedervary, the first two Presidents of what is now the Group of Equal Rights for Women; Ms. Mercedes de Briceno, the first Coordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat; and Focal Points, Ms. Susan Habachy, Ms. Parin Mohamedi and Ms. Zohreh (ZuZu) Tabatabai.

As we forge ahead into this new century, gains have to be consolidated and progress continued. There is no place for complacency, as grounds gained in gender equality can be swiftly and insidiously lost.

As I start a new phase of my life, with some trepidation, I might add, I take heart in the warmth and fellowship that working at the UN and with you have brought me personally. I wish you, all of you, the best in your careers and the courage to keep fighting for your convictions and for the ideals and principles on which the United Nations is based.

Angela E. V. King

Interview with Dr. Hilary Harris

(Consultant for OSAGI to conduct a study on the probable causes of the slow advancement of women in the UN system)

1. Can you explain to our readers what is your professional and educational background?

Dr. Hilary Harris



I am a Senior Lecturer in International Human Resource Management with a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Cranfield, United Kingdom. My key areas of specialization are international human resources management and intercultural and diversity management. I co-founded in 1999 and am presently the director of the Centre for Research into the Management of Expatriation

(CREME). The Centre is the first of its kind to be dedicated to the development of new approaches in the field of international human resources management. It focuses on international human resources management, intercultural management and diversity, while looking at gender and geographical diversity in its broadest form. I have been responsible for designing and running tailored programmes in human resources management, intercultural management and diversity for major international organizations. In 2002, I was responsible for establishing the Global Mobility Forum, with associate centres at Rutgers University, New Jersey, and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, as a way of increasing the scope and impact of CREME.

2. When and why did you become interested in international human resources management?

I have lived abroad and this allowed me to interact with people from different backgrounds, learning about different cultures and diversity. After being actively involved in the field of human resources, both as a practitioner and as a professor, I decided to pursue my PhD and remain in academia. I became aware that the teaching of human resources is done primarily from one point of view—the Western perspective—and felt that we needed to revise the methods as well as the curricula to incorporate different viewpoints from a diversity perspective. Organizational behaviour and human resources management courses in a majority of MBA programmes in developed countries are based on theories that are predominantly American. This is rarely acknowledged in the textbooks. But it has major implications for the applicability of the findings. For instance, most of the key motivational theories were based on male samples in the United States, as far back as the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, I developed new courses that incorporated different cultural perspectives.

I undertook my PhD studies on a part-time basis while lecturing full time. I also became a single mother in the first year of the programme, so work/life balance issues took on a personal nature. The focus of my PhD was to explore why there were so few women in international management. Research in this field shows that almost 90 per cent of expatriates are men, and only 5 to 15 per cent are women. The difference is critical in terms of gender equality at the most senior levels within an organization. International experience is now seen as a prerequisite for access to senior-management positions. Traditionally, it was believed that women's minimal representation rates were due largely to factors such as lack of interest on the part of the women themselves, dual-career and family constraints, safety and security fears, and lack of appropriate qualifications and experience. However, my doctoral study revealed, quite surprisingly, that the key deterrent to women's obtaining international assignments was the fact that the selection processes in home-country organizations were not fair and favourable to women on account of their predominantly closed and informal nature.

3. What is the nature of your assignment, and in what capacities are you a consultant to OSAGI?

The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) requested that I undertake a study on the probable causes of slow progress in the improvement of the status of women in the UN system, with a view to proposing strategies to accelerate the advancement towards the 50/50 goal of gender balance, established by General Assembly resolutions 57/180 and 58/144. The study is to be conducted in two phases: the first, in the UN Secretariat, and the second, in the UN system. The conclusions of the first phase will be presented to the General Assembly in 2004 at its fifty-ninth session.

4. In your view and experience as a professor, what constitute the main constraints that career women face today, as opposed to 20 years ago? What are your suggestions in addressing them?

Statistics show that women have become almost equal in numbers at the middle-management level in most developed societies. However, there is a major problem in moving from the middle to the very senior-management levels (particularly in the UK and the United States). Research shows that many women choose to leave rather than stay in the organization and progress to its highest levels. Key to this are the actual cumulative demands on the time of women. Long work hours—on account of a combination of family commitments, the working schedule, and additional expectations placed on them—make it extremely difficult to obtain any kind of work/life balance. In the UK, at the very high levels in the private sector, women comprise only 2 per cent. Furthermore, over and above the difficulties of managing work/life issues, something else is also going on at those levels:

the informal networks. The old boys' network is having an impact on the selection processes. The higher you get, the more informal things become. Therefore, who gets selected and why is based less on objective criteria than on a subjective evaluation of who "fits" better within the top team. Acceptability rather than suitability becomes critical. Looking at the statistics, it is hard to see much progress at that level.

How to overcome this problem? I'm not sure. But I still believe that when a woman wants to do the higher-level job, the current organizational cultures require women to make choices. These choices are generally between work and family; otherwise it's not doable and something has to give. As a woman, many sacrifices are required to reach the top, and most women give it up when they are almost there. To illustrate this point, statistics show that 95 per cent of men at the top are married, but only 5 per cent of women. In most prevailing organizational cultures it remains a real challenge to balance work/life with what "is required at the higher level".

One large and notable difference from 20 years ago in the world of women is the rising number of dual-career professionals. This has had a major impact, for instance, on international mobility. Before, it was expected that a woman would follow her husband's assignment, but today things have changed. Often, the career of one partner prevents the other from following. Research carried out by CREME highlights an increasing trend of men turning down international assignments because their wives have very good jobs. Organizational interest in various partner-assistance programmes for international relocation increased significantly once it became clear that this was a problem for men and not only for women! A new and interesting development that we are witnessing is an increasing number of women taking up international assignments with a male "trailing" partner.

5. How do women in leadership positions make a difference in society in general, and in the working environment in particular?

I don't think that women just by being women make a difference. Yet, they definitely become visual symbols. In many cases, women need to fit the existing leadership model and make it to the top by copying predominantly masculine leadership traits. It really depends on the woman, and having a woman at the top does not necessarily make it easier for other women. Women need to prove themselves more, and therefore are harder on themselves and colleagues. Organizations need to look at their top leadership behaviours and assess how they constrain diversity in approaches to managing and leading. An organization has to value its employees and focus on delivery, giving much more flexibility to how this is achieved. If this were possible, it would positively affect both men and women. I am not convinced that executive men and women are thinking along these lines yet.

6. What advice would you give to women who want to pursue careers as consultants and/or advisers?

You need to work hard; also being in academia is an advantage because you can publish your work, participate in conferences, write practitioner articles—and then people hear about what you are doing. I think you become a consultant mostly by word of mouth; at least this is how my career as a consultant developed. You need to be very competent in your field of expertise and have very good interpersonal skills, develop social and work networks, and belong to the right professional associations.

7. Do you have good practice examples on gender balance from the private sector?

One issue which I have found to be very important in terms of progress for women in organizations is how performance (and linked to this, potential) is judged. Research shows that very often performance is not judged on the person's output, but rather on the perceived qualities of that person. In this respect, concepts such as "commitment" and "presenteeism" become very important determinants of performance.

Organizations have to seriously consider what should be required of people and how to judge performance, because a new trend may be observed in the West: that of men who are also starting to opt out of high-pressure jobs. Parameters to judge output will need to be reviewed and alternative ways of working embraced—such as working from home. This is one alternative equally available to men and women. There are still gender prejudices as to whether women should be in management or not. What have changed are appearances. Before, discrimination was overt, now it is harder to detect. When human resources processes become really professional, evaluation processes should focus more on the quality of work and output of the individual rather than on more subjective and often informal criteria.

Good practices in the both the public and private sectors involve the use of competency assessments, which evaluate potential as well as current performance and assist with developing potential. Human talent is valued, and they groom their employees. A potential problem in an international organization such as the UN is that people stay

because they are trapped by a good package of benefits. This factor, combined with a lack of action on sanctioning bad performance, means that there is little interest in really enforcing a competency-based assessment model. In the corporate sector, individuals are developed and opportunities provided, but results are expected. This is good for both men and women.

8. How do you correlate UN human resources practices with the ability to reach General Assembly mandated 50/50 gender targets?

The UN has to dedicate resources to having a coordinator who will do outreach activities to attract as many qualified women as possible in order to reach the mandated goal. It also has to examine the criteria being used for Professional entry-level applicants, i.e., level of studies and years of experience. It is true that you need a level of expertise, but the Organization needs to identify and develop inside talent. Some of the requirements at the entry levels need to be queried. Human resources practices should be based solely on merit and quality, as happens in the private sector. The outreach practices should be reviewed, and vacancy ads should be made more attractive.

Additional changes should come from Member States, as the status of women in many States is very different from those in the West. It will take time for the social fabric of most countries to change in order to accept gender equality. In the UN, this is unique in the sense that diversity needs to be reinforced by resolutions and mandates, and, with geographical challenges, it will be more complicated to find the number of required women.

9. As a lecturer on human resources, what advice do you give to young women students who want to pursue an international career?

- Take all opportunities, and make sure the package is beneficial if you have a family or are a single mother;
- Balance your life;
- Never stay too long in one place or one job;
- Take risks;
- Always enjoy what you are doing.

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

Appointments of women to UN bodies ...

Secretary-General Kofi Annan established an **Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation**, in observance of World Water Day on 22 March 2004. The Board will capitalize on the unique expertise of its members to raise awareness of water and sanitation issues, help mobilize funds for water and sanitation projects, and encourage new partnerships. Out of a total of 13 members of the Board, the following five women have been appointed: H.E. Ms. Juanita Castaño, former Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia; Ms. Uschi Eid, Parliamentary Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany; Ms. Olivia la O'Castillo, President, Philippine Pollution Prevention Round Table; Ms. Judith Rees, Deputy Director, London School of Economics and Political Science; and Ms. Christine Todd Whitman, former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency of the United States.

Congratulations to ...

- **Ms. Carolyn McAskie** (Canada), for her appointment on 1 January 2004 as Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator. She previously served in OCHA in different capacities, and has undertaken different humanitarian and fact-finding missions on behalf of the Secretary-General.
- **Ms. Louise Arbour** (Canada) for her confirmation by the UN General Assembly on 25 February 2004 as the new **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**. Ms. Arbour was the Chief Prosecutor of the international war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and later became a member of Canada's Supreme Court. Ms. Arbour will be succeeding Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was killed in a terrorist attack in Baghdad last August.
- **Ms. Angela Kane** (Germany), for her appointment as Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management. She previously served as Deputy Representative for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Before that she was Director of the Americas and Europe Division in the Department of Political Affairs.
- **Ms. Elisabeth Lindenmayer** (France), for her appointment as Assistant Secretary-General, Deputy Chief of Cabinet. She has been serving as Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General since 1997 and has also served in several senior positions within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Women in the news ...

- The **African Union's** first Pan-African Parliament was inaugurated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 8 March 2004. Its first act was to elect **Ms. Gertrude Mongella** from Tanzania as president of the Parliament. Ms. Mongella has had a 34-year career as a politician, ambassador and educator, throughout which she has strongly supported the advancement of women. She served as Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women during 1993 to 1995 at the UN.

Gertrude Mongella



- **Ms. Maria do Ceu Silva Monteiro** was appointed President of the Supreme Court of Guinea-Bissau on 27 January 2004. This appointment fills a post that had been vacant for more than two years.
- **Ms. Amy Gutmann**, the provost of Princeton, was designated as the next president of the University of Pennsylvania on 23 January 2004. Ms. Gutmann has long been regarded as an advocate for diversity in higher education. She will succeed Ms. Judith Rodin, who became the first woman to head an Ivy League institution in the United States.

Around the UN ...

- At the conclusion of its 30th session on 30 January 2004, the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** adopted its draft report. For the first time since 1999, it made a general recommendation (No. 25) promoting the use of temporary special measures to accelerate the equal treatment of men and women. In a presentation at the 30th session, **Ms. Angela King**, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, announced that she had decided to leave the UN after serving in many capacities for nearly 38 years. She said that the steady improvement of awareness of women's human rights had been among the most satisfying developments during her career. **Ms. Feride Acar**, the Committee Chairperson, said that all the reports examined during the session pointed to the continued challenges facing the goal of gender equality. The persistence of prejudices and customary practices, as well as the stereotyped roles and cultural patterns of the conduct of women and men, contributed significantly to the challenge. In anticipation of Ms. King's retirement, Ms. Acar expressed her personal gratitude and the Com-

mittee's appreciation for Ms. King's support for both the individual members of the Committee and its mandate (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/index.html>).

- The **Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)** held its annual meeting from 23 to 26 February 2004 at UN Headquarters, New York. IANWGE reaffirmed its commitment to working with the High-level Committee on Management to achieve the goal of gender balance set by the General Assembly. IANWGE considered a range of issues, including the 2004 review, the appraisal of ECOSOC's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system, and the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2005. Task-force managers provided substantive reports on their intersessional activities and outlined plans for 2004. IANWGE established two new task forces: (i) indigenous women, and (ii) gender mainstreaming in evaluation, monitoring and programme reporting. This year's workshop focused on gender mainstreaming in evaluation, monitoring and programme reporting. IANWGE adopted concrete recommendations directed at strengthening gender perspectives in budgeting, evaluation, monitoring and programme reporting processes. Specific issues for consideration of the High-level Committees on Programme and Management, including gender mainstreaming in programme budgets and gender balance in the UN system, were also adopted (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/annualmeetings/2004.htm>).
- The **Commission on the Status of Women** was held from 1 to 12 March 2004 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Commission focused on two thematic issues, as outlined in its multi-year programme of work: the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, and women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution in post-conflict peace-building. As requested by General Assembly resolution 58/144, a verbal update on the improvement of the status of women in the UN system was presented to the Commission. During the period from 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2003, the representation of Professional women staff had increased from 35.6 per cent to 36.4 per cent. At the D-1 level and above, women make up 26.8 per cent (140 women out of 523) (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpdokumentation.htm>).

The Commission concluded its forty-eighth session with broad agreement on the need to involve men in the struggle for gender equality. Real change

required overcoming stereotypical attitudes that inhibit women's advancement and impede efforts to achieve gender equality. The Commission adopted agreed conclusions on two themes: "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", and "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building". The former focused on the need to raise awareness of men and boys through education and upbringing, encouraging the sharing of domestic responsibilities including caring roles, and promoting an increased role for men and boys in eliminating violence against women and in preventing HIV/AIDS. The latter theme's conclusions focus on conflict prevention, peace processes and elections, and reconstruction and rehabilitation in post-conflict situations. The Commission adopted resolutions on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan; the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women; revitalization and strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; and preparations for the forty-ninth session of the Commission. Another resolution called for a broad fight against HIV/AIDS by empowering women and strengthening their economic independence, while protecting their rights.

On the UN's own policies, the Commission passed a separate measure expressing concern over remaining constraints on the full implementation of gender mainstreaming, including inadequate support for strategies aimed at promoting gender equality (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>).

- **International Women's Day** was celebrated on 8 March 2004, at UN Headquarters, New York. A panel discussion on **Women and HIV/AIDS** was moderated by Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information, with the participation of Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General; Dr. Lee Jong-wook, Director-General, World Health Organization; H.M. Queen Noor, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Ms. Angela E. V. King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Ms. Ndioro Ndiaye, Deputy Director-General, International Organization for Migration; Dr. George Alleyne, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean Region; Ms. Noerine Kaleeba, UNAIDS; Mr. Dean Peacock, EngenderHealth, South Africa; and Dr. Linda M. Distlerath, Vice President, Global Health Policy, Merck & Co., Inc. The real heroes of the war against

HIV/AIDS are to be found among women, **Secretary-General Kofi Annan** said. Panellists addressed a range of issues associated with the pandemic, including the effect of migration and trafficking on HIV; the role of men and boys in preventing violence and the spread of HIV; and the role of the private sector in making medicines and prevention methods more accessible to women (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2004/>).

In your interest . . . policy matters

- **Conflict resolution in the United Nations Secretariat—ST/IC/2004/4 of 12 January 2004.** The purpose of the information circular is to inform staff of the means available to address and resolve conflict situations that may arise in the workplace. Conflict can be defined as any opposition or difference of wishes, needs, statements, arguments, actions or principles between two or more staff members, or between staff members and the Organization.

Gender news . . .

- The **Constitutional Loya Jirga of Afghanistan** approved a new Constitution for the country on 4 January 2004. It explicitly guarantees equal rights and duties of men and women before the law. This constituted a significant victory for women and girls in Afghanistan, who until three years ago were completely excluded from all spheres of public life. Furthermore, systematic violations of their human rights on a daily basis were common and accepted. Formally enshrining the principle of gender equality is a vital starting point for the transformation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, legitimizing the important role played by women and girls in rebuilding their country and in reshaping their future.
- The **Kingdom of Morocco** approved **one of the most progressive laws on women's and family rights in the Arab world** on 21 January 2004. It almost completely outlaws polygamy in Morocco. The changes to the "Mudawana" family code make polygamy acceptable only in rare circumstances, and only with the permission of a judge and a man's first wife. The age of marriage for women was raised from 15 to 18 years, the same as for men. The new law also stipulates that wife and husband share joint responsibility in family matters. The wife is no longer obligated to obey her husband, and women and men have the right to divorce under judicial supervision; the adult woman is entitled to self-guardianship.

In your interest . . . reports

Analysis of the obstacles to the improvement of the status of women

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/180, the first phase of an analysis of the probable causes of the slow advancement in the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system was conducted. It analysed the situation in the UN Secretariat using, inter alia, in-depth interviews with staff members at Professional, senior and General Service levels in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Geneva and New York, and data provided by the office of Human Resources. The report on the results of the study will be presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

The preliminary findings of the study are summarized below:

- **Recruitment processes:** The current modes of recruitment for Professional-level posts and above are not proactive or targeted enough to attract high-quality women candidates. Current data show that more men than women apply for posts in the Secretariat by a ratio of 3:1. The main inhibitors to recruiting women are the highly web-based application process and the qualifications criteria in the Vacancy Announcements. The web-based application process indirectly discriminates against women, who are proven to have less access to the Internet than men. The overly specific and restrictive qualifications criteria, which set rigid standards for previous experience and academic credentials, discriminate against an entire set of women applicants who may qualify on the broader basis of their skill sets.
- **Staff selection system:** The current system decentralizes authority over all aspects of the selection process to programme managers. The central review bodies, which once had a more active oversight role in the staff selection process, now only advise programme managers on procedural matters. Managers may choose male candidates, if they so desire, without having to provide any justifications.
- **Accountability:** Under the current staff selection system, programme managers are not held accountable for failing to meet their 50/50 gender-balance targets laid out in the Human Resources Action Plans.
- **Promotions: (G to P):** Among the female staff in the General Service category (62 per cent), there are significant numbers with advanced academic qualifications, international experience and language skills. Despite this, career progression to Professional-level posts for women

in the General Service is severely restricted, due to the need to pass the G to P exam and the limit of only 10 per cent of vacant P-2 posts allotted to them.

- **Mobility:** Under current policy, a key component of career progression is the need for mobility across posts, departments and duty stations. Mobility requirements are discriminatory towards women, because they do not take into account the reality of women facing a greater degree of restrictions due to family constraints. Current mobility requirements also do not account for the needs of spouses to find employment across duty stations.
- **Work/life balance and organizational culture:** Despite work/life balance policies, mandated in the Secretary-General's report (A/57/387) entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", current managerial culture views flexible work arrangements as barriers to productivity and efficiency, and more importantly, as incompatible both with career advancement and the performance of managerial-level posts. The need to work long hours, which is very difficult for women who bear a disproportionate burden of family responsibilities, is viewed as a critical necessity for career progression within the Organization.
- **Informal barriers at the entry level:** The primary barriers to advancement that women face at the entry level include:
 - Sex-role stereotypes that lead women to self-select in gender-typed occupations;
 - Occupational segregation in which traditional women's occupations, symbolized by less pay, power and prestige, negatively affect career prospects;
 - Direct or indirect discrimination in entry-level selection processes due to perceptions of what is "fit";
 - Lack of flexibility in entry-level requirements.
- **Informal barriers to career progression:** The career progression of women to senior-level and managerial posts is severely restricted due to informal barriers that become more prevalent at higher levels. Some examples of these barriers include:
 - All male networks that exclude women;
 - Less formal decision-making for appointments/promotions;
 - Perceptions that women do not have the same level of commitment that men have;

- Assumptions that women are not as acceptable as men in technical and senior-management roles;
- Work/life balance constraints.

- **Cultural, political and socio-economic factors:** The 50/50 gender representation target is harder to achieve in duty stations where local paradigms are less gender-responsive.

Recommendations, inter alia, to achieve the 50/50 gender-balance target include:

- More proactive and targeted recruitment processes;
- Greater accountability for programme managers in meeting the 50/50 gender-balance targets in the Human Resources Action Plans;
- The use of individual development plans to establish career progression strategies for women;
- Increasing opportunities for the promotion of women from the G to P level;
- Reforming the mobility policy to be more responsive to the unique circumstances of female staff;
- Better implementation of work/life balance policies.

Finally, the study stated that the personal commitment of the Secretary-General is the most important critical success factor of the drive towards the 50/50 gender representation target. The findings and recommendations of the study will be presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

Other reports . . .

At its 58th session held in Paris, from 29 March to 16 April 2004, the **International Civil Service Commission** reviewed the status of women in the organizations of the common system, and presented its report **Statistical review of gender balance in the Organization**. It was based on data provided by organizations in 2003 (the reference date is December 2002). In addition, the Commission decided that "a duration of four weeks paid leave for paternity purposes should be granted to staff at Headquarters and family duty stations, and up to eight weeks for staff at non-family duty stations" (and in exceptional circumstances, such as the death of a parent). A General Assembly resolution is required before paternity leave can be implemented in the Secretariat.

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** presented a new report entitled **Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women in management—Update 2004** on International Women's Day (8 March 2004). It shows that in 60 countries, women's share of managerial positions ranges from 20 and 40 per cent. Although women are entering the global labour force in record numbers, they still face higher unem-

ployment rates and lower wages. Institutional and attitudinal prejudices continue to hamper seriously women's progress into top jobs. Women represent 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor, and unless progress is made in creating "productive and decent employment", the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015 will remain unmet in most parts of the world (<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/docs/RES/292/F267981337/Breaking%20Glass%20English.pdf>).

The report entitled **Millennium Development Goals, China's Progress**, states that in spite of China's impressive economic achievements, women are lagging behind. The report, launched jointly in Beijing on 26 March 2004, by the UN and the Government of China says that gender discrimination contributes to rising female suicide rates and disproportionate poverty rates among elderly women. It also notes that the country will probably achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Women, peace and security

- Twenty women foreign ministers and other dignitaries from all regions of the world met during the 60th session of the **United Nations Commission on Human Rights** in Geneva on 15 March 2004 to discuss joint action to combat violence against women. The declaration issued after the meeting, which was convened at the initiative of Switzerland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, stresses that violence against women is a most universal and pervasive human rights violation, and commits to further develop policies that prevent violence against women.

Network of departmental focal points and mission focal points

To discuss the role of focal points and to hear about OHRM initiatives on gender issues, Ms. Angela King, staff from OSAGI and the network of New York-based departmental focal points met with Ms. Rosemary McCreery, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, on 27 January 2004. Ms. McCreery reaffirmed the strong commitment of the Department of Management and the Office of Human Resources Management to meeting the goal of gender balance by 2006 and to reviewing the role of the departmental focal points as part of this process. She noted that with the increased delegation of authority to managers, OHRM could currently only advocate for the set targets and goals. It was especially important, therefore, that the heads of depart-

ments and offices be held responsible and accountable for reaching gender targets.

The departmental focal points felt that due to the delegated authority to heads of departments and lack of information regarding the selection process, the overall environment was not supportive in the performance of their functions. Their recommendations included ensuring that focal points have access to all information on applicants and the departments' selection processes; participation in human resources planning meetings; participation in the selection process by, for example, reviewing the list of applicants to ensure that qualified women are not overlooked for interviews; participation in the interview of candidates; and ensuring that interview panels be gender-balanced. The focal points expressed the view that the special measures have in effect been nullified by the new staff selection system. However, means of integrating them into the system should be adopted. In addition, broader and more effective advocacy initiatives are needed to raise the awareness of all staff on the goals and policies of the Organization regarding gender balance.

Reporting from the field: the status of women in MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara)

Below are some observations of the situation of women in MINURSO during 2003, and a summary of activities initiated by the Focal Points to develop a more gender-sensitive work environment.

Statistical overview of the status of women in MINURSO (December 2002 to February 2004)

The Identification Commission of MINURSO was closed down as of 31 December 2003, with the full withdrawal of its international and local staff.

- Out of the 10 women of the Commission, only five were reassigned to other duties;
- The international civilian staff dropped from 82 to 55 per cent, and the gender balance continues to be greatly in favour of men;
- Out of 138 civilian staff, 115 are men and 23 are women. Of these at the Professional level, six are women, including one at the D-1 level, and 14 are men, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General;
- Out of 227 military observers serving with the mission, only two are women. The Civilian Police (CIVPOL) com-

ponent completed its duties, and as of December 2003 has been withdrawn from the mission.

- Ms. Leyla Khalfallah, Legal Officer, was appointed Focal Point for Women in December 2003, and Ms. Catherine Rompato, Information Officer, was appointed as her alternate.

Activities and programmes

A weekly gender awareness programme was distributed via Lotus Notes throughout the mission.

- The programme addresses gender differences between men and women, such as biological and psychological differences; gender identities and roles; cultural gender stereotypes, and how these differences are portrayed in power relationships, the media, language and others. It is sent in episodes, and the feedback from staff continues to be very positive;
- A programme on sexual-harassment awareness provides definitions of sexual harassment, and information on how to deal with it and how to prevent it;
- A special programme for women, “Just-for-You”, addresses women’s concerns to bring female staff closer together and to build solidarity among them;
- The focal point participated in a number of committees and boards related to different personnel matters.

Gender awareness was improved during the reporting period. A new Focal Point for Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation and HIV/AIDS has been appointed.

You can read all of **network** online at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fp.htm>

Work/life issues

A letter on spousal employment from the Assistant Secretary-General for the Office of Human Resources Management

Dear Colleagues,

We are aware that one of the issues faced by many staff contemplating a change of duty station is spouse employment. As one of the tools to support spouses seeking work at their new location, we are very pleased to inform you that the United Nations Secretariat has joined *Partnerjob.com*.

Partnerjob.com is a self-financing non-profit association that aims to facilitate the geographic mobility of members’ employees by helping find jobs for those employees’ spouses and partners at their new location. Launched in late 2000 by companies such as Hewlett-Packard, and Schlumberger, *Partnerjob.com* now has some 30 global employers among its members, including Procter & Gamble, PricewaterhouseCoopers, IKEA, Shell, Renault, the Asian Development Bank, and Siemens. Nine United Nations organizations are joining as part of a pilot project during 2004.

The *Partnerjob.com* web site provides a database of:

Job openings worldwide, posted by members and other authorized organizations;
Résumés/CVs of member spouses/partners to member organizations.

All internationally recruited staff members who wish their spouses/partners to have access to the site are kindly requested to send a message to Ms. Regina Pawlik in OHRM at Pawlik@un.org, indicating the spouse/partner’s name and e-mail address. Once access is granted, an e-mail with the login information will be sent by *patnerjob.com* to the spouse/partner who will be able to post his/her résumé/CV, consult the database of job openings and useful links, and participate in the online discussion.

If you have questions about, or comments on, this programme, please contact Ms. Pawlik.

Rosemary McCreery

News flash . . .

- **Secretary-General Kofi Annan**, while addressing the International Women's Health Coalition Annual Gala in New York on 15 January 2004, said that the greatest weapon in the war against poverty is the empowerment of women and the education of girls. Studies proved that helping women and girls serves to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, and improve health. When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings and investments go up; and what is true of families is true of communities and, eventually, whole countries.
- The **Global Coalition on Women and AIDS** is a new initiative, spearheaded by UN/AIDS and made up of activists, government representatives, community workers and celebrities, that seeks to stimulate concrete action on the ground to improve the daily lives of women and girls. Launched in London on 2 February 2004, its efforts focus on preventing new HIV infections among women and girls, promoting equal access to HIV care and treatment, accelerating microbicides research, protecting women's property and inheritance rights, and reducing violence against women (<http://womenandaids.unaids.org/default.html>).
- The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, with the support of the Government of Canada, held a meeting in Geneva on 29 March 2004 to explore how business can be used as a route to poverty reduction and gender equality with top retailers and women entrepreneurs from participating countries. This partnership, to be known as the **Trade Initiative for Poverty Alleviation and Gender Equality** is aimed at enhancing export opportunities and increasing earnings for home-based workers and women micro-entrepreneurs, while promoting sustainable and gender-sensitive methods of production. The meeting was part of the preparatory process for UNCTAD XI, to be held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004.
- The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** announced on 17 March 2004 that it intends to fund and hold a series of workshops in Afghanistan, allowing the country's religious leaders to participate in campaigns for girls' education, women's health, HIV/AIDS, immunizations, nutrition, and the protection of children from abuse and exploitation.
- The heavyweight novelists who have controlled Spanish-language literature for more than a generation are no longer the star attraction. This spot has been captured by **Maitena** from Argentina, one of the few world women cartoonists. She has become a cherished friend and advocate of the working women in Latin America, and articu-

lates their hopes and fears with wit and compassion. The popularity of her biting, satiric appraisal of the sexes and their relations increasingly cuts across gender lines because of her sense of humour, humanity and frankness, which is universal to most women.

- Do you agree that the marital dynamics of marriage have been altered because one of the partners retires while the other continues to work? According to an article published in *The New York Times* on 23 March 2004, as millions of women continue to work after their husbands retire, there is little to prepare the couple for the stresses they will face. The question of when to retire has largely been a male issue. Many working women are younger than their husbands, and many deferred their careers to raise children or care for elderly parents. As their husbands retire, however, the women return to work to continue a career that was put on hold. Hence, the new era of retirement increasingly includes two careers, diverging ambitions and ideas about what to do with the decades that follow. Some men feel threatened by the role reversal; others are impatient to travel or implement their original retirement plans. Some women resent having their husbands do relatively little all day, rarely taking on additional housework. It is strongly recommended that couples adequately discuss how they would like to live during their retirement, so that tensions could be avoided and better handled.

Web sites

<http://www.awis.org/>: Association for Women in Science dedicated to achieving equity and full participation for women in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

<http://www.MentorNet.net>: E-Mentoring Network for Women in Science and Engineering matches women who are studying these fields with mentors from industry and government labs for a year-long mentoring relationship, conducted via e-mail.

<http://commonwealthextranet.net/communispace/>: Commonwealth Gender Reference Group.

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

Ms. Angela King having lunch with staff of OSAGI



From left to right: Ms. Hanya Salah, Ms. Sylvia Hordosch, Ms. Angela King, Ms. Rebeca Dain and Ms. Netta Avedon

Retirement party for Ms. Angela King on 26 April 2004, organized by DAW and OSAGI



Farewell party for Ms. Angela King on 29 April 2004



From left to right: Ms. Angela King, Ms. Margaret Bruce and Mrs. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid



United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

How to get a job at the United Nations

Eligible women are urged to apply

The United Nations recruits qualified individuals in the following occupational groups:

- Administration
- Electronic data processing
- Language and related work
- Legal and related work
- Social development
- Economics
- Finance
- Library
- Public information
- Statistics

For junior Professionals, recruitment takes place through national competitive examinations; for language and related work, recruitment takes place through language examinations. For information on national and competitive examinations, please visit the following web site: <http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/exam.htm>

For middle and higher-level Professional posts, recruitment takes place through a competitive system of applications (described below). The Secretary-General is committed to the achievement of gender balance at all levels.

In addition to United Nations Headquarters in New York, the UN Secretariat has offices around the world, including: Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna. The International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are located at The Hague, Netherlands, and in Arusha, Tanzania.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

To review the listings of available posts, please visit the United Nations web site at UN Human Resources “Galaxy” e-Staffing System at:

<https://jobs.un.org/release1/vacancy/vacancy.asp>

The system provides instructions on application procedures. Please follow them.

Online applications are strongly encouraged to enable the UN to place your resume into a permanent database. It is most important that you observe the deadlines for applications.

Should you not have access to Internet facilities, you can also contact the Staffing Support Section, Operational Services Division, United Nations, Office of Human Resources Management, Room S-2475, New York, NY 10017, USA, for further information.

The site is also accessible through UN Intranet for staff members. For further information, go to the UN Intranet *Quicklinks/staff selection*. For frequently asked questions, and answers, click on *FAQ*.

For general inquiries or technical support on applying online, please contact estaffing@un.org

PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

Posts in UN peacekeeping missions are also listed on the “Galaxy” system. **Online applications are encouraged.** Should you not have access to Internet facilities, you may apply by sending your detailed resume to DPKO, Personnel Management and Support Service, Human Resources Planning and Development Section, One UN Plaza, DC1-0980, United Nations, P.O. Box 20, New York, NY 10017, USA. Listings of vacancy announcements and forms are available at UN offices worldwide. In general, positions are offered in the following fields: civil engineering, election monitoring, electronic data processing, civil and judicial administration, human rights, humanitarian assistance, gender, legal affairs, logistics, political affairs, procurement and public information.

UN COMMON SYSTEM

To find out more information on vacancies in the UN common system, please visit the following web sites for instructions on how to apply:

- www.un.org/womenwatch/news/vacancies/
- www.undp.org
- www.unfpa.org
- www.fao.org
- www.ilo.org
- www.unicef.org
- www.who.org
- www.wfp.org

For more information on the status of women in the Secretariat, please contact the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women/ Focal Point for Women, Ms. Sylvia Hordosch at (212) 963-5450; fax (212) 963-9545; e-mail: hordosch@un.org and/or dain@un.org; address: Office of the Focal Point for Women, Two UN Plaza, Room DC2-1290, New York, NY 10017, USA.

A letter from one of our readers

Hello,

I think that the question “Why are so many Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) (especially women) leaving within a couple of years?” is very valid.

I was a JPO with UNDP Turkey during 1996-1998, and I had the experience of a lifetime. The system was bureaucratic, but the assignment was meaningful and challenging, and my supervisor’s excellent guidance made the whole difference. I had good friends and colleagues, a nice apartment, a great time. A part of me wanted to stay in the system and my supervisor was willing to support me, but for personal reasons I opted to leave. For the first six months after I left Turkey, I was still regretting having chosen a PhD and a boyfriend instead of fighting my way further into UNDP. So why did I leave?

Because I realized that working in the UN system is not only saying yes to a job, it is also saying yes to a whole lifestyle, and one that is not exactly very compatible with having a family. Moving to a new country every 3 or 4 years

works best when you are alone, but it’s not that easy with a family. Your partner also needs a job. And maternity leave and other social benefits or provisions for families with small children are lagging far behind in the UN system.

As I said, I left the system to set up a family, and I am now married with two beautiful children. I find myself working at a research centre, with development issues, doing consultancies now and then. If I had stayed with UNDP, perhaps I could be in glamorous New York or an exotic and challenging location out there somewhere, not in a cold Nordic country. But in spite of my immediate regrets, I still believe that it was the right choice for me. I’m not saying that career and family cannot be combined, but for those of us who want to start up a family, an international career is not the best setting, particularly if the UN person is the woman.

Whenever I want to think of something nice, I think of my children and my JPO time in Turkey . . . couldn’t do without either of them!

(Name deleted for confidentiality)

Dear Readers . . . If there is any manager—female or male—that you would like to recognize as somebody who shares our commitment to improving the status of women in the Secretariat, let us know. We will highlight her/his work in our next issue. If you want to send us your comments about *network*, an article that you wrote etc., we would be delighted to receive it. The more interaction with our readers, the better!!!

You can read all of *network* online at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fp.htm>

network—The UN Women’s Newsletter

Editor-in-Chief: Sylvia Hordosch, Personnel Policies Officer, OSAGI

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, DESA

Production: Rebeca Dain, OSAGI/DESA

Design and layout: Graphic Design Unit, Outreach Division, DPI

Printed by the United Nations Publishing Section, New York

Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

United Nations, Two UN Plaza, DC2-1290, New York, NY 10017

Telephone: (1) (212) 963-6828; fax: (1) (212) 963-9545

E-mail: network-newsletter@un.org

39513—August 2004—2M