

UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan

Closing the gap:

Targets and commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women staff in the UNAIDS Secretariat

2016-2018 update

Gender Action Plan: Three years in progress

[The UNAIDS Secretariat] “continues to be a leader in a variety of specific areas related to gender equality and women’s empowerment, particularly: gender architecture and parity, organizational culture, coherence, resource tracking, monitoring and reporting, strategic planning, and knowledge generation and communication.” (UN-SWAP report 2014)

In March 2013, the UNAIDS Secretariat launched the Gender Action Plan that defines measures in seven strategic focus areas to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Plan comprises six numeric targets for monitoring progress towards achieving gender equality in the Secretariat and across all levels, with particular attention to senior positions. In all seven areas, and across the targets, UNAIDS has made significant progress, which has been summarized in the Gender Action Plan progress updates that continue to be regularly shared with staff. After just three years, the Plan has enabled numerous achievements that have improved the status of women at the UNAIDS Secretariat and which have been recognized as an example of best practice within the UN system.

Taking stock

Seven strategic focus areas

The seven strategic focus areas were developed based on an all staff survey carried out in 2012, to assess the UNAIDS Secretariat’s strengths, opportunities and challenges in achieving gender equality. The Survey was complemented through interviews and focus groups in the field and at Headquarters. Since the launch of the Plan in 2013, progress can be seen across all areas.

1. Leadership and accountability

- UNAIDS submits annual reports against the 15 Performance Indicators of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – or UN-SWAP – which was launched in 2012 and is coordinated through UN Women. Additionally, UNAIDS contributes to the UN Secretary General’s report to the General Assembly on Improvement in the status of women. Through both these processes, the Secretariat is commended for providing leadership on gender equality in the workplace in the UN System. In the UN-SWAP report published in 2015, UNAIDS was evaluated as meeting or exceeding requirements in 80% of the 15 UN-SWAP Performance Indicators (up from 73% in 2013). This overall performance compares favourably with that of Funds and Programmes as a whole, who are reaching compliance rates of 62% and 51%, respectively.
- In line with the UN-SWAP requirements, the UNAIDS Secretariat has developed a ‘gender equality marker’ – which was implemented against all 2016/17 workplans across the Secretariat – and includes a financial benchmark with the target that 15% of the expenditures by the UNAIDS Secretariat should be in support of actions that address gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal objective. This aligns

UNAIDS with the UN Secretary General's commitment to the UN system to allocate at least 15% of UN-managed funds in support of activities that support the advancement of gender equality as the principle.

- Since the launch of the Plan, the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors have reaffirmed their commitment to the Gender Action Plan as a Secretariat-wide priority, including at internal and external meetings. UNAIDS has showcased the Secretariat's experience with the Gender Action Plan during interagency discussions on UN reform and on enabling the UN system to be "fit for purpose" for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

2. Organizational culture

- Gains towards achieving the targets of the Plan and progress in its seven strategic focus areas are highlighted in regular progress updates as well as through financial and staffing updates provided to managers, and through management updates shared with all staff.
- An informal women's network, initiated at Headquarters, continues to provide a platform for women in the Secretariat to exchange views and ideas, as well as contribute inputs to initiatives related to the objectives of the Plan. The network also draws on the opportunities provided by the Leadership Programme for Women and the webinars for the alumnae.

3. Recruitment and selection

- The annual mobility exercise is supported by a global and regional gender analysis and remains a critical tool to reach the targets related to gender parity among Country Directors, and at P4/P5 and above levels. Since the launch of the Plan in 2013, the number of women UCDs increased from 15 (27%) to 27 (41%). In total, more than 50% of staff reassigned through Mobility 2013 and 2014 were women. Overall, the Secretariat is just 2% away from reaching gender parity at the P4 and above levels.
- The Secretariat's new recruitment policy was issued in May 2015, with specific provisions related to gender equality and empowerment of women, including that selection panels should include at least one woman, and qualified female candidates should be included in shortlists for vacancies. For vacancies at the P5 level and above, particular attention shall be paid to qualified female candidates.

4. Staff development

- The innovative Mentoring Programme for Women was launched in April 2014 and has so far supported 40 mentoring pairs through distance training and guidance during their year-long mentoring relationship. The programme aims to increase job satisfaction and contribute to professional growth and development for mentees from all categories of staff (GS, NO, P and D). A third cohort will be launched in April 2016. The UNAIDS Mentoring Programme for Women has been presented at common system meetings as an examples of best practice for growing internal talent and has inspired a number of UN entities to pursue similar programmes in support of women's empowerment.

- A Leadership Programme for Women was developed and launched in partnership with the UN System Staff College to contribute to the further development and strengthening of leadership skills and capacities of female staff. During the two cohorts implemented to date, 60 women leaders in UNAIDS undertook a 360° leadership assessment and participated in a five-day workshop held in Turin, Italy. Guided by senior leaders from academia and the UN system, participants explore strategies to tackle common challenges for women in leadership positions and reflect on how to leverage their individual strengths. Each participant develops an action-plan to help guide their future priorities and growth. The Staff College has underlined that the UNAIDS programme inspired the College's system-wide leadership course for women. The 2015 report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC on the United Nations System Staff College makes reference to the success of the tailor-made UNAIDS Leadership Programme for Women and the UNAIDS Gender Action Plan and that this has provided foundation and inspiration for the development of the UNSSC system-wide Programme for Women Leaders.
- The 60 alumnae of the Leadership Programme join 40 mentees who have benefitted from the UNAIDS Mentoring Programme for Women. Overall, one in four women at the UNAIDS Secretariat has participated in a development initiative under the Gender Action Plan.
- Beyond those initiatives, UNAIDS ensures that 50% of staff attending the UNSSC UN Leaders Programme and UNCT Leadership Workshop – both aimed at nurturing a new generation of leaders in the UN – are women.

5. Work-life balance initiatives

- The UNAIDS Flexible Working Arrangements Policy, issued in November 2013, contributes to the goals of the Plan and is in line with recent discussions on a healthy workplace. The Flexible Working Arrangements policy supports all staff and supervisors in optimizing productivity while enabling staff to successfully balance professional and private commitments.

6. Communication and advocacy

- Five editions of the 'Spotlight on UNAIDS Women' have featured 62 colleagues across the Secretariat, highlighting their role and contributions to the AIDS response. This initiative is welcomed throughout the Secretariat and has contributed to fostering a more inclusive organizational culture for all staff.
- Regular updates on progress towards achieving the six targets and in the seven strategic focus areas are shared with all staff. An intranet page serves as one-stop location for information and materials related to the Gender Action Plan.
<https://sites.google.com/a/unaid.org/unaid-intranet/services-for-staff/human-resources/secretariat-gender-action-plan>
- March 8 – International Women's Day – marks the date for annual Gender Action Plan progress updates as well as a wider information campaign to help sensitize UNAIDS staff on progress and remaining challenges in reaching gender parity.

7. Monitoring and reporting

- The seven strategic areas of focus and the six targets of the Plan continue to be monitored on a systematic basis and progress reported at senior management meetings. Information on the Gender Action Plan is included in the annual strategic human resources update provided to the PCB. Since the time of its launch, several PCB delegations have noted the progress made in implementing the Plan and its focus on empowering women staff at the UNAIDS Secretariat.

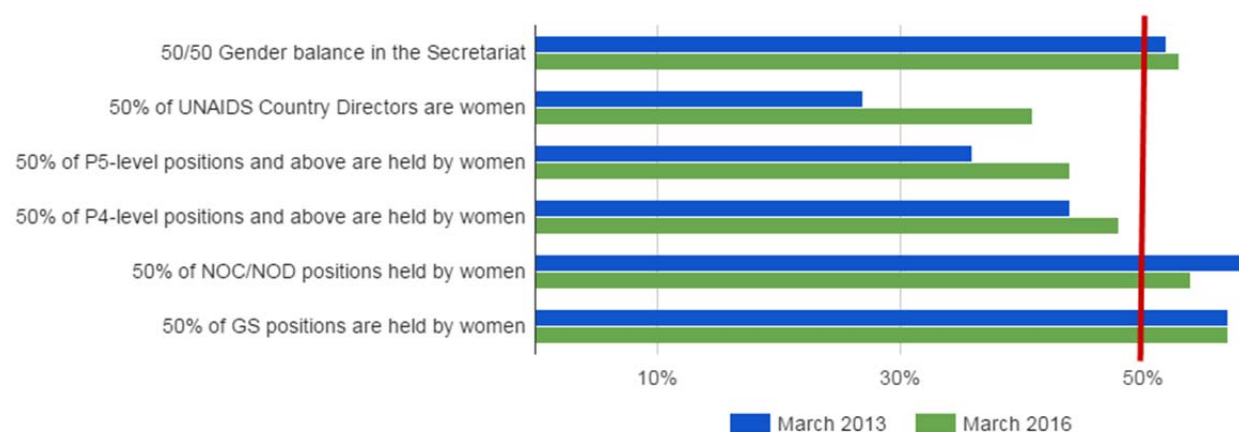
Six targets

Six numeric targets provide monitoring of progress across the seven strategic areas, towards achieving gender equality in the Secretariat. Annual assessment of the targets in March 2016 shows significant progress in most target areas, particularly with regards to staff in senior positions.

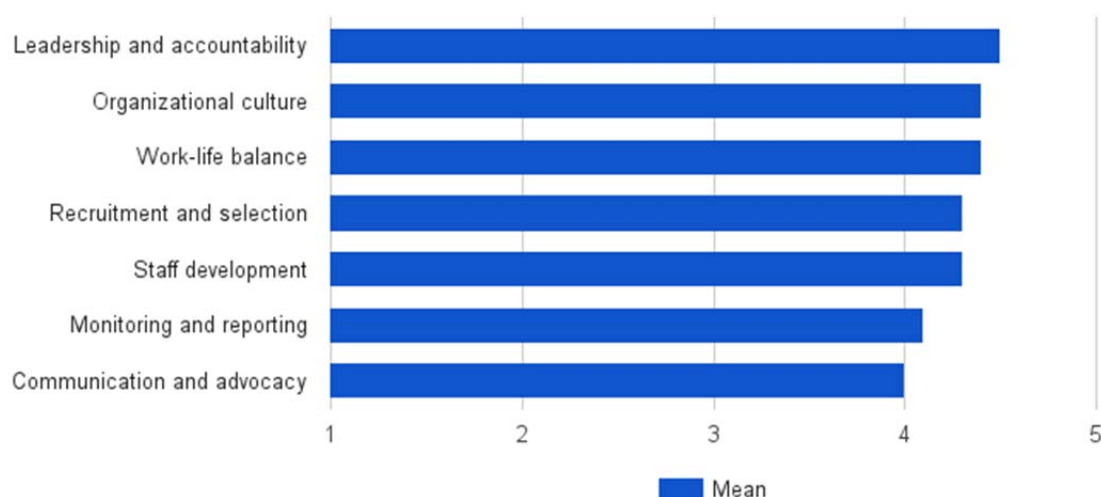


Looking ahead – extending the Gender Action Plan to March 2018

The significant progress made since the launch of the Gender Action Plan in 2013 emphasises the potential and commitment for continued action towards achieving gender equality and empowerment of women staff in the Secretariat.



Coupled with this progress, in 2015 a follow-up all staff survey to collect views on progress made in the seven strategic focus areas and the targets of the Plan confirmed their continued relevance for UNAIDS staff. Leadership and Accountability, Organizational Culture and Work-Life Balance emerged as the areas that staff felt were those of most importance, and overall, all seven areas received high approval ratings by staff – underscoring the need for sustained efforts across all areas and targets in the next phase of the implementation of the Plan, to ensure that gender equality becomes truly integral to the Secretariat's culture.



Building on these developments, it is critical that the Secretariat continues implementation of the targets and the strategic areas of focus, as outlined in the Gender Action Plan in the annex to this Update. The Gender Action Plan and its targets are therefore being extended to International Women's Day 2018 (March 8). This gives the Secretariat a realistic overall timeframe of five years since the launch in 2013 to reach the six targets and consolidate the innovative measures developed under the seven strategic focus areas.

The full Gender Action Plan outlining all elements of the strategic areas of focus, and the numerical targets, can be found in the adjoining annex.

ANNEX

UNAIDS Gender Action Plan

Closing the gap

UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women staff in the UNAIDS Secretariat by 2015

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1. Introduction

Eliminating gender inequalities and empowering women have been at the centre of UNAIDS' programme, advocacy and policy work for many years—and much energy has gone into reinforcing UNAIDS' efforts to strengthen the AIDS response's focus on women. This document turns the focus internally, to the UNAIDS Secretariat, and outlines the goal of achieving gender balance and the empowerment of women staff, in line with the *UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*.

The rationale for achieving this objective is clear: the connection between gender balance and organizational performance has been well documented. Organizations with a more balanced representation of women at the senior management level considerably outperform their counterparts with a lower representation of women in senior positions. Research has also shown that gender-balanced teams have greater potential for creativity and innovation, and contribute to better decision outcomes¹. For UNAIDS, one aspect not to overlook is 'leading by example'—an organization that calls for the elimination of gender inequality at the global level must also ensure its own internal policies and guidance follow suit.

The aim of the Secretariat Gender Action Plan is not merely reaching 50/50 gender balance at all levels but nurturing a supportive organizational culture for *all staff*—and thus creating a culture in which women are given the full opportunity to contribute to the workplace on an equal basis as men.

This document looks at the broader context of gender balance within the UN Common System, focuses on UNAIDS' efforts to promote gender balance, including an analysis of the current workforce and staff opinions, reviews the strengths and challenges, and outlines the measures to close the gender balance gap.

2. The broader context

2.1 Overview of gender balance in the UN system

Commitments by the UN General Assembly to achieve gender balance and equality across the UN system have been made since 1970. Impediments have been identified, measures suggested to overcome them and specific targets set. However, achieving gender balance remains a challenging goal.

In September 2010, the General Assembly expressed with serious concern "...that the urgent goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations system, remains unmet, and that the representation of women in the United Nations system has remained almost static, with negligible improvement in some parts of the system, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system". It also "emphasized the need for senior leadership sponsorship, enhanced monitoring and accountability, and more rigorous implementation of existing policies, including special measures for women and flexible working arrangements."² In December 2011, the Secretary-General issued a directive to all senior managers in the UN Secretariat calling for accelerated progress towards gender balance, in particular at the P-4 to D-2 levels, which so far have shown the least improvement.³

¹ *Achieving Gender Balance is Imperative for a Strengthened United Nations*, Office of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations, February 2010

² General Assembly Resolution A/65/334 dated 9 September 2010

³ Directive of the Secretary General to all Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions, "Women in the United Nations Secretariat", 23 December 2011 (see Annex 2)

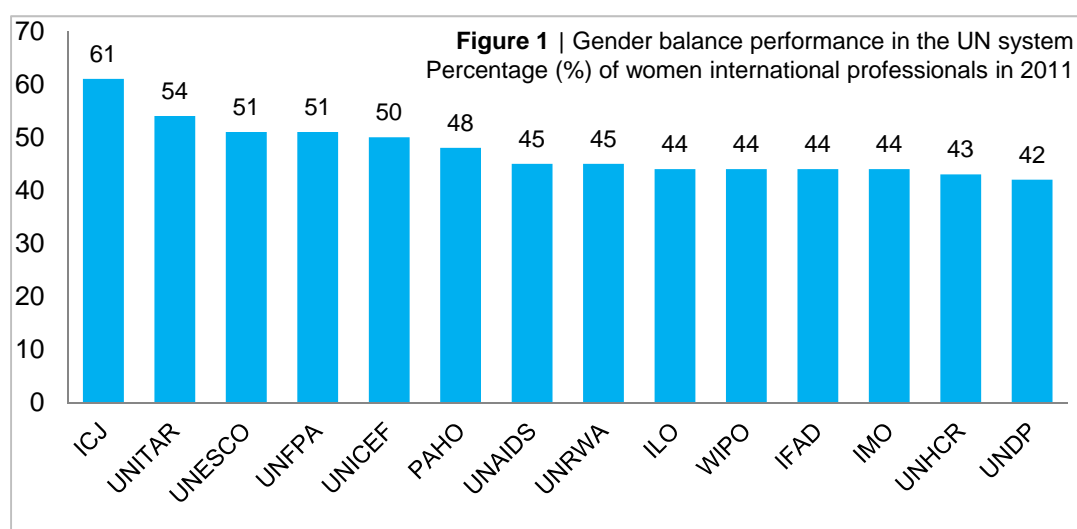
2.2 UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Following the issuance of the Secretary-General's directive, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) adopted the *UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (SWAP)⁴ in April 2012. The plan was developed under the leadership of UN Women, UNAIDS' newest Cosponsor, and UNAIDS was one of the first in the UN system to pilot the plan to test its feasibility and viability. The plan puts in place a set of common indicators against which the UN will measure progress on all aspects of its gender-related work. All UN organizations are now required to report against a matrix of performance indicators, including on progress towards the achievement of gender balance among staff. Specifically, the plan calls for the achievement of equal representation of women among General Service staff and at the P-4 level and above in the next five years. Organizational cultures that support gender equality and women's empowerment and the role of senior managers as champions of the equal representation of women are two key strategies highlighted in the plan.⁵ All organizations are expected to report back on progress on a regular basis; the due date for submissions to the first progress report was February 2013.

3. Where are we now?

3.1 UNAIDS within the UN family

The most recent available data on gender balance across the UN indicate that UNAIDS is performing reasonably well with regard to women professionals, with women occupying 45% of international professional posts and ranking 7th among the 14 top ranking UN agencies (Figure 1⁶).



⁴ <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/SWAP.pdf>

⁵ See System-wide Action Plan for Implementation of the United Nations CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, facilitated by UN Women, April 2012

⁶ Source: CEB Personnel Statistics 2011: <http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/stats/hr/ps/years>

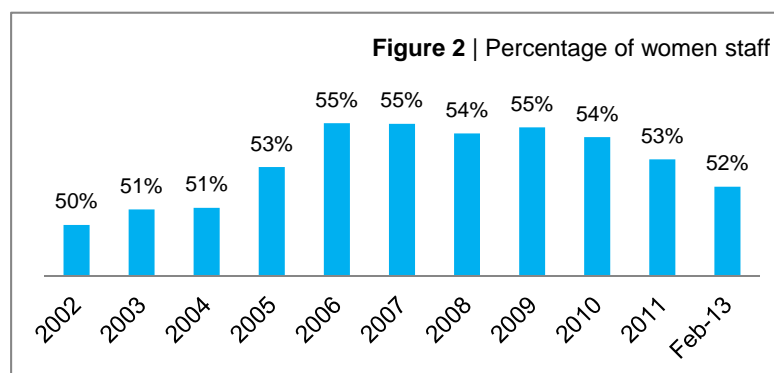
3.2 UNAIDS Secretariat workforce – statistics and analysis

3.2.1 Gender balance trends

Since 2002, the UNAIDS Secretariat has managed to maintain the overall number of women staff at 50% or slightly higher. The highest percentage of women staff (55%) was achieved in 2006 and 2007, and has since declined to 52% (Figure 2).

The Secretariat has fared less well in relation to women in international professional positions: in 2002, the number of international professional women was at its lowest level, at 40%, increasing to 46.7% in 2009, and dropping to 45% in 2012.

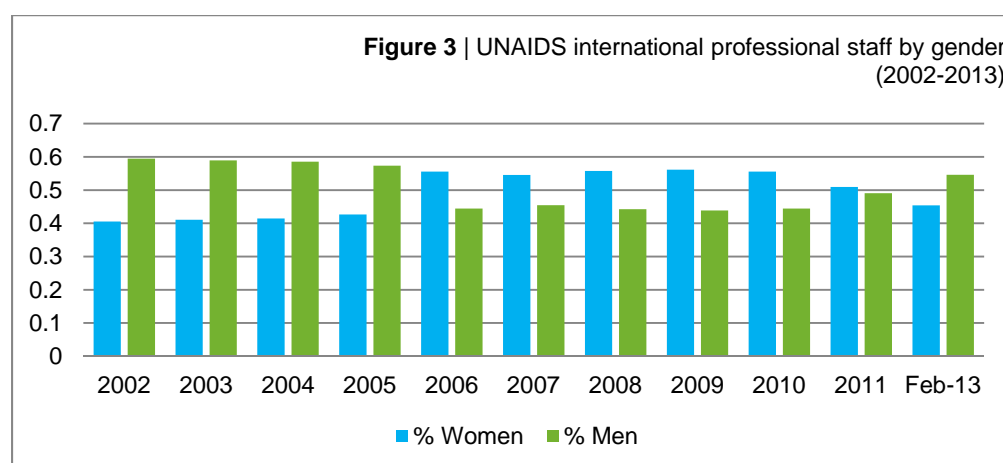
Despite the Secretariat's ability to maintain the overall levels close to or above the 50/50 goal, the number of women in both general service and international professional positions is declining steadily. This has to be taken with caution if the gains achieved are to be maintained.



An analysis conducted by UN

Women using UNAIDS' gender data from the period 2001-2010 indicate that by following the current rate of growth of professional women staff in the Secretariat—that is, not taking a proactive approach to address gender in the workplace—the gender balance target for women at the P-5 level will be reached in 2042, D-1 in 2022 and D-2 in 2025⁷.

Thus, while the Secretariat has managed to maintain the overall ratio of 50/50 in its workforce as a whole, the issue of the under-representation of women in the international professional grades needs to be addressed, as reflected in Figure 3.



⁷ Status of Women in the UN System at a Glance: 31 December 2001 – 31 December 2010: UNAIDS Projection: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/UN_System/Projections/UNAIDS_Projections_Word_02.17.12.pdf

3.2.2 Gender balance in UNAIDS

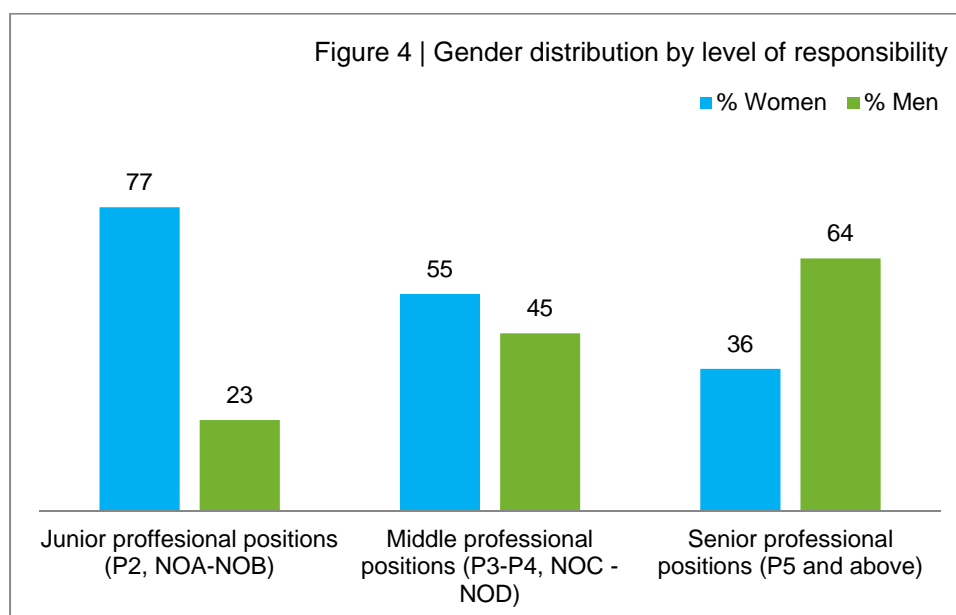
Gender statistics from February 2013 indicate almost equal participation of women and men in the Secretariat, with the ratio of 52:48 of women to men (Figure 3 bis). However, the situation for women holding international professional positions is different, with only 45% of women holding these positions. As the grade increases, the representation of women declines.

- 71 % women at P-2
- 48% women at P-3
- 57% women at P-4
- 36% women at P-5
- 37% women at D-1
- 20% women at D-2

Figure 3 bis | Gender distribution by grade in the Secretariat (February 2013)

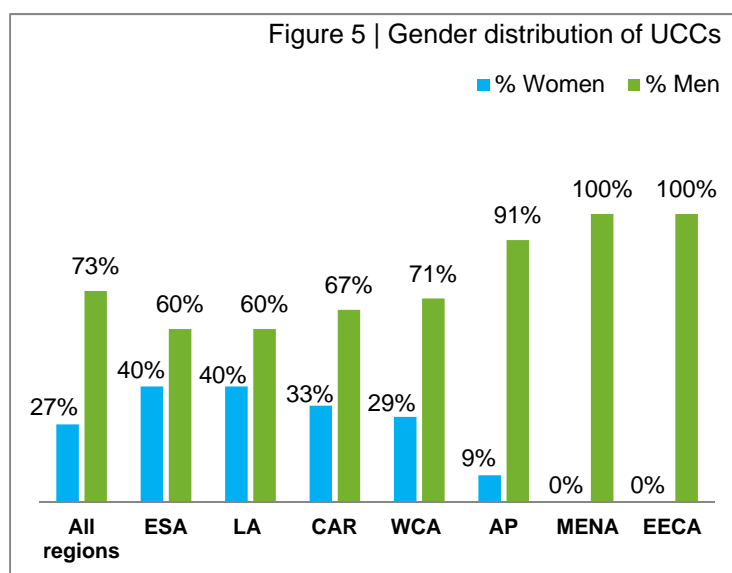
Grade	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2	NOD	NOC	NOB	NOA	G7	G6	G5	G4	G3	G2	Total
Female	0	1	2	14	53	69	29	10	13	42	4	3	10	81	71	24	2	3	431
Male	1	1	7	24	94	52	32	4	10	29	1	0	3	14	19	5	54	49	399
Total	1	2	10	38	147	121	61	14	23	71	5	3	13	95	90	29	56	52	830
% Women	0	50	20	37	36	57	48	71	57	59	80	100	77	85	79	83	4	6	52

As Figure 4 indicates, only 36% of senior professional positions (P-5 and above) are held by women followed by mid-level professionals (P-3, P-4, National Officer – Level C (NOC), National Officer – Level D (NOD)) at 55%. Junior professional positions (P-2, National Officer – Level A (NOA), National Officer – Level B (NOB)) are mainly held by women (77%).



Looking to the field, there are less women holding international professional positions in country and regional offices:

- Only 27% of UCCs are women (Figure 5).
- Only 42% of international professional positions in the field are held by women, compared to 50% at Headquarters.
- 49% of staff in the field are women compared with 60% at Headquarters; women represent 58% of staff in the RSTs and 45% in country offices;
- Among international professional positions, women represent 47% in RSTs and 36% in country offices.



In turn, the data point to a number of specific areas where the Secretariat can focus its efforts and design solutions to achieve gender balance goals, including the following:

- Increase the number of women in P-5 level positions and above;
- Increase the number of women UCCs;
- Pay special attention to country offices to balance out the participation of women and men in different staff categories; and
- Draw on the talent pool of women at P-4 and P-3 levels, in the National Officer category and at G-6 and G-7 levels to help correct the gender imbalance at higher levels.

3.3 Staff opinions

To assess the Secretariat's strengths, opportunities and challenges in achieving gender balance, the opinions of all staff were sought by way of an all-staff survey carried out in July 2012, as well as through individual interviews and focus groups in the field and at Headquarters.

Some 320 staff, out of nearly 900, participated in the process, with a good mix of women and men in all three categories (international professional, national officer and general service) from the field and Headquarters, as well as across age groups. The UNAIDS Staff Association (USSA) actively participated in the process. USSA Executive Committee members were invited to participate in the focus groups.

In the survey, interviews and focus groups, questions were asked in the following areas:

- Overall working environment;
- Leadership and commitment from senior management;
- Policy issues;
- Suggested special measures (focusing on three areas: recruitment/selection/career development; staff development and training; and work-life balance initiatives) and;
- Possible creation of a UNAIDS Secretariat Women's Network.

3.3.1 Key findings

As described in the sub-sections below, the most revealing finding from the study was the difference in perception between women and men about the opportunities and constraints of being a UNAIDS staff member, with men reporting considerably more job satisfaction than women, by a margin of 75% to 40%.

i. Working environment

The majority of staff expressed satisfaction with the overall working environment. However, when the data was disaggregated by gender, considerable differences were apparent, with men reporting much higher job satisfaction. Some responses reflected a perception of an exclusive ‘boys’ club’ and the view that, while there are formal decision-making structures, at least some decisions are made through an informal network. Work-life balance issues also ranked high as a concern. While policies are in place, respondents felt that the overall working environment does not support their implementation. In fact, the number one choice, selected by both women and men, among the potential measure to address gender issues was “Mechanisms put in place to promote optimal use of work-life balance.”

ii. Leadership and commitment by senior management

The majority of respondents concur that senior management is committed to support gender equality and the advancement of women. However, once again, there was a division along gender lines when responses were disaggregated. Only half of women considered that there is adequate support from senior management at Headquarters, and even fewer with respect to leadership at the regional and country level. In terms of female representation on senior management and decision-making bodies, the majority of men considered the level of representation satisfactory, while the majority of women did not.

iii. Policy issues

Qualitative analysis of the survey results revealed that many of UNAIDS’ existing policies (diversity and inclusion, work-life balance, etc.) are perceived positively, and that the concerns centre on their implementation, in particular by individual supervisors. Respondents called for greater accountability from both supervisors and staff. Also, with respect to establishments of quotas for recruitment, the majority of staff were clear that recruitment and promotion should first and foremost be based on merit and that when two candidates are equal or close to equal, preference should be given to the woman.

iv. Proposed measures

There are many ways in which the Secretariat can work toward the goal of gender balance and the empowerment of women staff. Seventeen potential measures were indicated in the survey with the request that respondents rank them by order of priority. Staff were also invited to add any additional measures they believe would help to achieve the gender balance goal.

The top ten measures are:

- 1. Mechanisms put in place to promote optimal use of work-life balance (76%)**
- 2. Identifying women at all levels for consideration of higher-level posts (56%)**

- 3. Facilitation of spouse/partner employment for staff on mobility (53%)**
- 4. Internal talent searches for positions at P-5 and above for women (52%)**
- 5. Development of a leadership programme for women at the international professional and national officer level (51%)**
- 6. Ensuring selection panels have at least one female panel member (49%)**
- 7. Development of a senior leadership programme for women (49%)**
- 8. Establishment of a mentoring programme for women (47%)**
- 9. Flexibility in leave without pay following maternity leave (46%)**
- 10. Providing specialized career development for women (45%)**

Looking at the top ten priorities through a gender lens, there were considerable differences in priority assigned to specific measures by women and men. While both women and men ranked mechanisms to support work-life balance as the number one priority, the next two priorities by women focused on the identification and development of internal female candidates for potential advancement, whereas male respondents listed as their priorities spouse/partner employment and ensuring selection panels have at least one female panel member.

v. Possible creation of a UNAIDS Secretariat Women's Network

The majority of staff were in favour of the creation of an informal and voluntary UNAIDS Secretariat Women's Network. Staff would like the network to focus on information sharing, career counseling, sharing successes and providing support in difficult times, as well as offering guidance on issues related to work-life balance and capacity building.

4. What are the strengths we can build on?

In striving to achieve gender balance, the Secretariat has considerable strengths to build upon:

4.1 Commitment by Senior Management

The Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors have repeatedly stated their commitment to gender balance among staff, as well as their intention to put in place a plan to achieve it. In an all staff message dated 16 March 2012, the Executive Director indicated that he is "...deeply committed to increasing women's leadership across UNAIDS and will put in place a plan to increase the capacity of women in UNAIDS to assume leadership positions." This was followed by a message by the Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance, on 25 June informing staff of the development of a Gender Action Plan aimed at achieving gender balance in the Secretariat at all levels by 2015 and improving the participation of women within the Secretariat's workforce. The Gender Action Plan reflects

part of the Secretariat's broader efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all its work to strengthen the HIV response, as well as contribute to the UN System-wide Action Plan.

4.2 Enabling human resources policies

A number of supportive policies exist, as outlined below:

- **UNAIDS Human Resources Strategy 2011-2015⁸**: This strategy reiterates the need to promote the Diversity and Inclusion policy across UNAIDS, including at the regional and country level. The strategy affirms UNAIDS' commitment to achieving gender balance throughout the Secretariat, including among middle and senior management, and to the improvement of work-life balance.
- **Prevention of harassment policy (2011)⁹**: The policy emphasizes that there is *zero* tolerance for harassment, sexual harassment or abuse of authority and lays down a process for the consideration of claims of harassment. Both the policy and the mandatory e-learning course aim to promote a harassment-free workplace.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2009)**: The Diversity policy¹⁰ and its complementary training package make specific reference to ensuring the equal treatment of women and men and to gender balance. The policy states "*UNAIDS strives to attain gender equality by creating a culture in which gender balance and diversity are valued as the core of a positive working environment, sensitive to the concerns of all staff, including the specific concerns of female staff.*"
- **Work-Life Balance Policy (2008)¹¹**: This policy aims to establish a supportive and enabling work environment, optimizing staff productivity and enhancing the position of UNAIDS as an employer of choice. The policy prioritizes a culture of managing for results, based on clearly-defined and shared objectives, rather than managing staff based on their physical presence in the office. All staff are called upon to understand their roles, rights and responsibilities in supporting improved and appropriate work-life practices.
- Other key UNAIDS documents, including the *Guide to Ethics*¹², the *Competency Framework*¹³ and the People Development and Performance Policy and Guidelines¹⁴, take full account of issues of gender equality and non-discrimination.

⁸ UNAIDS Secretariat Human Resources Strategy 2011-2015, launched 29 November 2010

⁹ UNAIDS HRM/IN 2011-1 ODD / HRM Policy on the Prevention of Harassment – Update and UNAIDS HRM/IN 2011-5: Mandatory e-learning course on prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority in the workplace

¹⁰ See Diversity Policy HRP/2009/1 dated March 2009

¹¹ See Work Life Balance Policy for UNAIDS dated November 2008

¹² UNAIDS Guide to Ethics, Values, Policies and Practices, July 2011

¹³ UNAIDS Secretariat Competency Framework, 2010

¹⁴ People Development and Performance Policy and Guidelines for the UNAIDS Secretariat, February 2012

4.3 The talent and potential of our staff

The Secretariat has a significant pool of highly-qualified women staff who have the potential to become higher-level professionals, for example UCCs and senior managers, as elaborated below and highlighted in Section 3 of this report.

- There is a large number of qualified professional women whose participation in recruitment exercises for positions P-5 and above can be encouraged, including the high percentage of women at P-3 (48%) and P-4 (57%) positions. This represents a considerable talent pool which to draw from.
- A significant percentage of women at the national officer level (61%) create a basis for the promotion of qualified national professionals to international professional positions.
- There is a considerable number of senior-level general service women staff at the G-6 (81) and G-7 (10) level (representing 27% of all general service staff) who, if interested and possessing relevant experience and qualifications, could be considered for international professional posts.
- The general service category as a whole can be a source for career development and advancement of women staff. Equal participation of women and men in the general service category should be promoted.
- Completion of the organizational realignment in 2013, including filling vacant posts, provides an opportunity for career advancement of women.
- Mobility exercises in 2014 and 2015 can provide additional opportunities for career advancement, with added emphasis on increasing the number of women UCCs.

5. What are our constraints?

5.1 The current fiscal environment

The current difficult financial environment is affecting agencies across the UN system, including UNAIDS. The recruitment and advancement of staff is also limited by the overall staffing targets to be maintained at 820 staff by end 2013. This translates into considerably less opportunities for the creation of new posts, affecting the ability to promote talented women from within as well as to attract external female candidates, as needed. Additionally, the ability of the Secretariat to offer learning and development opportunities by external providers will be considerably curtailed.

5.2 Realignment of field offices

The proposed realignment of field offices will put additional pressure on available vacancies, as staff who are in posts planned for abolition receive priority for placement. This may, in turn, affect the ability to appoint women.

5.3 Limited number of posts made available by retirement

There are only a very limited number of retirements expected within the period 2013–2015. Out of 29 international and national professional posts to be vacated by retirements throughout 2013-2015 (18 men

and 11 women), 9 positions will be abolished.

5.4 Issues in the overall working environment

As revealed in the section on staff opinion, while the majority of staff are satisfied, there is a large gap in satisfaction levels between women and men. Issues around lack of support for work-life balance initiatives also appear to have a negative impact on women staff, many of whom are also dealing with child care responsibilities. Lastly, the perception of female colleagues of a male-biased culture is a disincentive for women to believe that they will receive full and fair consideration for posts, which is the right of all staff.

6. What actions and measures are needed?

The actions and measures needed to both capitalize on the Secretariat's opportunities and minimize constraints are contained in the Gender Action Plan (starting on page 12). The focus areas for these actions and measures are as follows:

- 6.1 Leadership and accountability:** Senior managers and line supervisors must demonstrate leadership and champion the issue. It is only through strong leadership and a system of accountability that there will be a foundation upon which gender balance and empowerment of women can be built.
- 6.2 Organizational culture:** UNAIDS' organizational culture needs to be transformed so that it will fully support the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women staff. The Secretariat needs to ensure that a gender-sensitive work environment supports the needs of all staff.
- 6.3 Recruitment and selection:** Recruitment and selection are the critical stages that determine the quality and composition of the Secretariat's workforce, including the aspect of gender balance. Ensuring that a gender lens is factored into all recruitments and selections will foster an environment where qualified female candidates receive full consideration. This includes establishing targets for the period 2013-2015, encouraging qualified female internal staff to apply and where necessary, focused external recruitment of women. In addition, increasing the number of women in management positions will positively influence the gender balance within selection panels and other advisory or decision-making bodies, including the Mobility and Reassignment Committee (MRC).
- 6.4 Staff development:** The Secretariat has a considerable wealth of internal talent across all three categories of staff. The national officer and general service categories represent a substantial pool in which talent should be identified, developed and deployed for higher-level posts. Learning and training initiatives which focus on the identification and capacity-building of internal staff are key activities.
- 6.5 Work-life balance initiatives:** Managers throughout the Secretariat must be seen as supportive of flexible working arrangements. Work-life balance initiatives are a critical means to both enhance productivity and ensure a healthy environment for all staff to sustain their professional and personal

goals. The existing UNAIDS Work-Life Balance Policy provides support to both women and men in balancing work and personal commitments, including provisions on maternity and paternity leave, flexible working arrangements and part-time working. The policy will be updated to broaden policy options available to staff.

- 6.6 Communication and advocacy:** A communication plan will be developed to ensure the dissemination of information on progress towards achieving gender balance, including mechanisms for sharing positive experiences among staff, as well as on the policies and measures taken in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women staff.
- 6.7 Monitoring and reporting:** Monitoring and reporting activities will be designed for all aspects of the Gender Action Plan. Baseline gender statistics will be developed and updated to allow the measurement of progress towards UNAIDS' gender balance targets, and regular reporting will be provided to staff on progress made.

UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan

to achieve gender balance and the empowerment of women staff in the UNAIDS Secretariat by 2015

The UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan was developed in the context of the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

I. Guiding principles

Gender equality: *Gender equality will be embedded in UNAIDS' organizational culture and its human resources strategies, policies, guidelines, procedures and practices.* The concept of gender equality has long been established among the core guiding principles of the UN system. The Charter of the United Nations—in Articles 8 and 101—stipulates that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in every capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that there can be no distinction or discrimination on the basis of gender (Articles 2 and 23). The concept of equal rights is also embedded in the WHO Staff Regulations and Rules (adjusted, as necessary, to take into account special needs of UNAIDS): Staff Regulation 4.3 - “Selection of staff members shall be made without regard to race, creed or sex,” and Regulation 4.2 - “The paramount consideration in the appointment, transfer, reassignment or promotion of the staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity”.

Organizational excellence: *UNAIDS is committed to removing systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequality in all its forms, including gender imbalance within its own staffing structures.* Eliminating gender inequalities and empowering women have been at the centre of UNAIDS' programme, advocacy and policy work for many years. Achieving gender balance within the Secretariat enhances organizational effectiveness and efforts to support the achievement of the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the vision of getting to zero.

Staff as our strongest asset: *UNAIDS recognizes the value of staff as our strongest asset. Their full and active contribution is vital to the achievement of UNAIDS' vision.* A management and organizational culture in which gender balance is understood to be at the core of a positive working environment needs to be created. This environment will be sensitive to the needs and concerns of all staff and strive to address them, including the specific concerns of women staff.

II. Objectives:

The objectives of the Gender Action Plan are to create the conditions for achieving gender balance in the Secretariat, to empower women staff and to increase their capacity to assume leadership positions. These objectives will build on:

- Sustained commitment and support by senior management;
- The talent and potential of staff at all levels; and

- The existing human resources strategy and related policies and their full implementation.

III. Strategic focus areas

All staff need to assume personal responsibility for advancing the goal of gender balance and equality. This will ensure that UNAIDS is even more productive, inclusive, effective and credible. The following measures are intended to guide us towards action.

1. Leadership and accountability

Measures:

- Approve clearly defined and measurable gender targets for vacant positions.
- Develop an accountability and management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Develop gender equality competency within the existing competency framework.
- Review the performance evaluation system and streamline gender into existing accountability and management structures.

2. Organizational culture: creating an enabling working environment

Measures:

- Develop a gender sensitization programme/support system and guidelines to empower managers, especially regional directors and UCCs, to promote gender sensitivity and staff development.
- Develop a plan of activities to champion women as leaders.
- Review and mainstream gender sensitivity into UNAIDS's key management activities, e.g. management meetings, country assessments and reviews, annual management plans and reports, and projects such as UN Cares.
- Reinforce UNAIDS' policy on zero tolerance for harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority with periodic refresher training.
- Launch of an informal women's network to provide a supportive forum for women and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, advice, contacts and experience.

3. Recruitment and selection

Measures:

- Establish recruitment targets in support of gender balance, with a particular focus on increasing the numbers of women UCCs and in posts at the P-5 level and above, including initially the following:
 - At least half of short-listed candidates are women;

- At least one third of all vacant positions to be filled by qualified female candidates; and
- At least half of all vacant UCC positions to be filled by qualified female candidates.
- Encourage applications from both men and women with a view to improving gender balance in positions that are typically female or male dominated.
- Aim for all selection panels to have gender balance, or, if that is not feasible, ensure at the minimum that one panel member is female.
- Target external recruitment, as required, when internal talent is not available. Institute internal talent searches for positions at the P-5 level and above, establish a pool of qualified female candidates, and provide career counseling and advice related to applications for vacant posts and opportunities for promotion.
- Identify qualified women staff for advancement to the international professional category, including national officers and senior-level general service staff who are interested in international posts, with emphasis on increasing the number of women in professional positions.
- Use the mobility exercise as a way to promote the advancement of women in regions where they are currently under-represented, and to increase the number of women UCCs and at the P-5 level and above.

4. Staff development including career development and training

Measures:

- Provide specialized career development, coaching and support for women staff.
- Support learning of new skills and competencies through short-term assignments and special projects.
- Develop leadership programmes for mid-level staff, with particular emphasis on women staff.
- Develop a senior-level leadership programme for women.
- Review and dissemination of existing gender e-learning materials available in the UN system.
- Develop gender-sensitivity training for all staff.
- Establish a mentoring programme.

5. Work-life balance

Measures:

- Put in place mechanisms to optimize the use of work-life balance policies by all staff, both women and men, and general service and professional, including demonstrated support by managers.
- Facilitate, through active involvement at inter-agency level, spouse/partner employment for staff on mobility.

- Strengthen measures to support flexibility in leave without pay following parental leave

6. Communication and advocacy

Measures:

- Develop and implement a communication plan for senior managers.
- Develop and implement a plan to disseminate information on policies and tools to all staff.

7. Monitoring and reporting

Measures:

- Develop a statistical baseline on gender balance.
- Regularly update gender workplace statistics and communicate findings to staff and senior managers for workforce planning.
- Summarize available data and feedback on the promotion of gender as a key competency (as part of the new PER system) to evaluate achievement towards gender balance goals.
- Mainstream monitoring of progress against the Gender Action Plan into existing systems to gauge staff opinions and perceptions.
- Monitor the implementation of the gender balance policy.