

TO: Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions
A: (See distribution list)

DATE: 23 December 2011

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

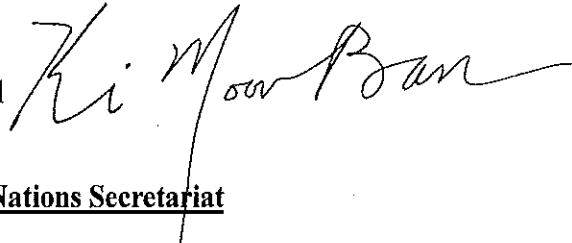
S/C DE:

FROM: The Secretary-General

DE:

SUBJECT: Women in the United Nations Secretariat

OBJET:



1. One of my priorities is for this Organization to reach the goal of 50/50 equal representation of women at all levels. This target has been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly, which has underlined the importance it attaches to effective action in this area. Furthermore, as a standard setting Organization, the United Nations should lead by example.

2. We have already made some progress, particularly in appointments of women at the most senior levels: the number of women at, or above, ASG level has gone from 21, in 2007, to 38, in 2011. However, this rate of growth has not been mirrored throughout the Organization. Women account for only 41 per cent of our total workforce in the Professional and higher grades, ranging from a high of 53 per cent at the P-2 level to a low of 24 per cent at the D-2 level. Further, the historic growth at the highest levels has been contrasted with the low rate of growth at the middle levels, where it has not averaged even 1 per cent per year over the past three years. This has to change. I am fully confident that, with your support, it can and will.

3. I, therefore, call personally on all Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions to accelerate progress towards gender parity in their areas, particularly at those levels which so far have shown least improvement, namely the P-4 to D-2 levels. I ask you to be mindful of the guidance regarding appointments of women which has been issued so far. This includes the instruction in ST/AI/2010/3 that the list of candidates, presented by hiring managers to the Central Review Bodies, should normally include at least one female candidate; and that female candidates shall remain on rosters for three years (as opposed to two years for male candidates). I also ask you to be alert to future guidance including the upcoming Gender Balance Strategy and Action Plan.

4. Let me also take the opportunity to stress the importance of a work environment that yields de facto as well as de jure equality. This requires effective implementation of the relevant human resource policies and creation of a workplace that is characterized by a culture of respect for all, including zero tolerance of abuse, harassment and sexual harassment. Also, key is the active use and stigma-free application of flexible working arrangements. The Organization is currently

piloting a number of new ways of working with the aim of updating our guidance on flexible working arrangements next year. Our goal is a more modern and efficient work environment that better meets the expectations and needs of staff to balance their work and life needs. However, while the Organization can promulgate policies that meet the highest industry standards, their implementation requires your consistent and dedicated support so that these policies positively and meaningfully affect the lives of staff. In this regard, I count on your full support.

5. I would also stress the importance of the role of Departmental Focal Points for Women. As such, they should be appointed at high levels with regular access to you and to information, as stipulated in their terms of reference (ST/SGB/2008/12). I would also like to underline the vital importance for all Departments, Offices and Missions to maintain accurate statistics on representation of women at all levels, including an appropriate baseline for five-year projections, so that we can properly measure progress.

6. Finally, may I remind you that my Compact with senior managers contains two indicators to explicitly measure and account for progress in the enhanced representation of women at all levels, including, in particular, the middle level. I urge all senior managers to work tirelessly towards this goal.

7. I look forward to your continued cooperation in this important area.

Distribution list:

Mr. Hany Abdel-Aziz, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information
Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
Ms. Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Ms. Lisa M. Buitenhuis, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Mr. Bernard G. Cochemé, Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and Secretary of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board
Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa
Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
Major General Natalio C. Ecarma III, Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
Mr. Yury Fedotov, Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Joint Special Representative for the African Union and the United Nations in Darfur and Head of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Mr. Abdoulaye Jannet, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
Ms. Hilde Johnson, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
Ms. Angela Kane, Under-Secretary-General for Management
Ms. Rima Khalaf, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Major General Juha Kilpivaara, Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

Mr. Albert Gerard Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Mr. Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Ms. Karin Landgren, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi

Ms. Carman L. Lapointe, Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia

Mr. Augustine P. Mahiga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia

Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support

Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Lybia

Mr. Roger Meece, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

Mr. Zachary Muburi-Muita, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Ms. Patricia O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs; The Legal Counsel

Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. Robert H. Serry, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Shabaan M. Shaaban, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management

Mr. Gregory B. Starr, Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security

Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme

Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

Ms. Margaret Vogt, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General, United Nations Office at Nairobi

Mr. Johnston S. Barkat, United Nations Ombudsman and Head of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services

Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support
Mr. Choi Soon-hong, Assistant Secretary-General for Information and Communications
Technology; Chief Information Technology Officer
Mr. Adama Dieng, Registrar, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
Ms. Joan E. Dubinsky, Director, Ethics Office
Mr. John Hocking, Registrar, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
Mr. Michael Smith, Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
Mr. Andrei D. Terekhov, Executive Director, Office of the Administration of Justice
Mr. Robert Watkins, Acting United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon