

# UNCT-SWAP PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 4.3

## Virtual Toolkit Resource



### What?

**Make parity a reality: Field-specific enabling environment guidelines  
(UN Women 2021)**



### Why?

These field-specific enabling environment guidelines provide tailored guidance for personnel in the field, especially in mission settings, to help increase the representation of women and accelerate efforts to reach gender parity in the UN system. The guidelines support the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and complement the enabling environment guidelines for the UN system and its supplementary guidance (please see resources under indicator 4.2 on organizational culture).

The field-specific guidelines focus on six thematic areas:

1. Professional and personal life integration;
2. Standards of conduct;
3. Security and safety;
4. Occupational safety, health, and wellbeing;
5. Recruitment, talent management, and retention; and
6. Leadership, accountability, and implementation.

Each chapter reflects the field-specific challenges and opportunities identified in the research and provide a series of practical recommendations and good examples for the organization, managers, and personnel at the individual level. An enabling working environment depends on everyone's contributions and should be available for all.



## Performance Indicator 4.3 Gender Parity

<b>Approaches Minimum Requirements</b>	c. A plan is in place for the UNCT to achieve gender parity.
<b>Meets Minimum Requirements</b>	a. The UNCT has reached gender parity.  <b>and</b>  b. A plan is in place for the UNCT to maintain gender parity.
<b>Exceeds Minimum Requirements</b>	Meets minimum requirement  <b>and</b>  d. The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) includes gender-specific actions and indicators in at least one Business Operation Area to foster gender equality and women's empowerment.



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# Make Parity a Reality

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IN SUPPORT OF  
The Secretary-General's  
System-wide Strategy on  
Gender Parity

Field-specific Enabling  
Environment Guidelines

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM



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Thank you to all who contributed to the Guidelines!

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# CONTENTS

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction:</b>	
<b>The importance of creating an enabling environment in field locations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1. Professional and personal life integration</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2. Standards of conduct</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3. Security and safety</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>4. Occupational safety, health and well-being</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>5. Recruitment, talent management and retention</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6. Leadership, accountability and implementation</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>ANNEX 1: Methodology</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>ANNEX 2: Resources for implementation</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>72</b>

# ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	African Union Commission
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CISMU	Critical Incident Stress Management Unit
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DOS	Department of Operational Support
DPPA-DPO	Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IDA	International Disability Alliance
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRMCT	United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OSCM	Office of Supply Chain Management
OSH	Department of Occupational Safety and Health
OVRA	Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate
SCRPD UN	Programme on Disability/Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security



UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOAU	United Nations Office to the African Union
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNSOS	United Nations Support Office in Somalia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNV	The United Nations Volunteers programme
UNVMC	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

# FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines. These Guidelines aim to support personnel in the field, especially in mission settings, to help increase the representation of women and accelerate efforts to reach parity in the UN system. The Guidelines have been created in support of the Secretary-General's [System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#) (2017), and they complement the [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#) (2019) and the [Supplementary Guidance](#) (2019).

An enabling environment that promotes a diverse, inclusive, and respectful work culture is a precondition for achieving and sustaining gender parity. The gap in women's representation in the UN system remains greatest and the rate of change slowest at non-headquarters locations, including in peacekeeping missions. Therefore, we need more support, tailored guidance, and examples of good practice for the field.

The Guidelines were prepared during the COVID-19 crisis that has created new challenges and exacerbated existing inequalities worldwide. The crisis has also offered opportunities for an organizational culture change in the United Nations. As we enter the Decade of Action on the Sustainable Development Goals, there is an opportunity to rebuild better, with women's rights at the centre, and to energize progress on gender equality, for the benefit of all. I am pleased that these Guidelines present recommendations and good practices that are relevant now and in the future.

The Guidelines were created through a participatory and intersectional approach. I am deeply appreciative to all interviewees, whether Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators, Gender Focal Points or Experts on Human Resources. The range of contributions, comments, feedback, and ideas provided from across the UN System at all levels has ensured that these Guidelines are relevant and easy to use.

The attainment of gender parity requires collective action. This is the time to step up, to increase the representation of women and to transform organizational culture in the field. Transformation starts with the leadership, but we all need to be part of this journey and make parity a reality.

Progress towards gender parity should also complement and reaffirm broader aspects of diversity and inclusion. We need to stand up against intolerance, sexism and racism, and eliminate any form of discrimination. We need to foster a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all. The recommendations and good practices in these Guidelines will tell you how to do this, and are applicable to all UN personnel in line with the aim of leaving no one behind. I invite all of you to implement the recommendations of these Guidelines, to be change-makers, and to walk the talk.

PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA,  
Executive Director of UN Women







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of these Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines is to provide tailored guidance for personnel in the field, especially in mission settings, to help increase the representation of women and accelerate efforts to reach parity in the UN system. These Guidelines support the implementation of the [Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#) and complement the [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#) and its [Supplementary Guidance](#).

An enabling environment means a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all personnel. These

Guidelines have been created by UN personnel for UN personnel across the world. They were produced by UN Women through a consultative, inclusive and collaborative approach with nearly 200 colleagues from over 50 countries where the UN operates.

Each chapter begins with an introduction to one of the six thematic areas, reflecting the challenges and opportunities identified by interviewees. The chapters also provide a series of recommendations and good examples for the organization, managers and personnel at the individual level. The recommendations are made based on the comprehensive and varied methods of data

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collection including qualitative interviews, focus groups and meetings. Each action contributes towards building an enabling working environment in support of gender parity and a more effective and inclusive modern organization that better serves the peoples of the world.

## 1. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE INTEGRATION

Supporting professional and personal life integration through policies and initiatives that recognize diverse family configurations is an effective way to recruit and retain the best talent for the field. Such policies and initiatives relate to tailored flexible working arrangements that suit the specific duty station and job roles, include parental leave, provide support for spousal employment, and appropriate facilities for nursing/expressing milk and childcare. It is important to note that the integration of professional and personal

life goes beyond care responsibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic made teleworking a reality as an emergency measure; however, most of the interviewed UN personnel in field settings hoped that flexible working would continue to be implemented after the pandemic.

## 2. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

All UN entities and personnel are expected to adhere to standards of conduct, which include guiding principles to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse, misconduct, abuse of power, discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. Consultations with interviewees revealed challenges in creating an enabling environment and underscored the importance of a thorough implementation of standards of conduct. All personnel, in particular leadership, have the responsibility to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a respectful and healthy workplace culture, ensuring equality and non-discrimination





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regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, mental health conditions, disabilities, and other characteristics while upholding zero-tolerance and a victim-/survivor-centred approach.

### 3. SECURITY AND SAFETY

Conditions of security and safety differ widely by location and have far-reaching implications for achieving gender parity. Interviewees disclosed that duty stations with high security risks or that are perceived to be unsafe may experience recruitment and retention challenges, especially among women. Gender-based security and safety risks should be acknowledged and mitigated in all locations. For example, organizations are expected to ensure compliance with existing United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) gender-responsive security and safety policies. While entity

leadership as well as security and safety personnel have a responsibility to implement security and safety planning and responses, it is incumbent on all personnel to practice UN values to create a safe, accessible and secure working environment for all.

### 4. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A healthy workforce is key for the United Nations to be able to deliver on its mandate. Availability, accessibility, effectiveness and awareness were identified by interviewees as key components to “provide a healthy, safe and respectful working environment that promotes greater accountability, efficiency and commitment of its workforce”<sup>1</sup>, as pointed out by the High-Level Committee on Management’s Cross-functional Task Force on Duty of Care. It is important to provide gender-



responsive Occupational Safety and Health, well-being support and services that reflect the diversity of personnel within the organization and cater for the realities of field work. Several interviewees indicated this as key for recruiting and retaining women in field locations and further underlined the importance of fostering well-being and psychosocial care due to the specific nature of the field environment and in line with the mandates of UN organizations.

## 5. RECRUITMENT, TALENT MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Recruitment is the gateway into the United Nations. Gender-sensitive recruitment and talent management maximize the organization's ability to acquire and retain the best workforce reflecting the organization's principles of diversity and equality. A comprehensive talent management strategy is critical to retain existing talent in the UN system. Interviewees also indicated that opportunities to grow and advance professionally are essential to attract and retain the best talent. Regular monitoring and reporting are crucial to assess and improve recruitment targets.

## 6. LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Many interviewees underlined that an enabling working environment starts with leadership. Leadership – including at the entity, field mission and UN country team (UNCT) level – has a special responsibility to set the right tone and put UN values into action by being responsive to gender parity commitments, diversity and inclusion, and leading by example. The head of entity's responsibility to achieve gender parity includes appointing and collaborating with Gender Focal Points who provide advice on reaching gender parity and creating an enabling working environment. Most interviewees called for more robust accountability measures in case gender parity is not reached. Moreover, it was proposed



MINUSMA / Harandane

that these Guidelines and the recommendations therein be obligatory for all senior leaders and management to implement and report upon. It was further suggested that all rules and regulations that hinder the attainment of gender parity and the creation of an enabling working environment should be altered. In this regard, support from UN Member States was called for.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN FIELD LOCATIONS

Creating an enabling work environment across the United Nations (UN) system is essential to operationalize the organization's founding principles of equality, justice and respect, and to ensure that no one is left behind, as promised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An enabling environment means a diverse, inclusive and respectful work environment – as a precursor to achieving gender parity and a key to sustaining it.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) created the [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#)<sup>2</sup> and its [Supplementary Guidance](#)<sup>3</sup> in support of the [Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#)<sup>4</sup>, in cooperation with the Human Resources Network of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the UN Secretariat's Office of Human Resources. Those Guidelines are being implemented across



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the UN, with the support of leadership, human resources experts and UN Gender Focal Points<sup>i</sup>, and in accordance with A/RES/74/128<sup>5</sup>, which calls for strengthening the implementation of policies and measures related to creating an enabling environment in the pursuit of gender parity.

The commitment to achieving gender parity has been reiterated in several resolutions of the UN General Assembly since the 1970s and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995<sup>6</sup>. In recent years, there has been a renewed commitment and accelerated progress. In his System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres has been adamant about the importance of achieving gender parity. For example, he has stressed that “while fundamentally a right, parity is increasingly necessary to the UN’s efficiency, impact and credibility”<sup>7</sup>.

The Secretary-General has led the way to advancing parity with tangible and impressive results. In 2018, for the first time in United Nations history, parity was achieved in the Senior Management Group and among Resident Coordinators. The organization has a record number of women heads and deputy heads of peace operations in its history. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has appointed the first female Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and three female special envoys.

Yet challenges persist. Women have been particularly underrepresented in the field, especially in mission settings. The Secretary-General’s Report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the UN system<sup>8</sup> shows that women in the UN are most represented at entry levels (P2 and P3 levels) and underrepresented at mid-

managerial and director levels (P4 level and above). The representation of women in professional and higher categories at non-headquarters locations is 8.7 percentage points lower than at headquarters. Furthermore, women comprise of only 30 per cent of the UN Secretariat’s staff in field locations<sup>9</sup>, 15.2 per cent of UN police and 5.4 per cent of UN military<sup>10</sup>.

The same report shows that the gap in women’s representation remains greatest and the rate of change slowest at non-headquarters locations, including in peacekeeping missions. Improving the representation of women is crucial so that the United Nations can be “more representative, and therefore, credible with the populations it serves in the field”<sup>11</sup>. Similarly, those interviewed for these Guidelines expressed that “most hardship locations will need women to achieve the goals of the mission” and that “gender parity is not only about the organization but how it benefits the people we serve”. Therefore, the way the UN works and delivers cannot be separated from its results.

The objective of these Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines is to provide tailored guidance for personnel<sup>ii</sup> in the field, especially in mission settings, to help increase the representation of women and accelerate efforts to reach parity in the UN system. These Guidelines are a critical tool given that the UN has a large presence around the world. For example, over 46 per cent of UN Secretariat staff serve in field operations.<sup>12</sup>

i “Gender Focal Points” also encompass “Focal Points for Women” i.e. these terms are synonymous. The term “Focal Point for Women” is used by the UN Secretariat, and is guided by the Secretary-General’s Bulletin on Departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat (ST/SGB/2008/12). The term “Gender Focal Point” is used by the remainder of the UN system.

ii Throughout the Guidelines, “personnel” is used to the extent possible as an inclusive term to refer to staff members, individual contractors, consultants, UN volunteers, interns and other members of the workforce that help the UN system to deliver on its mandate.





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## **AN INCLUSIVE AND INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH**

These Guidelines were produced through a consultative, inclusive and collaborative approach to ensure that recommendations are both beneficial and realistic and can be implemented with ownership by all personnel in the field. A substantive desk review of UN policies, reports and guidance as well as primary research was undertaken. Extensive stakeholder engagements by means of qualitative interviews, focus groups and meetings were conducted and written feedback collected with nearly 200 colleagues from over 50 countries where the UN operates, and with some experts from organizations outside the UN. Therefore, these Guidelines have been created by UN personnel for UN personnel across the world. As one colleague expressed during the

interviews: “the Enabling Environment Guidelines are a global reference”. For more information about methodology, please refer to the Annex 1.

These Guidelines adopt a broad definition of field locations to include peacekeeping and special political missions, and to ensure applicability among funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities. The UN’s field presence is not homogeneous but consists of diverse duty stations ranging from small, special political missions to large regional and country offices of different UN entities, and includes ‘family’ and ‘non-family’ duty stations.

The Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity does not cover uniformed personnel, as this category is regulated by a system different than that which covers other personnel. The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028<sup>13</sup> was



developed to create an enabling environment for uniformed women personnel at both headquarters and in the field. In these Field-specific Guidelines, the focus is on civilian personnel. However, uniformed and civilian personnel work side-by-side in the field and increasingly in an integrated manner. As underlined by the interviews, an enabling work environment depends on everyone's contribution and should be available for all.

In addition, while physical infrastructure is an important concern, it is not the focus of these Guidelines. Some interviewees underlined the importance of considering gender aspects in the design of offices, accommodation and recreational spaces. Specifically, the safety and location of accommodations were emphasized, as well as secure and private ablutions and lightning. Some interviewees also called for gender-sensitive on-site recreational spaces and health-care facilities. The accessibility of offices, accommodations and ablutions was highlighted as a precondition for recruiting persons with disabilities. For the improvement of gender-responsive physical infrastructure, colleagues are encouraged to contact the Engineering Support Section in the UN Secretariat's Department of Operational Support (DOS) and further review The Elsie Initiative for Field Missions' Facilities and Infrastructure<sup>14</sup>. The project develops recommendations for the physical infrastructure of missions with gender-responsive considerations to improve working and living conditions.

Progress towards gender parity should also complement and reaffirm broader aspects of diversity and inclusion. Women are not a homogenous group but face different barriers based on their identities. Interviewees of these Guidelines pointed out that personnel of different identities, such as ethnicity, race or disability, can have vastly different experiences in the UN system.

As with the Enabling Environment Guidelines, an intersectional approach<sup>15</sup> that is inclusive of different identities and conscious of the various

power dynamics in the UN system is applied in these Field-specific Guidelines and should guide the implementation of the recommendations. Inequality, like discrimination, does not occur along a single axis but is intersectional. As the professor who coined the term, Kimberlé Crenshaw, explains, "intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTIQ+ problem there".<sup>16</sup> People's identities and social positions are uniquely shaped by several factors at the same time, creating unique experiences and perspectives. These identities and power dynamics include but are not limited to sex, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, ethnicity, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability and age. This is why subject-matter experts in gender, disability and LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer) issues were consulted to strengthen the intersectional lens that is applied throughout these Guidelines.

Furthermore, the UN has engaged in various conversations and launched campaigns on diversity and inclusion. For example, the UN launched the 2019 UN Disability Inclusion Strategy to provide "the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations".<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the UN Secretary-General has launched a system-wide campaign of dialogue and action to eradicate racism and promote dignity within the United Nations.<sup>18</sup> The Secretary-General has invited everyone to join forces to reaffirm the UN's commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion. Furthermore, UN-GLOBE is the system-wide inter-agency group that continues to actively advocate for the equality and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ+ personnel in the UN system.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

These Guidelines have been developed amid the COVID-19 crisis, which has created and exacerbated challenges, as well as offered opportunities for organizational culture change and innovative working methods. Forced mass teleworking showed that adjustments are possible for a variety of job roles, and that working from home is feasible. However, it is important to note that the unusual mass teleworking arrangements undertaken because of the pandemic do not

constitute “normal flexible working” but were instead a business-continuity solution and an emergency measure with which most personnel had to comply.

The pandemic has intensified existing health and social inequalities, including among UN personnel. Research has revealed differentiated health risks of the virus, including across ethnicity and gender.<sup>19</sup> UN Women’s research clearly shows that across the world, women are more likely to take on the burden of increased personal and family demands.<sup>20</sup>



School and day care closures further exacerbated gender disparities in care and employment, harming women's – and especially mothers' and single mothers' – careers and livelihoods. Women are also more likely to be in care professions and serving on the front lines of the pandemic.<sup>21</sup>

The lockdowns and quarantines highlighted and intensified the existing “shadow pandemic” of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based-violence.<sup>22</sup> In his address to the Opening of the General Debate of the 75th Session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General referred to the increase in violence against women and girls during the pandemic, from domestic violence to sexual abuse, online harassment and femicide, as a “hidden war on women”<sup>23</sup>. The UN has developed a series of resources for personnel in this regard, including a dedicated website<sup>24</sup> and a guide for responding to domestic abuse.<sup>25</sup> Interviewees for these Guidelines also mentioned discrimination and harassment – including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, which can also occur online – as challenges to achieving a safe and inclusive working environment.

Women with disabilities reported challenges in meeting their basic needs, and risks to their personal safety. Workplaces going online was beneficial for some, but others – especially persons with visual impairment, the hard of hearing, the deaf and deafblind – faced exclusion on account of the inaccessibility of the tools being used.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, as emphasized by many interviewees, LGBTIQ+ people faced challenges in accessing health care due to persistent inequality, stigma and discrimination.<sup>27</sup>

As well as suffering physically from the virus, many have faced mental health challenges. Some personnel were stranded in their duty stations and unable to access health support or certain necessities or see their friends and families due to travel restrictions or workloads. Some personnel were, and are, dealing with grief and loss.

In the interviews for these Guidelines, many personnel reported increased pressures, both personally and professionally. Some reported that the inability to physically connect with colleagues presented some productivity difficulties, especially in challenging locations and peacekeeping missions where in-person stakeholder management is necessary or where internet access is limited. Similar challenges have been experienced by the UN Gender Focal Points that represent the whole UN system.

Yet, many UN organizations have demonstrated agility and compassion during the crisis. For example, a network of UN colleagues created the #BuildBackBetterChallenge<sup>28</sup> to contribute towards building a more resilient and agile UN, building on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to interviewees, many have experienced that working from home is feasible and productive, which may lead to a cultural shift towards a greater investment in workplace flexibility and inspire longer careers in the UN. This could have positive implications, especially for the retention and recruitment of women<sup>29</sup>. Some reported that the crisis has also increased awareness and support for mental health in the UN system.

Although the global pandemic has forced organizations to re-examine resources, achieving gender parity and an enabling environment is essential to realizing the UN's mandate, improving performance and optimizing efficiency. While many of the recommendations in these Guidelines do not require additional financial resources, some might need reinforcing with appropriate financial or human resources, depending on the UN entity. Others might need changes in human-resources-related rules and regulations. Therefore, in some cases, the support of UN Member States would be of utmost importance. It is critical to openly discuss what is required for implementing these recommendations, including gender-responsive budgeting<sup>30</sup>, changing mindsets as well as improving organizational culture. Doing business as usual will not be enough.

# 1. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE INTEGRATION

**“In any region I have worked in, it’s more work than life.”**

Consultations for these Guidelines revealed that, in the UN, the nature of work in the field may be perceived as incompatible with achieving a harmonious integration of professional and personal life. Interviewees noted that there is a perception that constant physical presence is needed in field environments to respond to unexpected crises and to engage with beneficiaries, civil society and governments. As pointed out by different interviewees: “Women still have to choose between family and peacekeeping” and “it is really difficult to have a personal life. It takes stamina to stay [in] the career”.

Furthermore, various research by the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Young UN, and UN-GLOBE indicates that partners or children may be unable to move even to family duty stations because of limited spousal employment opportunities and security and safety risks.<sup>31</sup> As mentioned by interviewees, “spouses struggle to find jobs and are forced to stay at home” and if a “spouse cannot have a job in the duty station, it is impossible to start a family”. Other challenges faced by field personnel included a lack of implementation of flexible working arrangements (FWAs) and the absence of facilities, for example for nursing/expressing milk and childcare.

**“Spouse is not able to get a job and is forced to stay at home sitting ... you want to keep families together, but how?”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

**“How often do you see men following women for the job? Spousal employment would enable women to take these jobs.”**

RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Several interviewees indicated that supporting professional and personal life integration through policies and initiatives that recognize diverse family configurations is an effective way to recruit and retain the best talent for the field. For instance, strong family-friendly policies contribute to the organization’s competitiveness and ability to function efficiently.<sup>32</sup> These policies typically include parental leave, breastfeeding policies and childcare support.<sup>33</sup> Yet these policies often fall short when personnel are required to care for ageing parents, children with special needs, or a family member with a disability. In terms of the latter, consideration of the wide range of persons with disabilities and their related care needs should be accounted for.<sup>iii</sup>

iii The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) indicates that “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (See CRPD 2006, Preamble and Article 1, “Purpose”)





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**“Childcare in the compound would help.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

**“The fact that you have a *crèche* enables people to come to work.”**

RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Importantly, the integration of professional and personal life goes beyond care responsibilities. An enabling environment is not only about family-friendliness. Personnel without care responsibilities face challenges related to retention and career development, managing long-distance relationships, loneliness and isolation, as well as difficulties in finding a partner when working in a remote duty station.

National staff may also face challenges stemming from the lack of different entitlements and support services available compared to international staff. For instance, as several interviewees pointed out, national staff are not entitled to Rest and Recuperation Travel and may therefore not always get the necessary breaks from the dangerous, stressful, and isolated working conditions under which they serve.

The interviewees identified FWAs as one of the most important policies that can support personnel's integration of professional and personal life. At the same time, key challenges mentioned included the lack of implementation of FWAs in the field, lack of trust and that the availability of FWAs is based on “the generosity” or “mercy” of the manager.

**“There are two different schools of thought: FWA as a favour and FWA as an opportunity.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT



MINUSMA / Sylvain Liechti

FWAs constitute mutually beneficial arrangements between personnel and their managers and are adjustments to the normal working hours and locations. The most common FWAs in the UN context include telecommuting, staggered working hours, compressed work weeks and scheduled breaks for external learning activities. However, a range of tailored and duty-station-specific solutions can be devised and should be

encouraged. While FWAs can certainly support working parents, these arrangements are for everyone and can support personnel in different life stages and with different life-changing events.

**“The principle of trust has to be there and good faith has to be assumed. Trust underpins the working environment that is pleasant.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

FWAs can attract people with diverse talents who may not have considered working in the field because of the applicable rigid working environments or security and safety risks, including persons with disabilities.<sup>34</sup> However, FWAs are not the same as reasonable accommodation.<sup>iv</sup> Persons with disabilities engaging with the United Nations in any capacity and staff who have dependents with disabilities have the right to reasonable accommodation.<sup>35</sup>

Several interviewees indicated that challenges in the field have been magnified by the COVID-19 crisis, which blurred professional and personal life boundaries even further, caused feelings of isolation and, in many cases, increased workloads as well as care and domestic work, especially among women and in particular among mothers and single mothers. Some national staff described the stigma of working from home and being “relegated to back-office work”.

At the same time the mass teleworking during the pandemic demonstrated that a certain level of flexibility can be applied in every duty station. The UN system-wide COVID-19 Pulse Check Survey further confirmed flexibility in remote working arrangements as the top positive development

<sup>iv</sup> Reasonable accommodation is “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Article 2, CRPD 2006).



MONUSCO / Force

related to the COVID-19 crisis and a way of working that the organization should keep.<sup>36</sup> In fact, interviewees repeatedly pointed out that “COVID is giving an example that FWA works” and “thanks to COVID, mindsets are changing”. Some interviewees also described the motivating aspects of remote teleworking: “It was liberating. It was professional. It was being recognized that I have a family. I was allowed to have a work-life balance”.

**“COVID has put flexible working in the spotlight and made home and care responsibilities more visible.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Aim to standardize parental leave<sup>v</sup>** to afford all parents, gestational and non-gestational, an equal post-birth paid leave entitlement of six months. Inter-agency knowledge-sharing and joint advocacy are recommended to strengthen proposals for change. The policy should apply to adoption, surrogacy and emergency or foster care and recognize parents' equal need to bond with their children.
- **Allow an additional six months of parental leave for staff in non-family duty stations<sup>37</sup>**, followed by measures to allow relocation to a family duty station. Provide additional leave to parents with multiple children (e.g. twins). Keep in mind that parental leave both contributes to gender equality and is key for early childhood development.<sup>38</sup>
- **Recognize that family duty stations are not necessarily family-friendly for all.** Consult personnel, Gender Focal Points and other experts on how the organization can create an enabling environment for all. Engage with UN-GLOBE duty station and agency coordinators and with UN disability inclusion focal points.
- **Explore the feasibility of establishing an on-site nursery, or crèche**, in coordination with other UN agencies, or, alternatively, providing a percentage reimbursement of costs for crèche where there is no such facility.<sup>39</sup> The design of the nursery and procurement of materials for the children should use universal design principles,<sup>40</sup> and personnel should be sensitized to accommodate all children with disabilities. Alternatively, or in addition, consider a 'parent-child office' that can serve as emergency childcare. In addition, create and keep an updated list of care-providers to help personnel with childcare in unexpected or emergency situations.
- **Ensure that safe and appropriate lactation space is in place**, in coordination with other UN agencies. In line with the UN Secretariat's Policy on breastfeeding (ST/SGB/2019/1)<sup>41</sup> "private and suitably furnished facilities specifically designed for breastfeeding or expressing milk shall be made available". The lactation space should be for the sole function of lactation designed to be accessible for persons with disabilities and with appropriate provisions, such as a fridge and a sink.<sup>42</sup> Liaise with the security and safety services to facilitate smooth access for partners or child-minders bringing a child to be fed during workdays while maintaining appropriate security standards.
- **Implement a centralized FWA system** (online Enterprise Resource Planning/management system) to streamline the process of requesting and tracking FWA usage. The default answer to FWA requests should be

<sup>v</sup> The broad term 'parental leave policies' is used in line with UN Women's advocacy efforts on one paid parental leave for all parents regardless of gender, including parents who adopt, foster, or have children through surrogacy or assisted reproductive technology (See: UN Women. Joint Statement: One UN for family leave and childcare 2019). For ease of comparison and since they are covered separately in the Staff Rules and in separate policies, good practice examples refer to maternity, paternity and adoption leave.



positive, bearing in mind the functions of the job, on-site work requirements and the prerogative of a manager to ensure functionality of the working arrangements at duty stations.

- **Consider which roles and tasks can be fully or partially performed outside the duty station.** In addition to international staff, remote telework could benefit national personnel who have care or other responsibilities in other parts of the country.
- **Track, monitor and analyse the use of policies in support of professional and personal life integration** with disaggregation by type of policy, locality, sex/gender, age, disability, contract type, grade and national/international personnel. Report the data regularly to the executive leadership and personnel, giving due respect to the privacy of individuals.
- **Consider conducting regular internal communication campaigns** to promote and demystify FWAs, showcasing reasons why personnel may opt to work flexibly. Complement such awareness-raising efforts with tailored guidance on how to implement workplace flexibility, such as prepared by UN Women.
- **Facilitate the availability of Internet access, necessary equipment and technology solutions** to enable regular as well as emergency teleworking.<sup>43</sup> Be mindful of accessibility of online tools for persons with disabilities, and consider using tools that comply with the latest Web Accessibility guidelines<sup>44</sup> including captioning and sign interpretation during online calls.
- **Support couples and families to move to the field**, if applicable. Expand opportunities for partner employment and facilitate mobility of dual UN career couples, permitting work opportunities in the same mission, if desired and feasible, while considering

career progression of existing personnel. Coordinate efforts at the UN country level. Consider initiating negotiations with host countries on work permits for partners. Similarly, support the main family member(s) of single personnel with a disability who may be with them at the duty station but not be a spouse (e.g. parent, sibling, adult child). Consider developing institutionalized spousal employment programmes. Furthermore, as part of pre-deployment briefings and welcome packages, offer information on spousal/partner employment. Support the creation of Local Expat Spouse Associations as a means for agencies and international NGOs to share information.

- **Support UN-GLOBE's Mobility Proposals<sup>45</sup>**, which include, for instance, that all staff should have the right to appeal assignment to a particular duty station, and to ask for an exemption, under any mobility policy, and that the organization ensures that all staff, including LGBTIQ+ staff, can secure residence visas for legal partners in family duty stations.





UNMISS

### ✓ Good examples:

- **UN Women, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** have extended maternity leave to 24 weeks. **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** provides staff members in D and E duty stations<sup>vi</sup> an additional period of two months of Special Leave with Full Pay, extending maternity leave to 24 weeks. **UN Women** provides an additional eight weeks of pre-delivery leave with Special Leave with Full Pay in D and E duty stations, extending maternity leave to 32 weeks in these hardship locations.
  - **UN Women, UNICEF** and **UNAIDS** provide 16 weeks of paternity leave. **UNFPA** provides 16 weeks of paternity leave in non-family duty stations and 12 weeks in family duty stations.
- **UNHCR** provides 18 weeks of adoption leave. **UN Women, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO** and the **UN Secretariat** provide 16 weeks of adoption leave.
- **UNICEF** provides a *crèche* in Afghanistan which is shared among other UN agencies.
- **The UN House in Abuja, Nigeria**, provides a physical room where parents can bring their child with a caregiver. The space is shared among UN entities.
- **The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)** provides a lactation room with a fridge, changing table, chair, hand sanitizer and some practical information, including the Enabling Environment Guidelines. The room is carpeted and has some toys in case personnel need to take care of a child during a working day.
- Companies such as **SAP** and **Bazaarvoice**<sup>46</sup>, **Accenture**<sup>47</sup> and **American Express**<sup>48</sup> provide free shipping for breastmilk for personnel on mission. This benefit has supported nursing mothers on work trips, alleviating the stressful part of travelling and reducing stigma related to having a newborn at home when travelling for work. The benefit has also made the transition back to the workplace easier and hence helped to transform the workplace culture.
- **The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)** has a policy, according to which all FWA requests have to be considered favourably by default, provided that the request fully meets business needs.
- At **UNICEF**, implementation of FWAs is one of the performance indicators for managers on how staff is being supported. As a result, in 2019, the share of staff using FWAs increased from 7 to 30 per cent.

vi Refer to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Hardship Classification. Available at: <https://icsc.un.org/>.

- **The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** supports remote teleworking by allowing staff members deployed in non-family duty station Mogadishu (Somalia) to work from family duty station Nairobi (Kenya) and undertake regular missions to Mogadishu when their presence is required. This allows personnel to live with their partners/ family members.
- **The UN Secretariat's** policy on Flexible Working Arrangements (ST/SGB/2019/3)<sup>49</sup> also provides for, in cases of compelling personal circumstances, teleworking outside of the duty station for an appropriate period not exceeding six months, and in exceptional circumstances an additional extension not exceeding three months.
- **The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** hosts an internal Human Resources Management Portal to facilitate FWA applications and to provide a central repository to monitor the application of FWAs.
- **The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** developed a Compendium of Good Practices for Enhancing an Enabling Work Environment in the Field. It offers best practices to strengthen inclusive work environments, including FWA implementation in the field. The Compendium has been incorporated within training on gender mainstreaming and parity and is discussed as part of the “Enabling Environment Week” organized by Vienna-based organizations.
- **The International Labour Organization (ILO)** published the Practical Guide on Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, which provides practical recommendations for effective teleworking that are applicable to a broad range of sectors, case examples on how employers and policymakers have



ONU Guatemala

been handling teleworking during the pandemic, and the lessons learned.<sup>50</sup>

- **The World Bank Group** runs a Career Lab to support spousal employment and spouses' integration into the duty station. The Lab's thematic sessions and professional groups provide spouses with a network and concrete tools for job-searching. The Career Lab takes a long-term approach in supporting spouses to understand the mobility principle as part of the Bank's career trajectories. All Career Lab participants reported having improved their ability to develop their career strategy and 40 per cent of spouses became employed in the USA following their participation.

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Foster a culture that is supportive of professional and personal life integration for all personnel.** Raise awareness of policy options and duty-station-specific solutions. Recommend that team members use appropriate policies and entitlements to support productivity and well-being in their specific job roles and situations. Show an example by using FWAs and parental leave, for instance, and by embracing professional and private life integration in daily work. Initiate discussions on the topic in team meetings and, with the support of the team, develop a Team Charter or plans including ground rules and agreements on the available workplace flexibility.
- **Sensitize team members on gender stereotypes** in daily work and encourage positive role models, beyond the mandatory training. For instance, consider shining a spotlight (e.g. through videos or intranet articles) on a diverse group of personnel who have benefited from parental leave, including fathers and same-sex parents. Avoid making assumptions about colleagues' family structures and how domestic responsibilities are shared. Be mindful of women's various roles and the fact that not all women are mothers, as not all men are fathers. Collaborate with HR personnel to facilitate discussions about UN values.
- **Offer peer and professional support to personnel who take parental leave.** Systematize and encourage the use of hand-over notes to support personnel transitions. Check in with your supervisee ahead of the end of the parental leave period. Offer flexible or gradual return strategies (e.g. part-time) as well as peer mentoring, as needed. Be knowledgeable of and prepared for the various needs of returning parents.
- **Apply and pilot tailored FWAs** that suit the specific duty station and job roles. For instance, if accommodation and offices are located in the same compound, allow personnel to adjust their working hours so that they can return to the accommodation to participate in study activities or be in touch with family and friends in a different time zone. Consider innovative approaches to flexibility, such as job shares and job swaps.
- **Monitor the use of Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Travel** and require staff to use it where applicable, bearing in mind that R&R Travel does not substitute for the need for flexibility in hardship locations. Consider allowing staff members to combine R&R travel with FWAs when needed or seek to change the rules to allow more flexibility. For national staff and non-staff personnel, discuss the use of a compressed work schedule and other possible solutions so they can also rest and recuperate.
- **Invest in effective teamwork and prioritization.** Clear, fair and transparent sharing of responsibilities supports everyone's professional and personal life integration, including managers. While rotational hybrid teams and telework approaches may become more common following the pandemic, it is critical to ensure that everyone feels included and has the possibility to connect in the workplace, for instance through regular team meetings. In addition, respect the right to disconnect during free time, including in hardship duty stations whenever possible. Respect core hours and encourage personnel to be offline after work and while on leave.
- **Recognize results-based good performance and productivity,** not time spent in the office or online. Providing continuous feedback and supportive guidance to team members to succeed in their roles is also part of an enabling environment.



## ✓ Good examples:

- **UNMAS** offered female security guards the option to work only day shifts in Damascus (Syria) because of gender-related security risks at night. This enabling provision helped the office recruit two female security guards and improved their security conditions on the job.
- **UNOPS** developed Remote Performance Management Guides for both supervisors and supervisees separately to better equip personnel for the performance conversations in a remote working environment and prepare both for potentially carrying out annual reviews virtually. **UN Women** developed Teleworking Guidance during COVID-19 that provides practical tips for both supervisors and team members.
- **UNICEF** has a flexible working modality called Special Emergency Compressed Time Off (SECTO), which benefits national staff in certain locations with sudden onset and/or rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situations. Staff members are allowed five days off after working in a compressed work schedule of 45 extra minutes every day for 40 days.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Familiarize yourself with available policies** supporting the integration of professional and personal life. Be an example by using them. Seek information via your manager, HR personnel, staff representatives and Gender Focal Points. Prepare for conversations with
- **Take into consideration the different time zones** colleagues may work in when communicating and scheduling meetings.
- **When organizing meetings, proactively enquire whether any accommodations would facilitate attendance**, such as a sign language interpreter.

supervisors about FWAs using a Conversation Guide, prepared by UN Women.

- **Stay mindful of your own professional and personal life integration needs.** Discuss working hours with your manager to ensure necessary professional and personal life boundaries. Participate in psychosocial preparedness training and seek counselling services, if needed. Indicate working hours and time zone in your email signature while showing respect for the respondent's working pattern.



UN Women / Catianne Tijerina

# 2. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

**“Don’t call women ‘fresh meat’.  
Let’s always have a professional relationship.”**

According to interviewees, challenges remain with creating an enabling work environment that nurtures a culture of respect for the rights and dignity of the UN personnel, beneficiaries and communities that the UN assists. UN personnel are required to adhere to the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.<sup>51</sup> All UN entities and personnel should be guided by the UN core values and be equipped with the skills, behaviours and core competencies required for the successful delivery of the organization’s mandate, both throughout their work and beyond UN premises and operations.<sup>52</sup> These standards of conduct include guiding principles to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse<sup>vii</sup>, misconduct, abuse of power, discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, and uphold the reputation of the organization.

**“When leadership deals with cases well, there is support throughout the system.”**

HEAD OF MISSION

**“Inclusive workplace – it is about attitudes, behaviours, resistance, and subtle ambiance. Body language and resistance from men is very visible. It is there and makes women uncomfortable.”**

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL

All United Nations personnel and partners are obliged to uphold the highest standards of conduct, particularly in light of the perceived and actual imbalance of power between them and those the UN serves. This requires compliance with the Secretary-General’s bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)<sup>53</sup> which is applicable to all United Nations personnel, including in agencies, funds and programmes.

All personnel, in particular leadership, have the responsibility to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a workplace culture of respect and to implement zero-tolerance and victim-/survivor-centred approaches.

vii According to the Secretary-General’s bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13, sexual exploitation constitutes any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse is defined as the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual activity with children – those under 18 – is prohibited regardless of the local age of majority or consent and mistaken belief relating to the child’s age. Exchange of money, employment and other goods, including exchange of assistance due to beneficiaries for sex is prohibited. Sexual relationships between United Nations personnel and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the United Nations.



UN Women / Marie Sophie Pettersson

A zero-tolerance approach is the certainty that the organization will always respond to reports of misconduct, will always support those who report, sanction perpetrators and will proactively ensure that equality and non-discrimination inform its work. There should be consequences for inappropriate behaviour using the principle of proportionality. The victim should never be in a worse position as a result of reporting sexual harassment or any other form of misconduct. A victim-/survivor-centred approach requires that all processes are conducted with care, with the utmost level of confidentiality and that affected individuals are ensured protection from retaliation.<sup>54</sup>

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has declared that “we will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. We will not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag. Every victim deserves justice and our full support”<sup>55</sup> and promised to put the UN “house in order”. In September 2017, a Victims’ Rights Advocate was appointed to oversee the implementation of this policy across the United Nations system. The Office of the Victims’ Rights Advocate (OVRA) underlines “the principles and rights underpinning a victim-centred approach, such as safety, dignity and respect, care and treatment, privacy and confidentiality.”<sup>56</sup>



**“UN Volunteers are leaving because of the macho culture”**

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

**“I don’t want compliments with what I wear. I don’t want personal remarks, because it is the first rung of the ladder – you know, the harassment ladder. It’s the first step. Then they want to have coffee and then they want to have dinner.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

In 2017, the UN Secretary-General initiated the creation of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System, which, among other actions produced the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, sexual harassment as: “the manifestation of a culture of discrimination and privilege based on unequal gender relations and other power dynamics.”<sup>57</sup> It is important to identify, acknowledge and address locally specific power dynamics and the consequent challenges, deriving not only from UN structure, hierarchy and contract modalities, but also from the local or occupational norms, culture and value systems. Zero-tolerance should be strictly applied to sexual harassment. As one leader said, “we should address the issue of a crime [sexual harassment] through administrative means. We deal with a driver who steals fuel in the same way as we deal with a man who conducts sexual harassment. The difference is that the driver would get fired right away.”



MINUSMA / Marco Dormino





UNMISS / Isaac Billy

**“You do not mention [LGBTIQ+] issues here ... the culture. I think if you are in such an environment, you don’t come out openly, for fear of your own life.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

**“Policies are improving ... but we are still afraid to speak out.”**

NATIONAL OFFICER

Standards of conduct have to be adhered to in day-to-day operations. Some interviewees revealed persistent resistance from colleagues to pursue UN values of equality and non-discrimination, regardless of sex/gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, mental health conditions and disabilities. Failure to adhere to standards of conduct manifests in forms of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia and inadequate advocacy for and awareness of disability issues in some field locations. While policies, guidance and advocacy are being implemented, it is increasingly important to create a safe space for all personnel to speak out.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Strengthen the prevention of and accountability for any form of discrimination.** Ensure that investigation functions are timely and apply a victim-/survivor-centred approach, which requires that all processes are conducted with care, including psychosocial and medical support, with the utmost level of confidentiality and that affected individuals are ensured protection from retaliation.<sup>58</sup> Be as transparent as possible about cases while maintaining the confidentiality of victims. Mainstream the UN system's Model Code of Conduct<sup>59</sup> to any

in-person and online UN system event. Use gender-neutral language and avoid ableism<sup>viii</sup> in all communications. Ensure that all processes have accessible reporting mechanisms.

- **Provide clear guidance and policies for managers** to build an enabling environment and healthy workplace relations for all. Offer peer support for field-based managers through regular regional meetings, online or offline. Create a joint platform which allows colleagues to share good examples and practice inclusive management.



MONUSCO

viii Consult: UN Women, "Gender Term" (Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/genderterm>) and United Nations, General Assembly, 2019. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. A/HRC/43/41.

- **Conduct campaigns to raise awareness of UN values and standards of conduct.** Develop and disseminate clear and accessible resources to guide personnel in preventing, recognizing and reporting misconduct.
- **Conduct context-specific inclusion and diversity training for all personnel.** Ensure specific training on addressing and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse as well as sexual harassment for all UN personnel, including contractors. Training should seek to transform culture and be specific to the organizational and cultural context, include collective ownership and bystander intervention, such as how to be an effective bystander in online environments.<sup>60</sup>
- **Appoint specific Focal Points** for Gender, Conduct and Discipline, LGBTIQ+ issues and Disability Inclusion, Racism and Ethnicity-based Discrimination, and Respectful Workplace Focal Points. Ensure that the terms of reference are clear, feasible and respected.
- **Improve accessibility and inclusion in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.**<sup>61</sup> It is important to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities, including persons with sensory, physical, intellectual, psychosocial and multiple disabilities, including both personnel and visitors with disabilities.
- **Make best use of the Gender Focal Point Network** in raising awareness and through communication efforts. Involve Gender Focal Points systematically in all relevant activities and engagements.

### **Good examples:**

- **The UN Secretariat** revised its bulletin on Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority (ST/SGB/2019/8)<sup>62</sup> to align with the UN System Model Policy on Sexual

Harassment. The revision included explicit reference to the inclusion of non-staff personnel, recognition of the range of impact from a single act of misconduct and a focus on prevention and early intervention, as well as the introduction of Clear Check, which is a centralized job candidate screening application. It captures information on sexual harassment offenders and alleged offenders that is provided by the entities of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

- **The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UNHCR and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** developed the Speak Up! Phone app linked to the UN hotline on sexual harassment. Also, **the UN Secretariat** has established a global 24/7 “Speak Up” helpline for personnel to speak confidentially with trained individuals.
- **OHCHR** created a first-responder network, called “Dignity Contacts”, as a means to expand the ways in which staff can seek confidential advice if they have concerns or questions about behaviour and treatment within the office, or are considering lodging a report regarding prohibited conduct. The “Dignity Contacts” network records notifications of concerns received and that anonymous data, along with data on complaints received by other means, are analysed with results published to increase accountability and build confidence among staff that action on individual cases is being taken.
- Reflective Leadership Dialogue at **UNHCR** is a space for self-reflection by managers on their behaviours and attitudes in order to strengthen their role as catalysts of safe, open, inclusive, respectful, equitable and accountable work environments.



- o **The Integrated Training Service (ITS) of the Department of Peace Operations** regularly provides guidance to Integrated Mission Training Centres (IMTCs) on the planning and delivery of various training activities for field personnel, including courses on standards of conduct. Participants indicated that they applied the knowledge by avoiding any situation that may have a negative impact on the mission, that the sessions raised awareness on organizational standards, and helped to reinforce core peacekeeping principles in the interaction with the local community.
- o **The UN Secretariat** has launched the United to Respect toolkit<sup>63</sup> and workshop dialogue sessions to support the implementation of the Secretariat's policy on addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority.
- o **The UN Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services**<sup>64</sup> has conducted Civility Cafés and **the Office of the Ombudsman for UN Funds and Programmes** hosts regular webinars, both of which discuss civility and respect at work, how to have challenging conversations and intercultural interactions to help personnel hone their conflict-management skills and behaviour.
- o **The Arusha (Tanzania) branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT)** has appointed a Focal Point for LGBTIQ+ personnel to raise awareness and initiate discussions.
- o **The International Organization for Migration (IOM)** has appointed a Global LGBTIQ+ Focal Point since 2015 and has additional LGBTIQ+ Focal Points at the country level.
- o **The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)** has issued the Policy and Plan of Action for Disability Inclusion (2020–2021) to integrate disability inclusion

throughout the Department's work. Progress towards implementing the Action Plan will be monitored regularly.<sup>65</sup>

- o **The ILO** includes accessibility among its compliance criteria when leasing facilities in field locations.
- o **The Office of Supply Chain Management (OSCM)** at the United Nations Department of Operational Support launched accessibility features on the UN procurement website. The Procurement Manual update places accessibility considerations at the forefront of the requirements' definition to avoid creating new barriers for persons with disabilities.<sup>66</sup>

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Adhere to, promote and implement Standards of Conduct.** Implement relevant policies, such as those addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, and the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment. Implement a



UNAMID / Mohamad Almahady

victim-/survivor-centred approach if informed of possible misconduct. Listen and inform affected individuals of the avenues for advice and assistance in a timely, sensitive and impartial manner and clarify issues of privacy and confidentiality. Report prohibited conduct and cooperate with investigations, audits and reviews.

- **Lead by example.** Do not tolerate sexist and derogatory jokes. Let others know that non-inclusive and sexist language is not accepted. Use inclusive and respectful language in your conversations.
- **Practice inclusive leadership by encouraging the equal participation of all.** Make sure to include all personnel for team engagements, such as team retreats, by ensuring accessibility of spaces and events. Initiate discussions on unconscious bias and inclusion in the workplace, preferably with the presence of a Gender/LGBTIQ+/Disability/Conduct and Discipline Focal Point.
- **Use the Guide for Managers: Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace<sup>67</sup>** produced by CEB Task Force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Adhere to the UN Standards of Conduct.** Familiarize yourself with relevant policies, such as those addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, those based on the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, and research reports such as UN Women's What will it take? Promoting cultural change to end sexual harassment.<sup>68</sup>
- **Establish what collective ownership looks like in the specific context and support its practice,** such as if someone engages in

unacceptable behaviour online. Some reactions include publicly or privately calling out negative behaviour, checking in on the affected individual, redirecting the conversation or asking someone else to intervene.

- **Practice a victim-/survivor-centred approach** if approached by an affected individual. Listen and inform affected individuals of the avenues for advice and assistance in a timely, sensitive and impartial manner and clarify issues of privacy and confidentiality. Report possible prohibited conduct and cooperate with investigations, audits and reviews.<sup>69</sup> Consult and seek advice from the UN Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, Gender/LGBTIQ+/Disability/Conduct and Discipline Focal Points, as well as other stakeholders, such as UN-GLOBE, as necessary.
- **Become an “ally”.** Use your voice to educate others, call out unacceptable behaviour and act as an active bystander.

### A good example:

- The informal, staff-led Women and Change Network within **UNHCR** collected stories of female personnel, of harassment and gender-based discrimination. Examples were presented to senior managers for discussion and a set of commitments were agreed upon for action and change.

# 3. SECURITY AND SAFETY

**“You want to know that when you work here, you are going to be looked after.”**



UN Photo/Logan Abass

Conditions of security and safety differ widely by location and have far-reaching implications for the achievement of gender parity and the creation of an enabling environment. Those consulted for these Guidelines indicated that duty stations with high security risks or that are perceived to be unsafe may experience recruitment and retention challenges, especially among women. Multiple colleagues identified that “the feeling of safety” affects well-being and performance.

**“Security and safety are cross-cutting subjects in all UN domains.”**

SECURITY AND SAFETY EXPERT

Responses to gender-based security incidents are particularly important. For example, one interviewee recalled that a poorly managed gender-based security incident led to many personnel leaving a duty station and the remaining personnel “still have trust issues”. Conversely, in another duty station, the response to a gender-based security incident was praised: “the positive impact of [the first responders’ and leadership’s] behaviour is commendable ... you want to know that when you work here, you are going to be looked after.”

**“Security enables or doesn’t enable.”**

SECURITY AND SAFETY EXPERT

Gender-based security and safety risks must be acknowledged and mitigated in all locations.<sup>70</sup> For example, women are more at risk of sexual violence, including sexual harassment and rape, and domestic abuse.<sup>71</sup> Globally, it is estimated that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence, with some national studies finding that 70 per cent of women have been victims or survivors of violence.<sup>72</sup> LGBTIQ+ colleagues or colleagues with LGBTIQ+ dependents, may face specific security risks stemming from local laws or customs.<sup>73</sup> For example, in over 70 countries, same-sex consensual activity is criminalized, and in some countries it is even punishable by death.

Intersectionality is particularly important in relation to gender-based security and safety risks – including race, ethnicity and disability. For example,

various stakeholders expressed that persons with disabilities, especially women, can face security and safety risks that are exacerbated by limited accessibility of workplaces, lack of specific disability-awareness training for security and safety personnel and the lack of legal protections for persons with disabilities.

Colleagues identified the importance of the culture and responses of security and safety personnel in providing and maintaining an enabling environment. While stakeholders praised the progress made to transform the traditionally male-dominated United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS), some noted that further progress is still needed. Some interviewees identified that there are attitudes of an “old boys’ club” that “only validates masculinity” among some, which is incompatible with UN values.

As the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women indicates, organizational culture “should explicitly advance the system-wide goals of gender equality and women’s empowerment”.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, as one Head of Mission commented on the importance of a gender-responsive approach to security and safety: “the women’s protection policy we deliver to the outside world, we should be practicing in our [UN] institutions.”

Notably, some interviewees recommended improving the focus on safety throughout the UN system with improved funding, accountability and integration of safety – including accessibility and fire, air travel and road safety – with some suggesting a better integration and accountability of security, safety and occupational health. For example, one interviewee commented, “compartmentalization of Occupational Health, Security, Safety and Disaster Preparedness has a

negative impact on funding, planning, recruitment, operations and learning.”

As outlined in the UNSMS Framework of Accountability, the UN has specific duties as an employer for the security and safety of personnel.<sup>75</sup> The UN has existing system-wide gender-responsive security and safety policies. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Security and Safety is mandated to develop UNSMS policies that are applicable system-wide and endorsed at the highest level of the UN.<sup>76</sup> UN Member States have urged the Secretary-General and UN system to implement gender inclusion in security management, including through General Assembly resolution A/RES/73/137.<sup>77</sup> As expressed in the 2019 Gender Inclusion in Security Management Policy, “By addressing gender inclusion in security management, the UNSMS is upholding, promoting and protecting human rights and supporting Member States, communities and individuals to meet their obligations”.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the strategic, high-level commitment to gender-responsive policies, many colleagues expressed the view that challenges remain in their implementation. The following recommendations, based on engagements with personnel, including security experts from across the UN system, are designed to support the implementation of these gender-responsive policies and offer added value for creating an enabling environment.<sup>ix</sup> While entity leadership and security and safety personnel are responsible for implementing security and safety planning and responses, it is incumbent on all personnel to practice UN values to create a safe, accessible and secure working environment for all.

ix As indicated in the introduction, while physical infrastructure is an important concern, it is not the focus of these Guidelines. Some interviewees underlined the importance of the safety and location of accommodations as well as private ablutions and lighting. For improvement of gender-responsive physical infrastructure, please review the Elsie Initiative for Field Missions’ Facilities and Infrastructure.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Ensure compliance with existing UNSMS gender-responsive security and safety policies** to mainstream gender in Security Risk Management (SRM) processes. Compliance with the Gender Inclusion in Security Management Policy supports the implementation of all UNSMS requirements.<sup>79</sup> Gender considerations, including those affecting LGBTIQ+ personnel, should be mainstreamed in all SRM processes.
- **An important requirement is for each entity to complete and disseminate the Aide Memoire for Immediate Response to Gender-based Security Incidents**, which includes context-specific information on support structures, safe locations, referral pathways, local gender-related customs and laws, and medical support for affected personnel.<sup>80</sup> As part of the Aide Memoire, ensure appropriate responses and resources such as referral pathways for incidents of domestic abuse involving UN personnel.
- **Mainstream disability-responsive measures** in SRM and security and safety premises plans, ensuring compliance with UNSMS policy and guidance.<sup>81</sup> Ensuring inclusion and accessibility for both personnel and visitors may involve measures relating to communications systems, alarms and evacuation procedures.
- **Update crisis-management measures to ensure a gender responsive security and safety approach to COVID-19 and other security and safety crisis situations.** Make sure that all aspects of crisis-management pillars are aligned to manage their respective responsibilities, including those that are gender- and disability-based.<sup>82</sup>
- **Allocate sufficient resources for gender and disability inclusion in security risk management.** Consider creating a reasonable accommodation fund and ensure that regular trainings are adequately resourced.<sup>83</sup>
- **Confirm resource allocation for the provision of appropriate security and safety equipment** for UN personnel, such as radios and phones. Ensure that personal protective equipment such as ballistic vests, are appropriately-fitting for people of different genders.
- **Consult local experts during policy implementation.**<sup>84</sup> UNSMS colleagues should engage with gender and disability focal points from UN entities in the country office or region, the host country and other local and international organizations as well as civil society representatives.<sup>85</sup> Consider developing a duty-station-specific inter-agency working group on gender-responsive security and safety and a database of service-providers, such as sign language interpreters and captioners.
- **Inform and engage all personnel about gender responsive security and safety threats, risks and measures.** Ensure the mainstreaming of gender and diversity considerations in security induction briefings, and all other security and safety communications and education. Information should be provided in accessible and alternative formats, be culturally specific and not rely on stereotypes.





UN Women / Ryan Brown

- **Provide regular, accessible and safe spaces for personnel to discuss security and safety concerns as well as provide feedback and propose improvements.** The UNSMS Gender Inclusion in Security Management Policy gives examples of engaging personnel, such as creating specialized networks and sessions, including by gender, as well as organizing events with all personnel.<sup>86</sup>
  - **Conduct gender responsive training for all personnel,** including UNSMS personnel, UN drivers, UN-contracted security guards, and other contractors who provide accommodation or transport. In addition, interviewees recommended specific training for those involved in training UN personnel.
  - **Implement specific security and safety training courses adapted to local needs,** such as Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments (SSAFE), Women's Security Awareness Training (WSAT), and Women's Security Awareness Training – Training of Trainers (WSAT ToT). Make sure that trainings incorporating LGBTIQ+ concerns are coordinated with a reviewing body such as UN-GLOBE.
  - **Include family members in security and other pre-deployment trainings** for personnel, especially in case of hardship family duty stations, as part of the 'duty of care' obligation.<sup>87</sup>
  - **Provide and disseminate inclusive and accessible travel information and modalities.**<sup>88</sup> Ensure that staff who are required to travel receive a UN Laissez Passer and are not required to travel on their national passport. In addition, consider providing safe, accessible transportation for commuting and for travelling to work assignments, including for interns.
- Good examples:**
- **UN Women in Asia and the Pacific** produced regional guides on addressing domestic violence/intimate partner violence among UN personnel, alongside UN agencies under the umbrella of the UN Secretary-General's UNITE campaign to end violence against



MINUSMA / Marco Dormino

women. A Resource Book on Intimate Partner Violence for United Nations Staff in Asia<sup>89</sup> was launched in 2019. Numerous UNCTs in the region are utilizing this Resource Book, adapting it to specific country contexts with local services and information, and training UN personnel widely across agencies.

- **The United Nations country team (UNCT) in Jordan** encourages inter-agency consultation and engagement with all personnel when completing and communicating the Gender Considerations Aide Memoire for Gender-based Security Incidents.
- **The UNDSS** in Haiti has mainstreamed gender-responsive security in induction briefings and documentation provided to UN personnel.
- **UN Women** developed Gender-Specific Security Awareness Training (GSSAT), a course that is open to all UN personnel of all

genders to build awareness, solidarity and security.<sup>90</sup>

- **UNHCR** developed Gender Inclusion in Security Risk Management training. This five-day training is offered to locally recruited security personnel to ensure knowledge and awareness of gender-based threats, provide guidance and practical applications of the inclusion of gender considerations in all aspects of security risk management processes, including incident management response. Participants have reported that they have benefited from the training, changed their attitudes and significantly increased their knowledge on gender and LGBTIQ+ issues.
- To increase security in the field, transportation for women national personnel is offered by **UNMAS** in Afghanistan and **the UNCT in Somalia**.
- In a similar vein, the **UNCT in Papua New Guinea** organized a daily shuttle for both national and international colleagues between their workplace and residence.
- **The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)** organizes a grocery market twice a week inside its camps to minimize movement outside, where the volatile security situation is particularly intimidating for women. This has minimized security risks by reducing visits to the open markets.

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Ask your team members about their specific security and safety concerns**, for example when commuting and travelling for work. Conduct these conversations in an open and sensitive manner, with no mandatory requirements for colleagues to share their specific situations. Provide feedback of

personnel concerns to the head of office who attends the Security Management Team (SMT) to ensure that security risks are managed.

- **Confirm that resource allocation and appropriate security and safety equipment are provided** to UN personnel, such as radios and phones.
- **Lead by example** by actively participating in security and safety education and training. Encourage women on your team to take Women's Security Awareness Training (WSAT) and all personnel to complete the Gender Specific Security Awareness Training (GSSAT).
- **Encourage the use of Flexible Working Arrangements** so that team members can travel at preferred times of day, if possible.
- **Allow personnel to travel for work assignments in groups, and with their preferred support persons, if required and if so desired**, especially those who may face specific risks while travelling and working in the local context.
- **In vacancy announcements, explain how the security and safety of personnel are addressed in the duty station.** Highlight how reasonable accommodations are addressed, including from a gender and disability perspective, to attract more diverse personnel and include security and safety competencies to communicate that all personnel have a responsibility to create a gender-responsive and secure work environment.
- **Practice a victim-/survivor-centred approach to security incidents** that prioritizes the affected person's rights, needs and preferences.<sup>91</sup> Listen and inform affected individuals of the avenues for advice in a timely, sensitive and impartial manner and clarify issues of privacy and confidentiality.<sup>92</sup>

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Follow all security and safety policies, guidelines and procedures.** Learn about the local security threats and understand measures to reduce risk. Complete mandatory training at your duty station, including training that is gender- and disability-specific. Join or create specialized networks, such as by gender, to discuss security risks and concerns.
- **Provide feedback** to your manager or head of office about security and safety threats that you face, any accessibility requirements that colleagues should be aware of during a situation of evacuation, as well as the quality and language of advice given, measures implemented and training provided.
- **Request Flexible Working Arrangements**, if needed, also to maximize your security and safety. Consider initiating a commuting club so colleagues who would feel safer travelling in groups have a way to do so and with their preferred support persons, if required.



# 4. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**“A collective investment in health is needed.”**

A healthy workforce is key for the United Nations to deliver its mandate. As the Secretary-General states in his System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity: “By focusing on what drives organizational culture, the UN can develop an inclusive work environment free of discrimination in any form, with the cumulative impact being a happier, healthier, more effective and efficient workforce.”<sup>93</sup>

Those consulted for the Guidelines identified availability, accessibility, effectiveness and awareness as the key components to create an enabling environment, by strengthening occupational safety, health and well-being for all personnel. One interviewee also noted that “more access to health facilities would help to recruit more women”. Also, according to UNHCR, adequate health services and facilities are one of the primary criteria for personnel when considering field assignments.<sup>94</sup> Providing gender-responsive Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as well as well-being support and services can foster a diverse pool of applicants, improve the retention of women and people from diverse backgrounds, and enhance the well-being of all personnel.

**“No gynecologist?! If you want 50 per cent women, you have to consider that.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

As indicated in the consultations for these Guidelines, field environments may create specific challenges that vary between different duty stations and are shaped by the availability and effectiveness of services and their capacity – such as local and on-site clinics, OSH risk management measures, private and public health services and psychosocial support. A wide range of factors need to be addressed to ensure the organization practices its values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity.<sup>95</sup>

**“Probably a broken arm can be handled, but anything more severe is going to cause issues.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT

Interviewees indicated that in many cases, outside of large integrated mission settings, OSH, medical and well-being services are not available or provided by the organization and therefore personnel rely on local frameworks and services. Those consulted for the Guidelines indicate that there can be a substantial gap in local services to ensure effective, well-resourced, and sufficient OSH, medical and psychosocial care for UN personnel. In particular, women and LGBTIQ+ people reported facing discrimination and challenging experiences when seeking support. Gender-responsive services include considering the distance to health facilities,



UN Women / Allison Joyce

availability, affordability, acceptability and quality of treatment, equal treatment of female and LGBTIQ+ colleagues, and provision of services as well as accessibility of facilities for personnel with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

**“Being in this place can be difficult. In crisis, we need someone to talk to.”**

HEAD OF MISSION

Several interviewees indicated the importance of fostering well-being and psychosocial care due to the specific nature of the field environment and the mandates of UN organizations. This was also indicated by the Secretary-General in the UN System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy.<sup>96</sup> One interviewee argued: “strengthening medical services and support increases personnel’s feeling of safety – this is a huge aspect of creating an enabling environment”. Another interviewee said that “we are in such a stressful situation, even if you are in a family duty station and mobile. Some of us live in small, isolated areas with confined

environments where you do not get to meet new people”. Availability, access, peer support and awareness regarding psychosocial support for personnel is critical for the UN to fulfil its duty of care to “provide a healthy, safe and respectful working environment that promotes greater accountability, efficiency and commitment of its workforce”, as pointed out by the High-Level Committee on Management’s Cross-functional Task Force on Duty of Care.<sup>97</sup>

Crisis conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic have clear implications for health and well-being. Interviewees across the UN stressed the importance of protecting personnel in such situations while ensuring business continuity and enabling programmatic implementation.<sup>98</sup> Further, interviewees indicated that the pandemic has increased awareness of the support required for mental health and psychosocial needs and illuminated the critical importance of ensuring sufficient crisis management, occupational health and safety planning and the availability of health services for UN personnel.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Provide in-person or remote access to women's health professionals and female doctors and nurses for all personnel, including at least one female gynecologist**, especially if adequate public facilities are not available. Take into consideration the cultural context, as some colleagues may be unable to be treated by male health practitioners. Provide translation services that guarantee confidentiality.
- **Consult with relevant stakeholders to gather adequate, locally specific information and to provide medical support, as recommended by the General Assembly (A/RES/73/137)**,<sup>99</sup> which noted the importance of further collaboration between the UN, its humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian organizations. Ensure that health challenges are addressed at UNCT. Engage with personnel, particularly women, LGBTIQ+ people and persons with disabilities and their representatives, to adequately respond to their health challenges. Provide accessible information, for instance as part of personnel's welcome packages, on medical evacuation practices, local laws and customs regarding health, and specific information for women, LGBTIQ+ personnel and persons with disabilities, including on sexual and reproductive health services.
- **Provide comprehensive HIV services and eliminate stigma and discrimination.**<sup>100</sup> Comprehensive HIV services include counselling, testing, treatment and care.<sup>101</sup> Maintain open, honest and regular communication about HIV to build a stigma-free work environment.
- **Comply with Occupational Safety and Health requirements and recommendations and integrate them into organizational and Enterprise Risk Management processes.**<sup>102</sup> Integrate the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Managements' Cross-functional Task Force on Duty of Care into the accountability framework for Representatives or Heads of Offices. This includes establishing an occupational safety and health oversight body or focal point as well as collecting information about specific risks and incorporating OSH risk management.<sup>103</sup>
- **Provide access to first aid kits and training** in the office and regions to equip everyone with first response skills, the tools available in the missions and offices, and instructions about who to approach when asking for help.
- **Consider facilitating access for fertility treatments**, in case this is not made possible by any insurance options.
- **When communicating on health and well-being, use gender-neutral and gender-responsive terminology as well as inclusive language regarding patients or treatment.** For instance, do not assume that the patient identifies as male or female or uses male or female pronouns. Use gender neutral terms such as 'partner' if inquiring of the patient's family status.<sup>104</sup>
- **Implement training sessions to equip managers and all personnel with skills to develop or improve coping mechanisms and support the**





MONUSCO / Michael Aliz

- well-being** of all personnel and dependents, as recommended in the UN System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy.<sup>105</sup>
  - **Provide gender-responsive and accessible psychosocial and support services.** Make counselling accessible either in person, over the phone or through video calls. Adhere to the training carried out by the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit (CISMU)<sup>106</sup> to be trauma-informed, including to support survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence, LGBTIQ+ members, persons with disabilities and those belonging to racial and ethnic groups. Consider hiring both international and national counsellors to respond to diverse cultural contexts and language needs.
    - **Set up cross-cutting responses to personnel's health needs and provide well-being and welfare activities.** Foster close collaboration among managers on health-related matters, and consult Gender, Disability and LGBTIQ+ Focal Points to ensure communication is accessible and
  - inclusive. Consider organizational support for telemedicine services.
  - **Consider implementing an internal communications campaign to tackle stigma around health conditions.** As one interviewee stated: "Mental health and all disability issues need to be demystified". Implement approaches to reduce stigma and promote mental health awareness in line with the UN System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.<sup>107</sup>
- ✓ **Good examples:**
- **The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)** have a gynecologist available on site.
    - **The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** in Islamabad (Pakistan) ensures accessibility for persons

- with disabilities in all their health facilities, including the on-site clinic, the doctor's office and the counsellor's office, via UNDS.
- **UNSO** provides access to its medical facility to all personnel, regardless of contract type, and at no further cost through its insurance policy. A special flight to Nairobi (Kenya) is offered when the on-site clinic has assessed that a staff member requires special medical treatment.
  - **UN Women's West and Central Africa Regional Office** in Nairobi (Kenya) encourages personnel to take care of health conditions also when travelling on missions. Duty of care arrangements and information packages are shared with personnel and cover all aspects of mental and physical health including stress counsellor contacts and security clearance when on business or personal trips.
  - **The ILO's Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, and their Special Representatives to the AU and the ECA**, incorporated a specific focus on women and HIV in their health and well-being efforts through awareness-raising on access to treatment.
  - **UNSO** ensures the availability of sanitary items, such as sanitary towels, tampons and panty liners.
  - **The World Bank Group** provides financial assistance to staff who are planning to have a child either through legal adoption or through reproductive technologies. The Child Planning Benefit can be used by staff members to cover part of the costs of services, such as surrogacy, adoption, artificial insemination, and the purchase and storage of genetic material.
  - **The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)** and **IOM Micronesia** have peer counsellor training available to all personnel to strengthen peer support skills regarding mental health.
  - **UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** Bangkok (Thailand), the **UNSO** and **UNDS** in Islamabad (Pakistan ) hired international and national counsellors to ensure everyone has access to counselling, providing choices in language of preference and responding to cultural sensitivities.
  - **The IOM** introduced a new multilingual and global team of counsellors. The team provides tele-counselling support, webinars and facilitation of well-being support networks in 11 languages, ensuring access and availability of psychosocial services for all personnel.
  - **UNSO** encourages personnel to give online feedback on the mission's medical services. This has helped to expand health services and respond to individual needs.
  - **UNFPA** has added telehealth options to their medical insurance coverage. In addition, free access to remote professional short-term counselling, resources and referrals are covered.
  - **UN House in Abuja (Nigeria)** provides access to gym facilities for all personnel to promote physical health and well-being.
  - **UNSO** organized the campaign 'Live one day in our shoes' in collaboration with its Disability Office and Disability Committee to share the experiences of persons with disabilities.





UN Women / Susan Markisz



UNMIL / Albert Gonzalez Farran





UN / MINUSCA - Leonel GROTHE

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Create awareness on the importance of occupational safety, health and well-being.** Lead by example and show the importance of well-being. Organize team meetings with your personnel to build capacities on stress management and invite a mental health professional to discuss health and well-being, if needed. Inclusive communication style can empower your personnel to take care of their well-being or, as one Head of Mission stated, “compassionate leadership is leading by example”.
- **Create awareness of the available health and psychosocial support services.** Provide regular information to personnel to make sure everyone is informed and has access to treatment and preventive health care.<sup>108</sup>
- **Implement a culture of zero-tolerance for discrimination against personnel with health conditions.**<sup>109</sup> According to the 2017 Secretariat Staff Well-Being Survey Data Report<sup>110</sup>, between 18 and 23 per cent of United Nations staff screened positive for a generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or hazardous drinking. Speak up if you notice discrimination or see a colleague who may need support and consult with HR personnel, if appropriate.
- **Foster an office culture and environment that encourages attending to one’s health needs,** discussing the importance of taking leave, regular breaks and maintaining professional and personal life integration. Refer personnel to the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit (CISMU) for stress management and resilience-building.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Foster well-being by creating and participating in support networks.** Be aware of the available health and psychosocial services available. Refer to the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit or internal counselling services for stress management, resilience-building and stress management. Be informed about where to turn to in case of a medical emergency or critical incident and be prepared to share this information with colleagues.
- **Provide feedback when using health and well-being provisions.** Provide feedback to your medical team, manager or organizational leadership on the available health care and related services, and advocate for addressing potential gaps.
- **Initiate and participate in well-being and welfare activities.** Consider initiating voluntary activities with colleagues that reflect the diversity of all personnel, such as excursions, book clubs, cooking or group exercise to reduce stress and better connect with each other. Remember your own health and well-being needs and practice self-care, such as by getting proper rest and nutrition, taking time off and seeking and accepting the support of others.



UN Photo/Harandane Dicko



# 5. RECRUITMENT, TALENT MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

**“New positions come, but every time you see a new man, a new man...”**

Recruitment is the gateway into the United Nations. Gender-sensitive recruitment and talent management maximize the organization’s ability to acquire and retain the best workforce, reflecting the organization’s principles of diversity and equality. As one senior leader explained: “we need to improve perception and reputation in the field... if we have more women, we could build a reputation and perception that would attract them”.

**“You, as a leader, should be involved. You need to make your point clear that you want women candidates.”**

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

Interviewees identified several critical factors in efforts to increase the number of women personnel in the field. Strong leadership commitment, consistent implementation of temporary special measures (ST/AI/2020/5)<sup>111</sup>, tackling unconscious bias during the recruitment process and in the workplace in general, ensuring physical accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities as well as gender-sensitive and inclusive communication strategies are all indispensable in the effort to tap into a diverse talent pool and hire more women to the field. Furthermore, as senior leaders interviewed for these Guidelines underlined, commitment to gender equality needs to be tested as a competence from all applicants.

**“Commitment to these [gender equality] issues is a competency. This competency needs to be measured beyond words.”**

RESIDENT COORDINATOR

**“Career development issues are at the bottom of priorities; however, talent management would increase motivation and commitment of all personnel.”**

GENDER FOCAL POINT







United Nations Peacekeeping

A comprehensive talent-management strategy is critical to develop and retain existing talent in the UN system. Training opportunities, exposure to new assignments and mentoring programmes are important components of an enabling environment that allows personnel to thrive at the UN. Such programmes are also in high demand by national personnel. As one interviewee indicated: “we, National Officers, also feel stuck. [We] hope the organization gives us innovation programmes to grow in our career and give us more opportunities.” Similar sentiments were shared by other female National Officers. It is also important to recognize and support personnel on other contract types, such as United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), interns and consultants.

One senior leader suggested that “if you have a facilitated mobility, such as a rotation programme, you get more women. If you want to attract, empower and retain the best qualified talent, we should not talk about only soft skills development: we need a hard-core change. You have to get the structure right”. Offering more opportunities for all women, including women with and without children, single mothers and women with disabilities, to grow professionally and advance their careers is essential to attract and retain them in the field. The level of engagement and satisfaction of personnel should be regularly analysed, such as through organization-wide personnel surveys and exit surveys.



UN / Pasqual Gorriz

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Use inclusive vacancy announcements.**<sup>112</sup> Use gender-neutral language and avoid ableism.<sup>113</sup> Emphasize also potential, not only experience. Include specific value statements to demonstrate the organization's values of diversity and inclusion. Seek support from HR practitioners on how to calculate years of experience, if needed.
- **Ensure accessibility of job application websites and offer reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities.** Consider having focal points in local universities and other relevant educational institutions.
- **Improve support for applicants from diverse backgrounds and sectors.** Organize accessible briefings on how to apply, especially on how to create application forms such as a Personal History Profile (e.g. PHPs or P11) in relation to qualifications, experience and requirements.<sup>114</sup> Initiate a single UN job platform to allow applicants to find all UN jobs in one place and apply using one personal information form.

- **Strengthen targeted, regular outreach to potential women candidates.**
- **Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are mainstreamed in employer branding and communications strategies.**<sup>115</sup> Highlight success stories and the positive and rewarding experiences of existing personnel.
- **Measure commitment to gender equality as a competence in each interview.** For instance, consider questions related to the candidate's real-life examples on how she/he has supported a young female colleague or mainstreamed gender perspective in the work.
- **Implement temporary special measures for achieving gender parity.** Apply special measures to selections and appointments at each level at which gender parity has not been reached.
- **Involve broader leadership representation in recruitment decisions at the country level.** Broader participation and joint efforts could accelerate reaching the gender parity targets.
- **Allocate sufficient human and financial resources for the inclusion of diverse groups.**<sup>116</sup> Note that human and financial resources need to be allocated to disability inclusion and need to be reported yearly into the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP).
- **Provide training on tackling unconscious bias for all personnel.** It will help personnel to recognize, minimize and manage biases, and will have impact in recruitment processes and decisions.
- **Enhance career development support.** Create office-specific or cross-agency career development programmes, including coaching, mentoring<sup>x</sup> and special assignments to develop skills.<sup>117</sup>
- **Conduct targeted outreach to women National Officers** and allow them to apply for International Professional positions. All UN candidates across the board should be considered internal candidates.
- **Encourage rotation initiatives.** Facilitate mobility between family and non-family duty stations.
- **Install tracking mechanisms and data collection** as well as reporting to better capture the representation of personnel from underrepresented groups or demographic segments.

### Good examples:

- **UNOPS** includes a value statement on professional and personal life integration in its vacancy announcements.<sup>xi</sup>
- **UNHCR** explains its commitment to Inclusion, Diversity and Gender equality on its application site.<sup>118</sup>
- **UNIDO** in Brazil considers unpaid work experience of the candidates as part of their experience. It removed the “previous UN experience is an asset” from vacancy announcements.
- **The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC)** designed and conducted an interactive career management series. To further enhance this series and support the career aspirations of female National Officers, an interactive Mock Panel Interview and individually tailored practice clinics have been offered. Since its inception, two

x UN Women has developed a Mentoring Guidance in Support of the Enabling Environment Guidelines.

Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/gender-parity/gender-parity-mentoring-as-part-of-creating-an-enabling-environment-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2254>

xi The vacancy announcement states: “UNOPS values its people and recognizes the importance of balancing professional and personal demands. We have a progressive policy on work-life harmonization and offer several flexible working options. This policy applies to UNOPS personnel on all contract types.”





MONUSCO / Myriam Asmani

female National Officers and one female National Assistant have successfully secured international positions.

- **The UN Secretary-General** launched the second Global Call for Heads and Deputy Heads of United Nations Peace Operations in 2019.<sup>119</sup> The aim of the outreach campaign was to increase and diversify the pool of candidates for senior leadership positions in UN peace operations.<sup>120</sup> Since 2017, 17 Global Call nominees (of which 59 per cent are women) have been appointed as Head or Deputy Head of Mission across peace operations, representing about 30 per cent of civilian leadership appointments in the field.
- **UNOPS** launched the Junior Talent Programme to find qualified professionals in hardship duty stations, in particular youth and underrepresented groups to build national capacity. So far, 17 women have been recruited in Guinea, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Afghanistan.

- **UNDP** and **the African Union Commission (AUC)** jointly implement the first African Young Women Leaders (AYWL) Fellowship Programme to develop the next generation of women leaders.<sup>121</sup> Launched in 2019, 22 fellows were assigned in 13 different UNDP duty stations.
- **UNOPS** in Haiti recruited women drivers for a local project by focusing on their partnership with a government agency that works with women drivers. Recruiters met with the potential candidates, trained and helped them to apply for the driver positions available.
- **The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO)** implemented Pre-deployment Trainings for Women Operational Prison Security Officers, with the participation of 33 women corrections officers in 2019. So far, 18 officers have secured deployment<sup>xii</sup> as government-provided corrections personnel, which has contributed to the increase in representation of women corrections officers in missions.<sup>122</sup>
- Several missions created video messages to showcase women who serve in peacekeeping and in special political missions. **UNMIK** created Women in Peacekeeping<sup>123</sup> and **UNVMC** made #TrabajaConNosotros #JoinUs.<sup>124</sup> **The Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations (DPPA-DPO)** showcased women Heads of Mission on the Meet UN Mission Leaders webpage.<sup>125</sup>
- **UNDP** and **the United Nations Volunteer programme (UNV)** created the Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities<sup>126</sup> to support inclusion and build a talent pipeline of young professionals with disabilities for jobs related to the

xii In the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.



UNHCR / Santiago Arcos

Sustainable Development Goals. So far, 16 young professionals with disabilities have been recruited at UNDP country, regional, and headquarter offices, and half of them are women.

- **OHCHR** launched an LGBTIQ+ Fellowship Programme<sup>127</sup> aimed at creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Furthermore, OHCHR ran a UN Diversity Internship Programme (2016-2019) to promote the recruitment of persons from underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities, members of ethno-linguistic and religious minorities, LGBTIQ+ people, and persons living with HIV to work with various UN agencies in Moldova.
- **DPPA-DPO** created a Leadership Partnering Initiative that offers all newly appointed

Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs) the opportunity to be paired with a currently serving or former SRSG/DSRSG to provide them with support during their assignment. Since its launch, the initiative has provided leadership partners to 29 SRSGs and DSRSGs, including 18 female SRSGs and DSRSGs.

- **UNICEF** launched the REACH programme in April 2020 to prepare high-performing national staff for an international career, with coaching sessions, mentoring, peer support and stretch assignments. Fifteen women and 23 men are part of the programme's pilot phase.



UN Women

- **The UN Secretariat's Office of Human Resources and UN Women** have developed Female National Officer Pool which is a database of female National Officers and their skills and expertise. The database will help the UN system to do dedicated outreach to female National Officers to recruit for international positions and therefore accelerate gender parity through improved talent acquisition.
- **UNHCR** stipulates in its Recruitment and Assignments Policy that the length of duty in 'High-Risk Duty Stations' is 18 months. To provide a meaningful break at the end of an assignment or mission in a High-Risk Duty Station and to prevent burn out, international staff members are granted up to 27 days of special leave with full pay at the end of the assignment.
- In 2019, **OHCHR** in Moldova led a survey to assess diversity among UN personnel, to understand the perceptions and attitudes towards underrepresented groups by UN personnel and to assess to which extent internal equality and diversity policies were being implemented. The data led to a report with recommendations on how to create a

more inclusive work environment and ensure a more diverse UN workforce.

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Incorporate gender indicators in the performance appraisal process**, including the Senior Managers Compact. Accountability for gender equality is best implemented when it targets senior leaders and all personnel, through the integration of clear objectives in each staff member's performance plan and review.<sup>128</sup>
- **Review parity targets both at the team and duty station level before making a recruitment decision.** Review and disaggregate data on promotions and the length of time until promotion. Add mandatory training of managers on gender, inclusion and diversity and unconscious bias, and use this knowledge during the selection process.
- **Implement temporary special measures for the achievement of gender parity, as necessary.** Temporary special measures<sup>129</sup> apply at all times when there is no parity, including at the time of establishment of a new entity, when the staffing of existing entities is expanded, during periods of downsizing, when a recruitment freeze is in effect or when an entity is reorganized.
- **Provide career development support.** Offer support by providing cross-training and job shadowing opportunities. Establish and leverage development opportunities, such as career conversations, mentoring and coaching programmes.





UN Photo / Marco Dormino.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Initiate a conversation and seek advice** from senior personnel beyond your immediate team to support career development. Be aware of required experience and competencies in more senior positions and seek out relevant skills development opportunities.
- **Take part in development opportunities**, such as career conversations, mentoring or coaching programmes. Liaise with your organization's HR and Gender Focal Point to discover talent management learning and development opportunities, such as free online courses offered by UN entities.
- **Apply for open positions.** Studies show that women do not apply for jobs unless they perceive themselves as fully qualified for all job requirements, while men apply even when they see themselves as meeting only 60 per cent of the requirements.<sup>130</sup>

# 6. LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

**“On paper, the plans are there; implementation is often the main challenge.”**

As one Resident Coordinator interviewed for these Guidelines expressed: “talking is not walking”. Therefore, this section provides concrete recommendations for implementing the Guidelines and creating accountability for organizations, leadership and all personnel to “walk the talk”.

Each UN entity, office and mission is different. Interviewees identified that “no one size fits all and no blanket policy is possible” and that it is important for any policy and practice to be “situationally and culturally aware”. Leaders are expected to play a key role in making good judgements in each context and to guide others.





One Head of Mission underlined the importance of compassionate leadership and leading by example: “you as a leader should be involved; you need to make your point clear that you are committed to gender parity and an enabling environment for all”.

## “It’s all about leadership.”

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

Leadership, including at each level of entity, mission and the UNCT, has a special responsibility to set the right tone and put UN values into action by being responsive to gender and diversity issues, verbalizing commitments and leading by example. As one senior leader put it: “UNCT should show to the host government that parity is possible to achieve”. Improving accountability is “the mechanics of how you make it [change] happen” as one interviewee expressed, which can be achieved through gender and diversity workplans and clear performance indicators, such as in the Senior Managers Compact. Coordinating to advance an enabling working environment jointly within UN country teams was also underlined as important by those who contributed to these Guidelines.

## “The most needed dialogue for an enabling environment is the conversation with leaders.”

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

Creating an enabling working environment requires cultural change whereby senior leaders engage in dialogue and conversations proactively and encourage their personnel to speak up. For example, one interviewee commented: “It’s not that [enabling environment] policies don’t exist; it is that there are so many power dynamics and personalities ... it is hard to ask for what you want if you are scared of someone ... just because a



UN Women / Ellie van Baaren



MINUSMA

D2 says his office is open, does not mean people will ask.” Another interviewee highlighted the importance of “building transformative leadership that goes beyond checklists”.





UNMISS/Amanda Voisard

**“As a head of mission, you represent everyone in the mission.”**

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

Many interviewees recommended discussions on gender roles and norms, and how gender parity and an enabling environment benefit all personnel, including men, and contribute to the effectiveness of the whole organization. Taboos and stigmas faced by women in the field need to be actively addressed, with strong involvement by leadership as also highlighted by a study from the International Peace Institute (2020).<sup>131</sup> Other success factors identified by the interviewees for

addressing possible resistance included active listening to personnel’s concerns and points of views with patience and respect, and senior-level personnel verbalizing their commitment to gender parity and creating an enabling environment.

**“Taking a gender-sensitive approach and creating an enabling environment helps [with] delivering the mandate.”**

SENIOR MISSION LEADER

A practical way to enhance implementation of the Enabling Environment Guidelines is to strengthen the role of Gender Focal Points.<sup>132</sup> As stipulated by the Secretary-General's bulletin on departmental focal points for women in the UN Secretariat and the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, each department, office, regional commission and mission is required to have at least one focal point.<sup>133</sup> Member States have similarly underscored the importance of "the active support of gender focal points and focal points for women" in creating an enabling environment (A/RES/74/128).<sup>134</sup> The head of entity's responsibility to achieve gender parity includes appointing and working with Gender Focal Points, who provide support in promoting a gender-sensitive and responsive work environment.

## “Implementation requires candid and frank communication.”

GENDER FOCAL POINT

Furthermore, clear and consistent communication, and space for personnel to engage, were identified as fundamental by interviewees. Communication on the progress made towards gender parity can take several different forms, and consistency and regularity of the messages is important. As one interviewee stated: "implementation requires candid and frank communication".

Many interviewees also advocated for the importance of "male advocates for change" to reiterate the importance of allying with men. Importantly, interviewees also indicated that creating an enabling environment is the responsibility of all personnel.

UNAMID





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- **Create specific gender and diversity plans with adequate accompanying resources** at the country and mission level, drawing on these Guidelines, including clear and robust accountability mechanisms, and indicators.
- **Incorporate gender and enabling environment considerations into performance indicators.** Make sure that the mission structures and decision-making processes, including reporting lines, allow for joint vision and unobstructed progress to be made.
- **Recognize and provide incentives and rewards** for managers who reach gender parity targets.
- **Have a standing item at town hall meetings on the creation of an enabling working environment,** in which senior leadership demonstrates the actions they have taken to advance gender parity and enabling environments, and personnel are given the opportunity to ask questions and present ideas.
- **Aim at efficient coordination in gender parity efforts and in creating enabling work environments at a UNCT level,** with the Resident Coordinator's Office – in cooperation with, and with substantive and technical advice from, UN Women. Resident Coordinators and Heads of Agencies should be further encouraged to champion gender parity and creation of enabling environments within the UN at country level, including in recruitments.
- **Review the status of women** in terms of numbers and organizational culture in the



UN Women/Bundit Chotsuwan

- UNCT. It is crucial to know the situation at the country level when recruiting.
- **Include gender-parity- and enabling-environment-related targets in the annual workplans of UNCTs and Resident Coordinators.** Monitor and track trends towards achieving gender parity and an enabling environment and organizational culture supportive of gender equality and the empowerment of women within the UN system at country level, in line with the UNCT SWAP Scorecard.
  - **Create, share and pool resources at UNCT level,** including lactation spaces and childcare facilities in UN common premises, wherever feasible.
  - **Include gender-specific actions and indicators in the Business Operations Strategy,** including specific gender parity indicators.
  - **Empower Operations Management Teams and the Human Resources Teams** to support and



facilitate progress on creating an enabling working environment. Encourage OMT to regularly discuss with the Gender Theme Group on advancing gender parity and an enabling environment.

- **Leverage the Gender Theme Groups** to advance the exchange of good practices and influence the achievement of gender parity and an enabling environment, in collaboration with OMT at country level.
- **Appoint at least one Gender Focal Point** in each office, department and mission.<sup>135</sup> Entities are encouraged to have multiple gender focal points of all genders for this role, and not only women. Provide clear Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points. Ensure sufficient time and financial resources for Focal Points to carry out their functions. Educate colleagues about the role and responsibilities of Gender Focal Points. Make sure that senior management regularly consults with Gender Focal Points.
- **Contact other organizations in the region or similar offices to create local Gender Focal Point networks** to support each other with good practices. For support, contact the Office of the Focal Point for Women, which leads and coordinates the network of Gender Focal Points in the UN system ([focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org](mailto:focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org)).

### **Good examples:**

- In **the UN Secretariat**, heads of entities, senior managers and hiring managers are held accountable for gender parity targets in performance reviews.
- **UNVMC** has established gender indicators for all staff as part of their annual appraisal to measure performance.
- **UNOPS** included a 'Gender Parity Objective' for all leaders and personnel at the P4 level and above for its 2020 performance appraisals, with the goal to achieve 60 per cent of all recruitments of respective office/group being filled with qualified women.
- **The UNCT in the Democratic Republic of Congo** has produced a Gender Parity Compact, a strategy that is designed to achieve full gender parity by 2026. The Compact has been signed by all heads of agencies of the country team.
- **The Resident Coordinator in Nigeria** has explicitly encouraged all agency representatives to pay special attention to recruitment and onboarding processes to ensure a fair, equal and respectful working environment.
- At the request of the Network of Women Leaders in **the UN Nairobi Duty Station, UN Women's Regional Office for East and Southern Africa** commissioned a study entitled Report on the status of women in UN Office in Nairobi to review the representation of women in the UNCT in terms of numbers and organizational culture.<sup>136</sup>
- **The UNCT in Tanzania** made its Business Operation Strategy gender-responsive by including specific gender parity and gender-responsive procurement indicators.<sup>137</sup> This increased awareness, capacity and commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

- **The DSRSG of UNAMI** created the mission-level Gender Parity Strategy and Implementation Plan. Enthused by this leadership commitment, the mission established a gender parity working group to promote, deliver and monitor progress in implementing the plan. The working group reports to the Senior Leadership Team on a quarterly basis on implementation and provides recommendations on further action.

- The leadership of **UNMIK** expanded the role of the Focal Point for Women to include participation in strategic meetings on gender and diversity. The Focal Point for Women also participates in all senior management meetings and reports directly to the SRSG.
- The leadership of **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)** expanded the role of the Gender Focal Point and Focal Point for Women to include respective participation in strategic meetings on gender equality and parity.
- At the **Department of Operational Support (DOS) of the UN Secretariat**, Gender Focal Points meet monthly to discuss implementation of the Gender Parity Strategy. The Under-Secretary-General acknowledges the important role of the Focal Points in supporting the gender parity targets in his all-staff internal communications and at town halls.
- **Make sure and evaluate that your team understands their responsibilities** in creating an enabling environment through various initiatives and everyday behaviours.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- **Practice UN values** by being sensitive and responsive to gender equality and diversity issues, verbalize commitments and lead by example, showing support and discussing the importance of gender parity and diversity with your colleagues.
- **Volunteer to become or encourage a colleague to become a Gender Focal Point.**
- **Include gender equality and enabling environment related targets into your performance framework.**
- **Reach out to your Gender Focal Points** to discuss how you can help promote their work and create an enabling environment.

## FOR MANAGERS

- **Include gender and enabling environment targets in your, and your team's, performance indicators annually.** Lead by example by being sensitive to gender and diversity issues, and taking action on professional and personal life integration, flexible working arrangements, standards of conduct, security and safety as well as health and well-being.
- **Collaborate with staff representatives** and provide space for team dialogue to create an enabling environment.
- **If your supervisees are Gender Focal Points, ensure that they have enough time and financial resources** to carry out their important role. Discuss regularly what they need to meet their responsibilities.

# LOOKING AHEAD

These Guidelines provide a range of ideas and examples on how to create enabling working environments in the field. Now it is up to you to turn words into action, to bring this document to life and put its recommendations into practice.

Regardless of your role – whether you are Head of Mission, Resident Coordinator, Manager, Gender Focal Point, Mid-career or Junior Professional, UN Volunteer or Intern – you can make a difference. Every action matters toward building a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all personnel. It is envisioned that your first step will provide an excellent base of good practice and empower others to follow suit!

Based on its mandate, UN Women remains ready to support efforts to reach gender parity and to create enabling working environments. Please share your experiences in implementing these Guidelines with the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System at UN Women by contacting the Office ([focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org](mailto:focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org)). Please also make use of further resources by visiting <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations>.

Together we can create an inclusive, diverse and respectful working environment, in every team, office, department and mission. Let's start today.



# ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive and varied methods of data collection used in the production of these Guidelines included a substantive desk review of UN policies, reports and guidance as well as external research, qualitative interviews, focus groups and meetings, and written feedback.

Nearly 200 colleagues from over 50 countries where the UN operates and experts from organizations outside the UN collaborated to create these Guidelines. Personnel at different levels and contract types were consulted upon including interns, consultants, national staff, Gender Focal Points and senior leadership. The leadership included Resident Coordinators, Regional and/or Deputy Regional Directors, Country Representatives and leadership from various missions. Furthermore, UN Human Resources experts were interviewed in various locations.

The recommendations and good practice examples were gathered from these sources and validated by their respective entities or offices. The good practice examples were chosen to compliment the recommendations in efforts to create an enabling environment.

The Office of the Focal Point for Women collaborated with colleagues from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the system-wide network of Gender Focal Points, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) and United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) to ensure comprehensive and diverse organizational and geographic coverage of those consulted. Colleagues who contributed to these Guidelines included the following:

## UNITED NATIONS NETWORKS

- **UN system-wide network of nearly 400 Gender Focal Points from different entities and duty stations**
- **The United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) Human Resources Network**
- **Managers, junior personnel and national staff from different field offices (nominated by interviewees as well as the Junior Professional Officers Network and Young UN)**
- **The UN Department for Safety and Security Field Reference Group**
- **Senior representatives of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN)**
- **UN-GLOBE, a system-wide inter-agency group advocating for the equality and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ+ personnel in the UN system and its peacekeeping operations**
- **United Nations Enable / UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Focal Point Network**



## UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES

- **EIGHT PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS:**
  - United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)
  - United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
  - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
  - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)
  - United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)
  - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)
  - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)
  - United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)
- **FOUR SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSIONS:**
  - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)
  - United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC)
  - United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
  - United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
- **ALL SIX FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES:**
  - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  - United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
  - United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
  - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
  - World Food Programme (WFP)
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- **TEN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES AND BODIES:**
  - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
  - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
  - World Bank Group
  - World Health Organization (WHO)
  - International Labour Organization (ILO)
  - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
  - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
  - United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations Regional Service Centre in Entebbe
- United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU)
- United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT)

## UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT DEPARTMENTS AND OFFICES

- Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO)
- Development Coordination Office (UNDCO)
- UN Programme on Disability/Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD)
- Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate (OVRA)
- Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)
- Department of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)
- Department of Operational Support (DOS), including the Medical Support Section
- Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), including the Critical Incident Stress Management Unit (CISMU)
- Office of the Ombudsman for the United Nations Funds and Programmes in Nairobi
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

## ORGANIZATIONS OUTSIDE THE UN

- Rome Institute for International Counseling, Coaching and Mediation
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- OutRight Action International
- WorkLife HUB
- Care International

**FIGURE 1.**  
**MAP INDICATING THE LOCATIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE GUIDELINES.**



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



# ANNEX 2: RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Kindly visit UN Women's website for further resources on implementation:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations/gender-parity-resources>

## WHY GENDER PARITY?

Factsheet available on [UN Women's website](https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations/gender-parity-resources).

**Gender parity is a commitment, not just an aspiration**  
The UN Charter, the 1979 CEDAW and the 2010 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action all commit the UN and member states to achieving gender equality.

**Gender parity benefits all**  
Gender parity is not just for women. It is about equality for all. Without equal gender parity, we cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Gender parity is not new**  
The General Assembly first adopted the goal of gender parity in 1979. It has since been reaffirmed in various UN resolutions.

**Why Gender Parity?**  
The UN has shown that gender parity is the most effective way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Gender parity is a UN priority**  
The UN Secretary-General has made gender parity a top priority in his mandate.

**Gender parity is about maximizing talent**  
Gender parity is about maximizing talent. It is about ensuring that all people have the opportunity to contribute to the world's progress.

## TEN WAYS TO CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT DURING COVID-19.

Factsheet available on [UN Women's website](https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations/gender-parity-resources).

**Ten Ways to Create an Enabling Environment during COVID-19**

UN Women created the **Enabling Environment Guidelines** in support of the Secretary-General's **Enabling Environment Guidelines**. The **Enabling Environment Guidelines** can and should **regularly be updated** as the UN adapts to the COVID-19 crisis. Adapted from the recommendations in the Guidelines, here are ten ways to create an enabling environment for all personnel during this extraordinary time:

- 1) Senior management promotes the benefits of workplace flexibility as a way to be more effective and deliver better results, not only as a way to balance work and life. Research shows that workplace flexibility benefits organizations through improving staff well-being and enabling business continuity.
- 2) Managers recognize results-based good performance and productivity, not time spent in the office or online. All personnel promote an environment of trust and accountability.
- 3) Efforts are made to average team meeting times that work for everyone including colleagues in different time zones and those with care responsibilities.
- 4) The right to disconnect is recognized. All colleagues are encouraged to be offline when not working.
- 5) Maximum flexibility is urged for colleagues to carry out care commitments which may be exacerbated during this crisis. Flexibility to support personnel addressing family care issues, including eldercare and care for family members with disabilities, including temporary disabilities or illness.
- 6) Managers and colleagues do not make assumptions about colleagues' family structures and how domestic responsibilities are shared.
- 7) All personnel should contribute to and support a culture of respect, zero tolerance and accountability for discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority which can all take place online.
- 8) Efforts are made to create diverse and gender balanced panels during webinars and other online meetings.
- 9) Online meeting networks and informal support systems are harnessed.
- 10) Career development training and learning opportunities are promoted for everyone. These can be beneficial to support colleagues through the crisis as well as in the future.

## OPPORTUNITIES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING - WHY IT MAKES SENSE (TAILORED ESPECIALLY FOR MANAGERS).

Factsheet available on [UN Women's website](https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations/gender-parity-resources).

**Flexible Working Arrangements for the United Nations**  
WHY IT MAKES SENSE

Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.

The Secretary-General's 2019 report on the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) states that the Enabling Environment Initiative will help to achieve gender parity in the workplace.

**Cost savings - resource efficiency**

- 1. Greater to support those that staff will work more flexibly.
- 2. Greater to support those that staff will work more flexibly.
- 3. Greater to support those that staff will work more flexibly.

**13%** productivity improvement achieved by people working flexibly and more effectively.

## BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING.

Factsheet available on [UN Women's website](https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations/gender-parity-resources).

**Benefits of Flexible Working**

1. **Increased productivity from a results-driven approach based on trust, engagement and accountability**  
Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.
2. **Reduced absenteeism and increased well-being**  
Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.
3. **Business continuity**  
Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.
4. **Increased spending**  
Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.
5. **Attraction and retention of an engaged and diverse workforce**  
Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are widely defined as arrangements involving a range of work schedules and other work-life balance options that can be used to meet the needs of employees. Flexible working arrangements can be used to meet the needs of employees in a variety of ways.

ANNEX 2: Resources for implementation



# ENDNOTES

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