



6 August 2020

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## Administrative instruction

### Temporary special measures for the achievement of gender parity

In accordance with the procedures for the promulgation of administrative issuances set out in [ST/SGB/2009/4](#) and Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance promulgates the following:

#### Section 1

##### Goal

1.1 The General Assembly<sup>1</sup> has recalled Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations and requested the Secretary-General to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels in the United Nations. Until the goal set by the General Assembly is realized throughout the United Nations Secretariat, in every entity,<sup>2</sup> overall and at each level, the temporary special measures described in the present instruction apply to all types of posts and positions, as set out herein, irrespective of the source of funding. It is clear that unless temporary special measures are implemented to address the gender imbalance in accordance with resolution [70/133](#), progress will not accelerate in a meaningful way.

#### Section 2

##### Scope

2.1 The temporary special measures contained in the present instruction shall apply to selections and appointments as described in the present instruction. The temporary special measures shall apply to selections and appointments at each level at which gender parity has not been reached within the entity. For the purposes of the present instruction, parity is considered to be within the 47 to 53 per cent margin for each

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<sup>1</sup> See General Assembly resolutions [49/222 A](#), [49/167](#), [50/164](#), [51/67](#), [51/226](#), [53/119](#), [53/221](#), [55/258](#), [61/244](#), [63/250](#), [65/247](#) and [67/255](#). See also resolution [70/133](#), in which the Assembly requested the “Secretary-General to review and redouble his efforts to make progress towards achieving the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels throughout the United Nations system, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, considering, in particular, women from the developing and the least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and unrepresented or largely underrepresented Member States, and to ensure the implementation of measures, including temporary special measures, to accelerate progress, and managerial and departmental accountability with respect to gender balance targets”.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the present instruction, the term “entity” has the same meaning as described in section 1 of [ST/SGB/2019/2](#).



level within the entity. The temporary special measures shall apply at all times when there is no such 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. Since these measures are aimed at correcting a historical gender imbalance, they will apply only to the underrepresentation of women and, therefore, do not apply to selections and appointments to levels within an entity in which gender parity has been reached.

### **Section 3**

#### **Temporary special measures for job openings at the professional level and above**

3.1 This section shall apply to selections and appointments of one year or longer in the Professional and above categories.

#### **Outreach to potential candidates**

3.2 Entities that have not reached gender parity as per section 2.1 will attempt to identify qualified women prior to the posting of the job opening. This should be done as early as possible. If practicable, this should be done at least six months in advance in cases of foreseeable vacancies, for example, in cases in which vacancies have occurred as a result of retirement and in cases in which posts are proposed to be created. For that purpose, the head of entity will attempt to seek women candidates from both within and outside the Organization, including through advertisements and special searches.

3.3 The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, in coordination with the entities that recruit from rosters created as a result of competitive examinations under staff rule 4.16, will make outreach efforts two to six months prior to the announcement of the competitive examination to ensure that there is an adequate pool of women applicants for the examination.

#### **Selection**

3.4 Entities that have not reached gender parity as per section 2.1 shall apply the temporary special measures in subparagraphs (a) through (c) below to selection exercises within the scope of section 3.1 whenever the entity is selecting a candidate to fill a job opening from either a list of candidates endorsed by a central review body, a competitive examination roster or a list of rostered candidates who applied for a job opening:

(a) The job opening shall be filled by one or more women candidates on the list or the roster, provided that the women candidates meet the requirements for the job opening and that their qualifications are substantially equal or superior to those of the competing male candidates;

(b) In accordance with staff regulation 4.4, the fullest regard shall be given to the qualifications and experience of women already in the service of the United Nations;

(c) In evaluating women candidates, particular emphasis shall be given to their potential to perform at a higher level, although they may not have been offered such an opportunity in their prior service.

3.5 When one or more women candidates meet the requirements of the job opening and the head of entity intends to select a male candidate, the head of entity shall submit a written analysis, with appropriate supporting documentation, indicating how the qualifications and experience of the male candidate, when compared to the requirements of the job opening, are clearly superior to those of the women candidates who were considered suitable. This written analysis and supporting documentation

shall be submitted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for review, using form P.401.

3.6 The appointment of all external candidates shall be subject to the established criteria regarding qualifications and experience and to the applicable requirements of equitable geographical distribution. Given the lack of gender parity in the Organization and the fact that women are underrepresented, every effort shall be made to increase the number of women from developing and least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and unrepresented or largely underrepresented Member States. If any candidate for a post subject to equitable geographical distribution is to be recruited over the normal maximum desirable range for a given country, such exceptional cases shall be considered more favourably when a woman candidate is to be selected in accordance with the provisions of section 3.4 (a) of the present instruction.

#### **Section 4**

##### **Temporary special measures for temporary assignments**

4.1 This section shall apply to the selection of internal candidates to temporary job openings in the Professional category and above and in the General Service and related categories.

4.2 When selecting an internal candidate for a temporary job opening, due regard shall be given to the need to broaden career development opportunities for women. When there are one or more internal women candidates, the temporary job opening shall be filled by one of those internal candidates, provided that the qualifications and experience of the candidate meet the requirements for the temporary job opening and are substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates.

4.3 When the head of entity selects an internal candidate to a temporary job opening, the local human resources or Executive Office shall document the manner in which eligible internal women candidates have been reviewed.

#### **Section 5**

##### **Selections to peace operations, political missions and new entities**

5.1 All heads of entities engaged in the selection of staff for peace operations, political missions or new entities shall ensure that women applicants are reviewed and selected for job openings and temporary job openings within their entities in accordance with the requirements of the present instruction. When selecting staff for a newly established entity, particular regard shall be paid to women candidates to ensure that parity is reached from the outset of an entity's creation. Women in the Professional category and above and those in the General Service and related categories shall be especially encouraged to apply for job openings and temporary job openings in the field.

#### **Section 6**

##### **Increased awareness of gender issues**

##### **Gender training**

6.1 The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance shall develop and design gender training programmes to: (a) foster a better understanding of gender dynamics at play in recruitment; (b) foster the career advancement of women; (c) foster development opportunities for women; (d) foster a better understanding of working environments across cultures; (e) develop and maintain a gender-inclusive work environment; (f) ensure compliance with these special measures; and (g) eliminate obstacles to the advancement of women within the Organization. These

training programmes shall be designed to change the organizational culture, to enhance awareness of gender issues and to address issues of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The training programmes shall explain the principle of gender equality mandated by Article 8 of the Charter and the tools that exist to achieve this goal, including the provisions under the present instruction and other relevant rules, in particular those regarding accountability.

6.2 Gender training shall be designed to develop greater awareness of assumptions and perceptions regarding gender parity and a gender-inclusive work environment and to assist entities in identifying areas for improvement and developing ways to provide a more supportive work environment for women and men.

6.3 Special training for senior officials and middle-level managers shall be provided to address the need of the Organization to mainstream a gender perspective in work programmes and reporting mechanisms, emphasizing strategies to incorporate a gender perspective in all aspects of the substantive work of the Organization.

6.4 Appropriate gender training shall be incorporated into the curricula of induction and orientation courses, senior management, people management, supervisory training and conflict resolution courses, mission readiness and peacekeeping management training, administration, human resources and other appropriate staff development programmes. Mandatory training courses specific to gender sensitivity and programmes on mainstreaming a gender perspective are currently listed in the annex to the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations mandatory learning programmes ([ST/SGB/2018/4](#)).

6.5 Heads of entity, programme managers and executive offices, in collaboration with the Department of Operational Support, shall exercise leadership in implementing and facilitating training and career development to ensure equal opportunities for women in the Professional category and above and in the General Service and related categories, including by creating opportunities for managed rotation between posts and assignments, movement within and between occupations and the acquisition of skills in fields of work or assignments traditionally segregated along gender lines.

## **Section 7**

### **Implementation and monitoring special measures**

7.1 Heads of entities shall have primary responsibility and shall be accountable for the implementation of the special measures set out in the present instruction, including during periods of downsizing, when a recruitment freeze is in effect or when an entity is reorganized or newly established.

7.2 Each head of entity has access to statistics showing the current distribution of women and men by category of posts at each level within their entity, regardless of the source of funding for the post. Heads of entities are required to report quarterly on progress achieved under their gender implementation plans for achieving gender parity to the Secretary-General through the Office of Human Resources and the Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy.

7.3 The Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the temporary special measures contained in section 3 and will provide this information to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for incorporation in the relevant reports in accordance with its mandate.

7.4 The Department of Operational Support is responsible for the implementation of all training programmes described in section 6 of the present instruction, in cooperation with the heads of entities.

7.5 The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance shall be responsible for:

(a) Developing gender training programmes and expanding gender training Organization-wide;

(b) Providing policy advice as well as interpretation of the implementation of the special measures contained in the present instruction;

(c) Identifying recruitment sources to expand the pool of women candidates for vacancies in occupations in which women are particularly underrepresented;

(d) Promoting gender-inclusive language in job openings, in accordance with the guidance on gender-inclusive language for all six official United Nations languages,<sup>3</sup> and avoiding gender stereotypes in outreach efforts.

7.6 The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources shall ensure that gender distribution information is included in the annual report to the General Assembly on the composition of the Secretariat.

## **Section 8**

### **Final provision**

8.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

8.2 Administrative instruction [ST/AI/1999/9](#) of 21 September 1999 is hereby superseded.

*(Signed)* Catherine **Pollard**  
Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy,  
Policy and Compliance

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/>.