



## **Personnel matters**

### **Employment and participation of women in the work of WHO**

#### **Report by the Director-General**

The purpose of this document is to report to the Executive Board: (1) on efforts to increase the proportion of women occupying professional and higher-graded posts in established offices, including the most senior levels; (2) on progress achieved towards parity for women and on the proportion of women employed as consultants, short-term staff, temporary advisers and on scientific and technical advisory groups as requested in resolution WHA50.16; (3) on steps taken to implement the recommendations in the policy statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system. The Board is invited to note the report.

#### **PROPORTION OF WOMEN OCCUPYING PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER-GRADED POSTS**

1. By resolution EB63.R25, the Executive Board in 1979 approved the establishment of a specific target for the proportion of women occupying professional and higher-graded posts in established offices. The target was set at 20%, and subsequently raised to 30% in 1985 by resolution WHA38.12. In 1993 resolution EB91.R16 established 30 September 1995 as the date by which the target of 30% should be reached. In 1997 resolution WHA50.16 increased the target for representation of women in the professional categories to 50%, and further set a target of 50% by 2002 for new appointments of women to professional categories and the representation of women as temporary advisers and consultants and serving on scientific and technical advisory groups.

2. The following table provides a summary of the number of staff in the professional and higher-graded categories in all posts in established offices, and the proportion of posts occupied by women at 30 September 1997 as compared to 30 September 1996 (the target of 30% by 30 September 1995, set by the Health Assembly in 1985, has not yet been reached):

Established offices	1996			1997		
	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%
Headquarters	151	361	29.5	155	355	30.4
Africa	20	97	17.1	19	101	15.8
The Americas*	22	32	40.7	23	25	47.9
South-East Asia	9	56	13.8	14	61	18.7
Europe	16	40	28.6	15	37	28.8
Eastern Mediterranean	16	45	26.2	17	44	27.9
Western Pacific	8	35	18.6	8	36	18.2
IARC	16	37	30.2	15	37	28.8
Total, regional offices and IARC	107	342	23.8	111	341	24.6
Total, established offices	258	703	26.8	266	696	27.7

\* Excluding PAHO staff based in Washington, where there were 64 women and 86 men in 1996 (42.7% women), and 64 women and 84 men in 1997 (43.2% women).

3. Tables 1 and 2 of the Annex compare the change in numbers and proportion of women and men by location and grade between September 1996 and September 1997.

4. In 1994, the Executive Board in resolution EB93.R17 urged the Director-General to give consideration as a priority - where qualifications were equal - to the appointment of women candidates at D2 and ungraded levels, and requested the Director-General to report annually on action taken to this effect.

5. The following table illustrates the change in the number of women at D2 and ungraded levels between 1996 and 1997; the proportion of women in these positions has declined overall from 11.8% to 10.7%:

Grade	30 September 1996				30 September 1997			
	Total	Men	Women	% women	Total	Men	Women	% women
D2	50	45	5	10.0	41	38	3	7.3
Ungraded	18	15	3	16.7	15	12	3	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.7</b>

6. From 1991 to 1996, 87 men and only 14 women were promoted to P6/D1. Part of the problem of achieving a higher proportion of women at D2 and ungraded levels is the relative dearth of candidates for promotion from P6/D1. As Table 1 of the Annex shows, in 1997 there were only 19 women compared with 119 men in P6/D1 posts. More effort is needed to find among middle-level and senior managers women who may, with suitable training or assignments, be able to assume responsibilities in the highest echelons of the Organization.

## PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION WHA50.16

7. Resolution WHA50.16 adopted in May 1997 calls for the target for representation of women in the professional categories to be increased to 50% and strongly urges Member States to support the Secretariat, *inter alia* “by identifying more women candidates and regularly submitting their candidatures”.

8. Given the difficulties experienced in attaining the target of 30%, it is clear that even greater efforts will have to be made to attain a proportion of 50%. The situation reflects to a certain extent that of women in the governing bodies; the Executive Board in May 1997 included four women out of 32 members, a proportion of 12.5%; at the Fiftieth World Health Assembly there were 256 female participants out of a total of 1082, i.e., 23.7%. The situation is only marginally better in technical bodies (see paragraph 16).

9. The Steering Committee on the Employment and Participation of Women in the Work of WHO, in which members of the Executive Board participate, held two meetings in January and May 1997 in order to continue its task of reviewing and monitoring the situation. A major challenge of the strategy to increase the employment and participation of women in the work of WHO will be to raise awareness in Member States of the need to find more female candidates for vacancies in general, as well as to increase the participation of women in expert and consultative group meetings. Accordingly, Permanent Representatives in Geneva were urged to submit more names of qualified candidates. Following the disappointing response, all WHO collaborating centres, expert panels, national and international nongovernmental organizations and WHO Representatives were asked to find qualified women and submit their names. A roster of women candidates is being compiled, in cooperation with ministries of health, WHO Representatives, collaborating centres, academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations, for possible participation in expert and consultative group meetings.

10. A resolution was adopted by the Regional Committee for Africa at its forty-seventh session, on “promoting the participation of women in health and development” which calls, *inter alia*, for the appointment of a focal point for women in each ministry of health with the objective of serving as a “regional steering committee” to facilitate and promote the contribution of women to health and development at national and regional levels and to foster their participation in the work of WHO. A declaration in support of the resolution was adopted by the ministers of health.

11. The ultimate attainment of the target of 50% is complicated by the fact that the overall level of staff in the professional and higher grades in WHO has been steadily falling, from 1589 posts in 1993 to 1304 posts in 1997. Furthermore, the turnover rate of 14.2% for women (excluding normal retirement) is higher than that for men (12.7%). An “exit interview” questionnaire has been developed in order to ascertain the reasons for the different rates of voluntary departure among women and men. A report on the preliminary findings will be submitted to the Steering Committee in 1998.

12. The rate of recruitment of women will have to be increased very significantly compared with that of men if reasonably rapid progress is to be made in achieving the target set by resolution WHA50.16. Programme managers, assisted by the Division of Personnel in reviews of staff in their areas, will have to obtain more applications from female candidates, anticipating vacancies so that recruitment can be planned further in advance and more time left for finding suitable candidates.

13. Resolution WHA50.16 also set a target of 50% by 2002 for the representation of women as temporary advisers, consultants and members of scientific and advisory groups, and requested the Director-General to report annually to the Executive Board on progress.

## Short-term professionals and consultants and temporary advisers

14. Available statistics for the whole of WHO for short-term professionals and consultants during the period from 1 October 1996 to 30 September 1997 show that there were 1429 assignments of men, totalling 83 584 work-days, and 901 assignments of women, totalling 55 975 work-days (40%).

15. Available statistics for temporary advisers for the same period show that there were 2020 assignments of men, totalling 14 970 work-days, and 1035 assignments of women, totalling 8578 work-days (36.4%).

## Members of scientific and technical advisory groups

16. Available statistics for membership of expert advisory panels and attendance at various expert committees, scientific and technical groups and advisory and steering groups for the same period show that 4032 men attended such meetings for a total of 8910 days, compared with 1253 women for a total of 3562 days (28.6%).

## ACTION ON ACC POLICY STATEMENT

17. A status report on the implementation of the ACC policy statement on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system was provided to the ninety-ninth session of the WHO Executive Board.<sup>1</sup>

18. The proportion of women in professional and higher grades in WHO does not differ significantly from the average for organizations of the United Nations system, which at 31 December 1995 - the most recent date for which comparative interagency statistics have been published - was 28%. Figures for the four major specialized agencies were: FAO, 17%; WHO, 26%; ILO, 28%; UNESCO, 34%.<sup>2</sup>

19. The ACC statement remains the reference for action within WHO, but there are few developments to report during the 12 months since the last report.

20. The WHO policy on sexual harassment was announced on 14 May 1996 by an Information Circular distributed to all staff. Since then staff have been designated to serve on the informal and formal panels for the resolution of complaints, and workshops have been conducted for the panel members. The rules of procedure and terms of reference of members serving on the formal Grievance Panel have been prepared.

21. WHO has agreed to participate in the proposed Participating Agencies' Mobility System (PAMS) which will, *inter alia*, enhance conditions for spouse employment and staff mobility within the United Nations system. PAMS is expected to provide an easy and effective way for staff members and their partners to submit curricula vitae to a central computerized roster for consideration by personnel officers in the United Nations system at headquarters duty stations and major regional centres. While still in the preparatory stages, this new roster will, it is hoped, facilitate spouse employment and staff mobility.

22. Since the change in Rule 410.3 of the Staff Rules, allowing the employment by WHO of spouses of staff members, the number on short-term contracts has remained at 12, including six employed since the previous reporting period (four women and two men).

## ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

23. The Executive Board is invited to note the report.

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<sup>1</sup> See document EB99/1997/REC/1, Annex 5.

<sup>2</sup> Document ACC/1996/PER/R.10, Personnel Statistics, p. 41.

## ANNEX

**TABLE 1. NUMBERS OF WOMEN AND MEN PROFESSIONAL STAFF,  
BY GRADE - ALL LOCATIONS  
(1996 AND 1997)**

	Grade categories	Total		Women		Men		% women	
		1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
Headquarters	P1-P3	81	80	40	37	41	43	49.4	46.2
	P4	133	130	52	55	81	75	39.1	42.3
	P5	199	212	44	49	155	163	22.1	23.1
	P6/D1	53	51	7	8	46	43	13.2	15.7
	D2	36	29	5	3	31	26	13.9	10.3
	Ungraded	10	8	3	3	7	5	30.0	37.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>512</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>30.4</b>
Regional offices and WHO Representatives' offices	P1-P3	96	91	37	37	59	54	38.5	40.7
	P4	74	76	20	17	54	59	27.0	22.4
	P5	153	158	28	34	125	124	18.3	21.5
	P6/D1	59	61	6	8	53	53	10.2	13.1
	D2	9	9	-	-	9	9	-	-
	Ungraded	5	5	-	-	5	5	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>396</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>
International Agency for Research on Cancer	P1-P3	18	18	11	9	7	9	61.1	50.0
	P4	22	23	4	5	18	18	18.2	21.7
	P5	7	4	-	-	7	4	-	-
	P6/D1	5	6	1	1	4	5	20.0	16.7
	D2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>28.8</b>
In established offices	P1-P3	195	189	88	83	107	106	45.1	44.0
	P4	229	229	76	77	153	152	33.2	33.6
	P5	359	374	72	83	287	291	20.1	22.2
	P6/D1	117	118	14	17	103	101	12.0	14.4
	D2	45	38	5	3	40	35	11.1	7.9
	Ungraded	16	14	3	3	13	11	18.8	21.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>961</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>27.7</b>
In projects	P1-P3	86	78	46	41	40	37	53.5	52.6
	P4	198	205	46	49	152	156	23.2	24.0
	P5	114	108	11	13	103	95	9.6	12.0
	P6/D1	12	12	-	-	12	12	-	-
	D2	3	3	-	-	3	3	-	-
	Ungraded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>413</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.4</b>
Unassigned and others	P1-P3	17	5	6	4	11	1	35.3	80.0
	P4	17	5	7	1	10	4	41.2	20.0
	P5	18	5	6	2	12	3	33.3	40.0
	P6/D1	6	8	-	2	6	6	-	25.0
	D2	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
	Ungraded	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>39.1</b>

	Grade categories	Total		Women		Men		% women	
		1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
In all locations	P1-P3	298	272	140	128	158	144	47.0	47.1
	P4	444	439	129	127	315	312	29.1	28.9
	P5	491	487	89	98	402	389	18.1	20.1
	P6/D1	135	138	14	19	120	119	10.4	13.8
	D2	50	41	5	3	45	38	10.0	7.3
	Ungraded	17	14	3	3	15	11	17.6	21.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>1 435</b>	<b>1 391</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>1 055</b>	<b>1 013</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>27.2</b>

**TABLE 2. NUMBERS OF WOMEN AND MEN PROFESSIONAL STAFF,  
BY GRADE - REGIONAL OFFICES AND WHO REPRESENTATIVES' OFFICES  
(1996 AND 1997)**

	Grade categories	Total		Women		Men		% women	
		1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
Africa	P1-P3	40	40	6	6	34	34	15.0	15.0
	P4	11	11	2	1	9	10	18.2	9.1
	P5	50	53	10	10	40	43	20.0	18.9
	P6/D1	14	14	2	2	12	12	14.3	14.3
	D2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>117</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>15.8</b>
The Americas	P1-P3	22	20	15	15	7	5	68.1	75.0
	P4	16	14	4	4	12	10	25.0	28.6
	P5	14	12	3	4	11	8	21.4	33.3
	P6/D1	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
	D2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Ungraded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>47.9</b>
South-East Asia	P1-P3	10	10	2	3	8	7	20.0	30.0
	P4	11	16	4	4	7	12	36.4	25.0
	P5	27	32	2	6	25	26	7.4	18.7
	P6/D1	13	13	1	1	12	12	7.7	7.7
	D2	3	3	-	-	3	3	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>18.7</b>
Europe	P1-P3	5	4	2	2	3	2	40.0	50.0
	P4	17	17	6	5	11	12	35.3	29.4
	P5	28	25	7	6	21	19	25.0	24.0
	P6/D1	5	4	1	2	4	2	20.0	50.0
	D2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.8</b>
Eastern Mediterranean	P1-P3	12	11	9	9	3	2	75.0	81.8
	P4	10	10	2	2	8	8	20.0	20.0
	P5	20	20	4	4	16	16	20.0	20.0
	P6/D1	15	17	1	2	14	15	6.7	11.8
	D2	3	2	-	-	3	2	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>27.9</b>
Western Pacific	P1-P3	7	6	3	2	4	4	42.8	33.3
	P4	9	8	2	1	7	7	22.2	12.5
	P5	14	16	2	4	12	12	14.3	25.0
	P6/D1	11	12	1	1	10	11	9.1	8.3
	D2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Ungraded	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>18.2</b>