



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
103rd Session
Provisional agenda item 6

EB103/10
19 January 1999

Employment and participation of women in the work of WHO: annual report

Report by the Secretariat

1. The Executive Board and the Health Assembly have for the last two decades been endeavouring to improve women's employment and participation in WHO by establishing a series of targets, time frames and recruitment thresholds (see Annex 1). This document reports on progress in meeting the most recent objectives, namely, gender parity for professional and higher graded categories and, as a means of achieving that target, a 50% recruitment threshold (i.e., 50% of new appointments to the professional categories should be women) by 2002.
2. Well over a decade after the 30% target was set, women account for just 27.6% of the overall professional workforce in WHO (although the target has been exceeded at headquarters, in the Regional Office for the Americas, and in the Regional Office for Europe). Professional women staff are concentrated at the lower end of professional grades: over 60% of professional women staff are at grades P.4 and below, whereas almost 60% of professional men staff are at grades P.5 and above. Grade for grade, fewer women than men are in posts with managerial responsibilities (see Annexes 2 and 3). At current female recruitment and promotion rates (female recruitment at headquarters is about 40%), the gender parity target set by the Member States cannot be met in the foreseeable future (see Annex 4).
3. The setting of targets by the governing bodies and regular reporting on these issues to the Executive Board and to the staff at large are clearly not enough. Realistic targets and implementation strategies, coupled with decisive action, are required.
4. Since 21 July 1998 the following steps have been taken to increase the role of women in WHO:
 - C the Director-General has stated her determination to achieve gender parity;
 - C more than half of the Executive Directors appointed were women;
 - C special recruitment provisions have been introduced to identify women candidates;
 - C a 60% recruitment threshold for women in the professional and higher graded categories has been established, which will enable gender parity to be achieved by 2010, assuming current attrition rates. At headquarters, Executive Directors will establish targets and strategies for each cluster, based on staffing reviews, and will be held accountable, through the performance management system, for

reaching the targets set. The Director-General has written to Regional Directors about implementation of the policy in regional and country offices;

C focal points for women have been established in each Management Support Unit to support cluster efforts, with a central focal point in the Department of Human Resources Services.

5. A four-part action programme for improving the participation of women in WHO is being developed in the following areas: recruitment/selection/outreach; career development/representation; retention/workplace environment; and monitoring/accountability/feedback. Further details will be provided in the context of the report on reform of human resources management policy to be submitted to the Board at its 104th session.¹ This will make it easier to see how efforts to improve women's employment and participation are to be integrated with other policy initiatives for human resources management.

6. In this vein, it is suggested that annual statistical reports specifically on women's representation should be discontinued in favour of a workforce profile report, which would track and analyse data not only by gender, but also by age, geographical distribution, turnover, type of contract and other characteristics.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

7. The Executive Board is invited to note that:

(i) a follow-up report will be submitted to its 104th session, in the context of a broader report on reform of human resources management, which will also contain proposals for meeting the 50% target for the representation of women as temporary advisers and consultants, and members of scientific and technical advisory groups set up by the Health Assembly;

(ii) future reports on the representation of women will be included in annual human resources reports on the WHO workforce (including age and gender profiles, geographical distribution, breakdown of staff by contract types, staff turnover, etc.).

¹ See also document EB103/9.

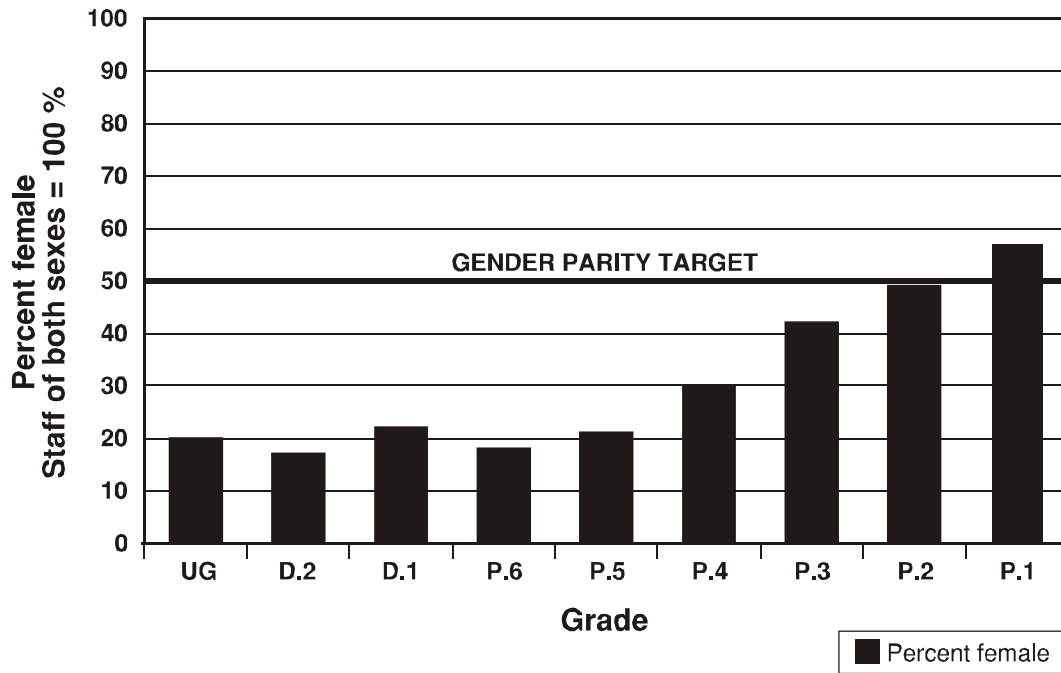
ANNEX 1

**TARGETS FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN
PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER GRADES IN WHO**

Year	Reference	Target	Time frame
1979	EB63.R25	20%	Not stated
1985	WHA38.12	30%	Not stated
1993	EB91.R16	30%	By 30 September 1995
1997	WHA50.16	(a) 50% (representation in professional categories) (b) 50% (recruitment rate) (c) 50% (representation of women as temporary advisers and consultants and serving as scientific and technical advisory groups)	Not stated 2002 2002

ANNEX 2

**PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE PROFESSIONAL STAFF,
ALL ESTABLISHED WHO OFFICES, BY GRADE
30 NOVEMBER 1998**



ANNEX 3

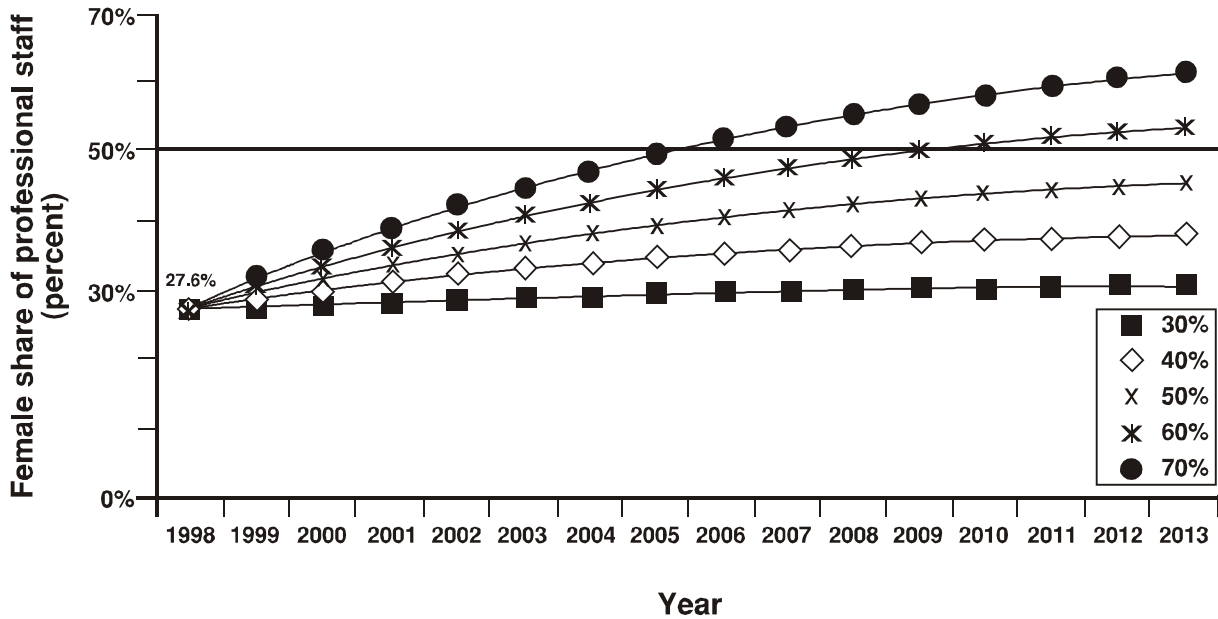
**DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION,
GRADE AND SEX AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 1998**

Organizational location	Ungraded			D.2			D.1			P.6			P.5			P.4			P.3			P.2			P.1			Total			Percentage	
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Headquarters	5	3	8	30	8	38	9	3	12	27	10	37	183	55	238	73	51	124	28	22	50	10	11	21	0	3	3	365	166	531	68.7	31.3
Africa	1	0	1	2	0	2	3	2	5	9	1	10	63	12	75	33	4	37	24	9	33	18	9	27	4	1	5	157	38	195	80.5	19.5
The Americas	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	12	5	17	56	21	77	5	5	10	4	10	14	1	1	2	81	42	123	65.9	34.1
South-East Asia	1	0	1	2	0	2	5	1	6	9	1	10	43	11	54	13	5	18	4	3	7	2	1	3	1	1	2	80	23	103	77.7	22.3
Europe	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	3	5	3	0	3	29	8	37	10	7	17	1	2	3	2	3	5	0	0	0	49	23	72	68.1	31.9
Eastern Mediterranean	1	0	1	2	0	2	6	0	6	8	2	10	29	2	31	16	3	19	3	6	9	4	4	8	0	1	1	69	18	87	79.3	20.7
Western Pacific	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	9	0	9	20	5	25	26	10	36	3	3	6	4	3	7	0	1	1	66	22	88	75.0	25.0
IARC	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	1	5	4	0	4	17	5	22	8	5	13	2	3	5	0	0	0	37	14	51	72.5	27.5
Interregional	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	8	2	10	6	2	8	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	21	6	27	77.8	22.2
Grand total	13	3	16	40	8	48	32	9	41	70	15	85	391	100	491	250	108	358	77	56	133	46	45	91	6	8	14	925	352	1277	72.4	27.6
Percentages	81.	18.	1.3	83.	16.	3.8	78.	22.	3.2	82.	17.	6.7	79.	20.	38.	69.	30.	28.	57.	42.	10.	50.	49.	7.1	42.	57.	1.1	72.	27.	100		
	3	8		3	7		0	0		4	6		6	4	4	8	2	0	9	1	4	5	5		9	1		4	6			

M = male
F = female
T = total

ANNEX 4

**FEMALE SHARE OF WHO PROFESSIONAL STAFF, 1998 TO 2013,
ASSUMING FEMALE RECRUITMENT RATES
OF 30%, 40%, 50%, 60% AND 70%¹**



Years until 50% share	
Recruitment rate	Years
30%	Never
40%	Never
50%	38 years
60%	12 years
70%	8 years

¹ Assuming 120 new recruitments and 120 terminations per year.

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