



Employment and participation of women in the work of WHO

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 a 30% target was set, women account for just 28.7% of the overall professional workforce in WHO. Although that target has been met at headquarters and in the Regional Office for the Americas, no office is close to reaching the 50% target. 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 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, 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 progress reports on these issues to the Executive Board and to the staff at large need to be complemented by realistic and decisive implementation strategies. Accordingly, 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 (MSU) to support cluster efforts, with a central focal point in the Department of Human Resources Services (HRS). MSUs are responsible for actively promoting and supporting cluster efforts to reach such targets, in particular by assisting managers in locating qualified female candidates and ensuring that gender parity considerations are fully taken into account by selection panels. They are also responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress. HRS is responsible for coordinating such efforts throughout all WHO offices, including the regions, and for preparing statistical and analytical reports for the Director-General and governing bodies. In this context, it is developing a four-part action programme comprising specific initiatives in (i) recruitment/selection/outreach; (ii) career development/representation in internal bodies; (iii) retention/workplace enhancement measures; and (iv) monitoring/accounting/feedback mechanisms. This programme is being developed in full consultation with the clusters and regional management, as well as with staff representatives.

4. It is recalled that resolution WHA50.16 also established a 50% target for the representation of women as temporary advisers, consultants, and members of scientific and technical advisory groups by 2002. The latest available data (end 1997) show the following picture:

	Actual ¹	Shortfall
Temporary advisers	36%	14%
Members of scientific and technical advisory groups	29%	21%
Short-term consultants	approx. 35%	15%

5. To reach the 50% target it is proposed that:

C the shortfall for each group should be reduced by at least one-third over each of the next three years, with the aim of reporting a 50% overall representation to the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly;

C annual monitoring reports will be presented to the Executive Board and remedial measures adjusted as necessary, depending on progress;

C while 50% of the overall membership of scientific and technical advisory groups and of expert committees should be women, a 10% representation margin will be acceptable in either direction for any one group/committee;

C for short-term consultants, parity should be sought at all professional levels and the total number of work-days will be taken into account;

C Regional Directors and Executive Directors will be held accountable for reaching the above targets, while directors will be held responsible for identifying women for committee memberships and short-term consultancies.

¹ For the Organization as a whole: figures for some offices are higher, others lower.

6. Annual statistical reports on women's representation, including temporary advisers and short-term consultants, will be incorporated into a workforce profile report, which will track and analyse data not only by gender, but also by age, geographical distribution, turnover, type of contract and other characteristics.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

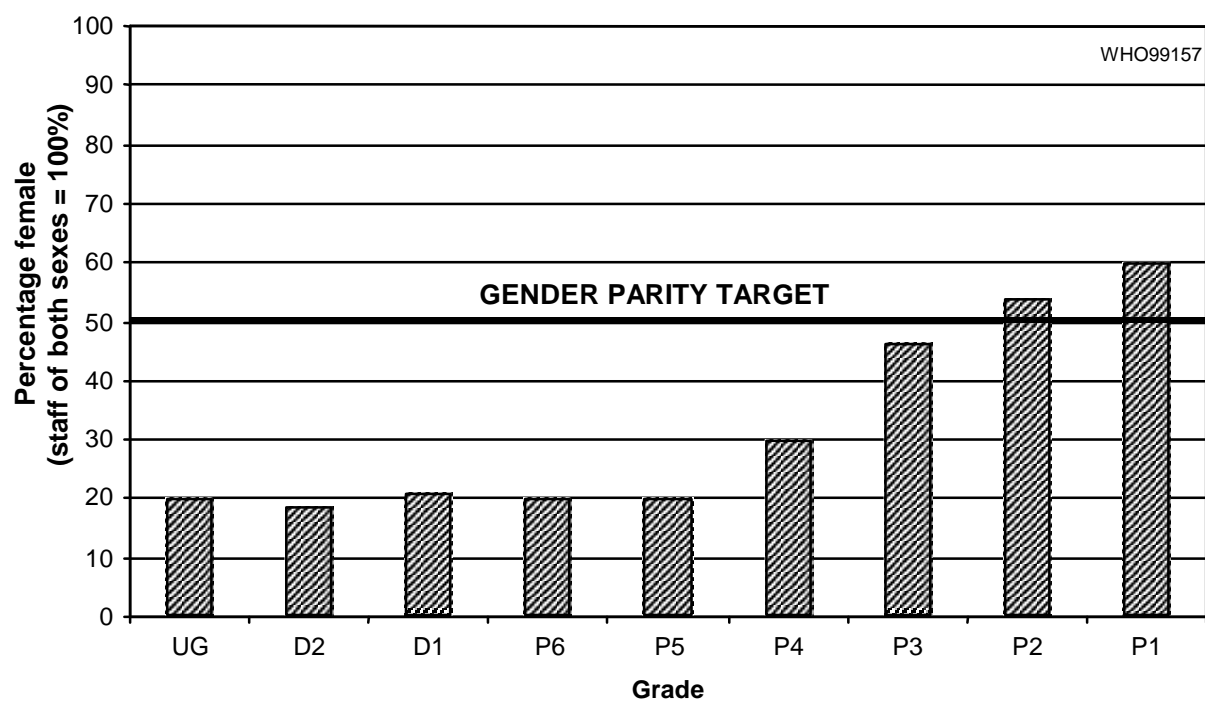
7. The Health Assembly is invited to note the report.

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, consultants and members of scientific and technical advisory groups)	Not stated 2002 2002

Annex 2
Percentage of females in all professional staff,
all established WHO offices, by grade, 31 March 1999



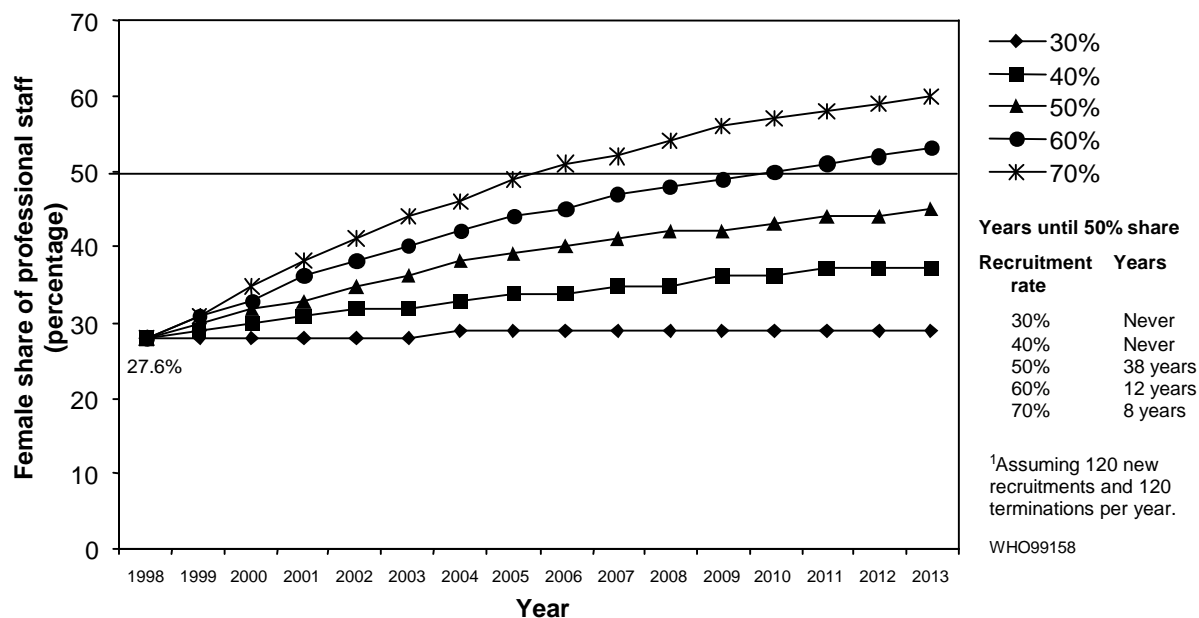
ANNEX 3

DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF BY ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION, GRADE AND SEX AS AT 31 MARCH 1999

Location	UG			D2			D1			P6			P5			P4			P3			P2			P1			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	T	M
Headquarters	4	3	7	28	9	37	9	3	12	25	9	34	184	55	239	76	54	130	24	31	55	9	12	21	1	3	4	360	179	539	66.8	33.2		
Interregional	1	0	1	3	0	3	4	0	4	0	0	0	9	2	11	8	2	10	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	26	7	33	78.8	21.2		
Africa	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	2	6	7	1	8	65	12	77	31	4	35	25	8	33	16	10	26	4	1	5	154	38	192	80.2	19.8		
The Americas	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	12	5	17	56	22	78	4	5	9	4	12	16	1	1	2	80	45	125	64.0	36.0		
South-East Asia	1	0	1	2	0	2	4	1	5	9	1	10	41	11	52	15	5	20	3	1	4	2	1	3	0	0	0	68	20	88	77.3	22.7		
Europe	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	2	4	3	0	3	29	8	37	12	7	19	1	3	4	2	4	6	0	0	0	58	24	82	70.7	29.3		
Eastern Mediterranean	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	4	7	2	9	31	2	33	17	2	19	2	6	8	4	4	8	0	2	2	63	18	81	77.8	22.2		
Western Pacific	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	8	0	8	22	5	27	24	11	35	3	2	5	4	3	7	0	1	1	63	22	85	74.1	25.9		
IARC	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	1	5	4	0	4	17	4	21	8	5	13	2	3	5	0	0	0	37	13	50	74.0	26.0		
Grand total	12	3	15	39	9	48	30	8	38	63	14	77	397	100	497	256	111	367	71	62	133	43	50	93	6	9	15	909	366	1 275	71.3	28.7		
Percentages	80.0	20.0	1.2	81.3	18.8	3.8	78.9	21.1	3.0	81.8	18.2	6.0	79.9	20.1	39.0	69.8	30.2	28.8	53.4	46.6	10.4	46.2	53.8	7.3	40.0	60.0	1.2	71.3	28.7	100.0				

M = male
F = female
T = total

Annex 4
Female share of WHO professional staff. 1998 to 2013.
female recruitment rates of 30%, 40%, 50%, 60% and 70%¹



= = =