PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
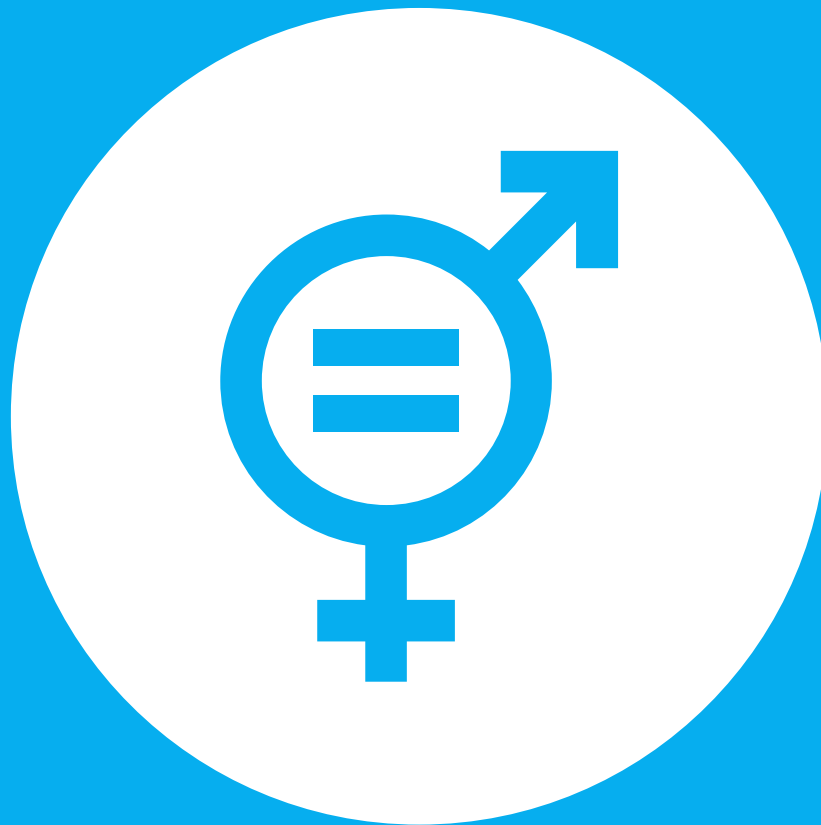# 15

EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

15. Performance Indicator: Equal Representation of Women		
Approaches requirements	**Meets requirements**	**Exceeds requirements**
12a. Plan in place to achieve the equal representation of women for all professional and higher staff levels	12b. Equal representation of women for all professional and higher staff levels is reached	12c. Equal representation of women for all staff levels is reached

What is the Equal Representation of Women indicator?

In 2017 the Secretary-General issued the _System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity_ to operationalize system-wide efforts to advance this priority. The Strategy notes (p.5):

> The goal of gender parity at all levels in the UN is a commitment that is now two decades old, and is reflective of core values that are as old as the Organization itself. In the intervening years there has been no shortage of policies, reports and recommendations to further this goal; yet implementation has been hampered in the main by a lack of sustained political will and accountability, absence of accompanying measures and enabling conditions for real reform, and resistance at different moments from key stakeholders.

According to the latest report of the Secretary-General on the Improvement in the Status of Women (2023), in 21 entities the overall representation of women was between 40-49 per cent, while in 5 entities the figure was below 40 per cent. In 10 entities, the share of women was 50 per cent or more. The gender gap is greatest at management levels and in the field, including in peace operations.

Lack of parity leads to institutional conditions that are not conducive to gender equality outcomes. However, parity cannot stand alone and must be accompanied by reforms that model inclusion and actively prevent harmful bias and stereotypes in decision-making.

All entities will ensure that they update, report on, and meet their targets under the Gender Parity Strategy (GPS), including in UNCTs, missions, liaison offices etc. The EOSG will lead on an update of the GPS with a focus on missing areas and addressing the areas or entities in need of most accelerated effort.

GENDER PARITY TARGETS
Gender parity, or the equal representation of women, is considered by the strategy, and for the purposes of UN-SWAP reporting, to be within the **47 per cent to 53 per cent margin**.

Evidence base

Examples of documents to attach to substantiate reporting:

- Entity-specific Gender Parity Strategy and/or Implementation Plan
- Entities will also be required to submit gender parity data by level on the online reporting platform.

Note: Please identify a self-explanatory title for the documents uploaded onto the platform, particularly for those shared to the UN-SWAP Knowledge Hub.

Who is the Business Owner for this indicator?

The head of the entity, along with the directors of divisions, should take primary responsibility for adequate planning and reporting on the equal representation of women. This includes ensuring that gender equality is prioritized within the organization's overall strategy and leadership decisions, with the entity's senior-most official responsible for human resources management overseeing its implementation.

Elements derived from the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP)
✓   All entities ensure that they meet their targets under the Gender Parity Strategy.

What are the requirements for this indicator?

How to approach requirements

To approach the requirement for this Performance Indicator, the UN entity **must have a plan in place for achieving the equal representation of women**, based on the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. The strategy provides recommended actions across a range of areas including leadership, accountability recruitment, retention, talent management, senior appointments, mission settings and creating an enabling environment. A **sample** of these is below:

✓   Annual targets set by level to reach gender parity before the ultimate deadline of 2028.2F3F[30]

> While a proposed methodology is presented in the strategy, entities are free to establish targets as they choose provided they result in the attainment of parity by the 2028 deadline. It is recommended that entities review anticipated vacancies and retirements in evaluating opportunities to advance progress towards gender parity.

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[30] For UN Secretariat departments and offices, targets have been provided by OHRM. Targets in Phase 1 initially focus on staff on fixed/permanent/continuous appointments at the Professional levels and higher. In phase 2, departments and offices will include General Service and national staff on fixed/permanent/continuous appointments (please see pages 12 & 15 of strategy).

- ✓ How senior managers will be held accountable for meeting targets.
- ✓ Incentives for promoting parity.
- ✓ How the entity intends to accelerate progress towards meeting its targets, e.g. through workforce planning; temporary special measures; strengthening of organizational culture; addressing unconscious bias in recruitment; retention, progression and talent management; outreach for recruitment, and as appropriate, specific action in relation to mission settings.
- ✓ How the entity will ensure real-time data is made available to hiring managers and entity heads to track process and implement accountability measures.
- ✓ The internal oversight mechanism through which progress will be monitored, and details of reporting.
- ✓ Resources required to achieve targets.
- ✓ The institutional structure, including focal points appointed at a senior level with clear and written terms of reference and an appropriate dedication of time, resources, and training.

Issues of organizational culture, including in relation to gender parity, are covered in Performance Indicator 13. For further details review the Secretary General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, [the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations system, its supplementary Guidance and the Field-Specific Enabling Environment Guidelines](#).

How to meet requirements

To meet requirements for this indicator, entities should have **reached the equal representation of women for all professional and higher staff levels.**

Entities must submit up to date staffing statistics, for all levels, to substantiate their rating.

How to exceed requirements

To exceed requirements for this indicator entities should meet requirements and **ensure equal representation at all staff levels**.

Current practice

The **United Nations University (UNU)'s** Gender Action Plan has a clearly stated objective to achieve gender parity at all levels by 2024 (see PI12). The UNU Council (governing body) monitors the implementation of UNU's Gender Action Plan each year, through an annual standing agenda item at their meeting. The annual gender report (referred to as the gender and diversity report since 2021) provides an annex setting out all the goals of UNU's Gender Action Plan for the year and the status of achieving set objectives in the plan. Further, the report contains statistics on UNU's gender parity at all levels including P4 and above. UNU has an external gender parity page which is updated daily automatically showing UNU's parity at all levels including by institute. All of these mechanisms, including the ongoing advocacy by the UNU Rector and senior management of recruiting more women at the senior level are evidence of UNU's significant efforts in this area.

In March 2018, the **United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** hosted the "Leadership, Women and the UN" workshop which was facilitated by the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) in Vienna. The week-long workshop brought together twenty-seven UN system-wide staff members at the P4 and P5 levels for reflections about the gender dimension of leadership, power and influence. The workshop facilitated self-awareness through a 360-degree leadership assessment that utilized individual leadership action plans to ensure a truly transformational leadership experience. Given the excellent feedback received, UNOV/UNODC has requested the UNSSC to establish this important workshop in Vienna on an annual basis.

Multiple UN entities have implemented policies to ensure an equal representation of women in decision-making processes and bodies. For instance, UNHCR ensures gender parity in committees, advisory bodies and boards. UNIDO adopted an administrative instruction titled "Equal representation of women: UNIDO's policy on panel parity".

Examples of special measures:
- In 2020, the Secretary-General promulgated the updated "Temporary special measures for the achievement of gender parity" that apply to selections and appointments where gender parity has not been reached and creates greater accountability around recruitment. Specifically, where a woman candidate has equal or superior qualifications to a male candidate, but the entity intends to select the man, the administrative instruction requires the head of entity to submit a written justification to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for review. Implementation of the temporary special measures is improving in regularity and consistency and has constituted an important tool for awareness and accountability.
- The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** used to have women-only candidate pools for bureaus that had fallen below 45% representation to strengthen accountability of managers to reach gender balance targets. To monitor, collect and analyze data and draw timely and meaningful insights from it, UNDP uses its PowerBI platform which provides up-to-date information on the entire workforce, as well as by grade, by office, etc. There is also a dashboard with information on UNDP gender parity that is publicly available.
- Multiple entities enforce the removal of ranking of recommended candidates to allow for greater latitude in the final selection process, and compare candidates' qualifications against the job vacancy requirements, as opposed to against one another;
- Both the **United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** and **UNDP** apply flexibility in around time in post criteria for female candidates. The new Recruitment and Assignments Policy of UNHCR requires interview panels to be diverse and assisted by local HR/admin colleagues. The new policy also calls for parity at all levels, stipulating that: "When two or more candidates fully meet the requirements of a position and are considered substantially equally qualified, preference will be given to female candidates until gender parity is achieved at the relevant grade level." The composition of the Joint Review Board is determined jointly with DHR and the Staff Council, and every effort is made to ensure various aspects of diversity, including gender balance. The JRB oversees and reviews selection processes to make sure that they are conducted in line with the policy. Part of this oversight is directly related to ensuring that the gender clause is applied as required.

Recruitment and talent management

In 2020, the **UN Secretariat's Office of Human Resources** and **UN Women** developed a Female National Officer Pool, 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.

The UN Secretary-General has launched a **Global Call for Heads and Deputy Heads of United Nations Peace Operations**. The aim of the outreach campaign is to increase and diversify the pool of candidates for senior leadership positions in UN peace operations. The campaign has been shared across different communication channels, including social media, printed ads, as well as across the UN system. Over 50 per cent of new appointments for mission leadership in 2021 were Global Call nominees.

ⓘ Additional Information

The availability of up-to-date data during the recruitment process is critical to support leadership and hiring managers in making decisions that will be immediately reflected in the organization's representation of women, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors or for senior positions. In 2021, UN Women in collaboration with UNDP launched the UN System-Wide Dashboard on Gender Parity that collects data on gender representation in nearly 40 UN agencies. The representation of women and men can be viewed by grade, staff category, duty station and age group and can be filtered by organization. This monitoring tool should be widely utilized by UN leadership and hiring personnel to track progress and target interventions during the recruitment process to ensure the achievement of gender parity within the UN system. The dashboard would be available also for the Member States, civil society representatives and other partners as an instrument to improve the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

The UN Women website contains information about the representation of women in the UN system including: the Reports of the Secretary-General on the Improvement of the status of women in the UN system, which provides system-wide sex-disaggregated data on the selection, representation, advancement and retention of women, information on progress made and obstacles encountered in achieving gender balance, and recommendations for accelerating progress; key policies and acts; and the Enabling Environment Guidelines with the Supplementary Guidance and the Field-Specific Enabling Environment Guidelines.

The Office of the Focal Point for Women in the UN System at UN Women leads and coordinates the network of nearly 500 UN Gender Focal Points, driving system-wide efforts to achieve gender parity and create enabling working environments across the UN. This includes advocating for gender parity, supporting inclusive work environments, and promoting capacity building, sharing good practices, and fostering interagency collaboration. As per SGB/2008/12, departmental focal points for women shall be appointed in each department, office, regional commission and mission, and they are encouraged to join the Network. For more information, please contact focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org.