

Enabling Environment in Action:

Flexible Working Arrangements and Inclusive Engagement

Global Annual Meeting of Gender Focal Points and Focal Points for Women

Thursday 12 and Friday 13 September 2019

Conference Room 3, United Nations Headquarters,
New York, USA



UN-Women/Ryan Brown

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Katja Pehrman, Senior Advisor/Focal Point for Women in the UN System, UN-Women



Ms. Katja Pehrman commenced the annual meeting by welcoming a record number of Gender Focal Points and Focal Points for Women (GFPs), with special recognition to colleagues joining from the field offices and missions. GFPs were praised for leading by example every day and playing a crucial role in progressing the [Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#) by creating entity-specific implementation plans, raising awareness and tackling unconscious bias.

The objectives of the 2019 Global Annual Meeting were to support GFPs in their ongoing work as changemakers and specifically:

- ❖ Inform participants about the support available from UN-Women and provide practical tools to increase the engagement of men and improve the implementation of flexible working arrangements;
- ❖ Inspire participants through the exchange of experiences, good practices, ideas and lessons learned related to achieving gender parity and the Enabling Environment Guidelines;
- ❖ Advance the implementation of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity and the [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System and Supplementary Guidance](#) by strategizing on how to overcome barriers.

The meeting marked the two-year anniversary of the launch of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity and reaffirmed that gender parity remains a top priority in the United Nations. The Secretary-General's achievements in working towards gender parity include:

- ❖ Gender parity among the Senior Management Group (for the first time in the United Nations' history) in 2018;
- ❖ Gender parity among Resident Coordinators in 2018;
- ❖ Appointment of the first female Under Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and three female special envoys – almost equivalent to the total number of female special envoys in the United Nations over the past 70 years;
- ❖ Global Call outreach campaign aimed to increase and diversify the pool of candidates for senior-level positions in the UN peace operations with a particular view to advancing gender parity and geographical diversity;

- ❖ Establishment of a Working Group at the highest levels on Emergency Measures to Achieve Gender Parity in Peace Operations.

As Ms. Pehrman expressed, reaching gender parity is not only about numbers, but also about changing the working environment in order to achieve sustainable results. 2019 has been a significant year for leading this transformation. The Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System and Supplementary Guidance were launched in early 2019 at the request of the Secretary-General to support and sustain parity and equal opportunities for all. The Guidelines resulted from system-wide collaboration among the GFPs, HR network colleagues, UN-Women and many other stakeholders. GFPs were thanked for their valuable contributions to this process.

Other developments related to gender parity in the UN system include the [Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at UN System events](#), which was launched in the summer of 2019, and an updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for Departmental Focal Points for Women in the Secretariat that is forthcoming. GFPs were thanked for contributing to the biennial report of the Secretary-General on the [Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system](#) which was published and discussed in the General Assembly's Third Committee in 2019.

Ms. Pehrman reminded GFPs of the resources provided by The Office of the Focal Point for Women/Gender Parity Team at UN-Women, including:

- ❖ Regular capacity-building sessions and webinars with UN and external experts;
- ❖ Briefing materials including a one-pager on why gender parity is important for the UN, data on women's representation in the UN system and fact sheets on flexible working;
- ❖ A podcast series on flexible working co-produced by WorkLifeHub and UN-Women;
- ❖ All of this information and more resources on the newly designed GFPs Extranet.

She also pointed out that 2020 will mark a series of anniversaries, including the 10th anniversary of UN-Women and the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Ms. Pehrman reiterated to the GFPs that these anniversaries provide everyone with a great opportunity to evaluate the progress made as well as create stronger solidarity and action for gender equality and parity.

SESSION ONE: ENGAGING MEN IN THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

This session was designed to give Gender Focal Points a greater conceptual understanding on why and how to engage men further in the promotion of gender equality, with practical guidance on how to identify and respond to resistance in its different forms.

Mr. Laxman Belbase, Global Networks Manager, MenEngage Alliance, stressed the importance of engaging men in promoting gender equality because of the long history of male-dominant structures in organizations and the need to overcome a bias that gender inequality does not affect men. The existence of resistance in all different forms is expected and can reflect success, since change for equality and justice involves disrupting existing thinking patterns.

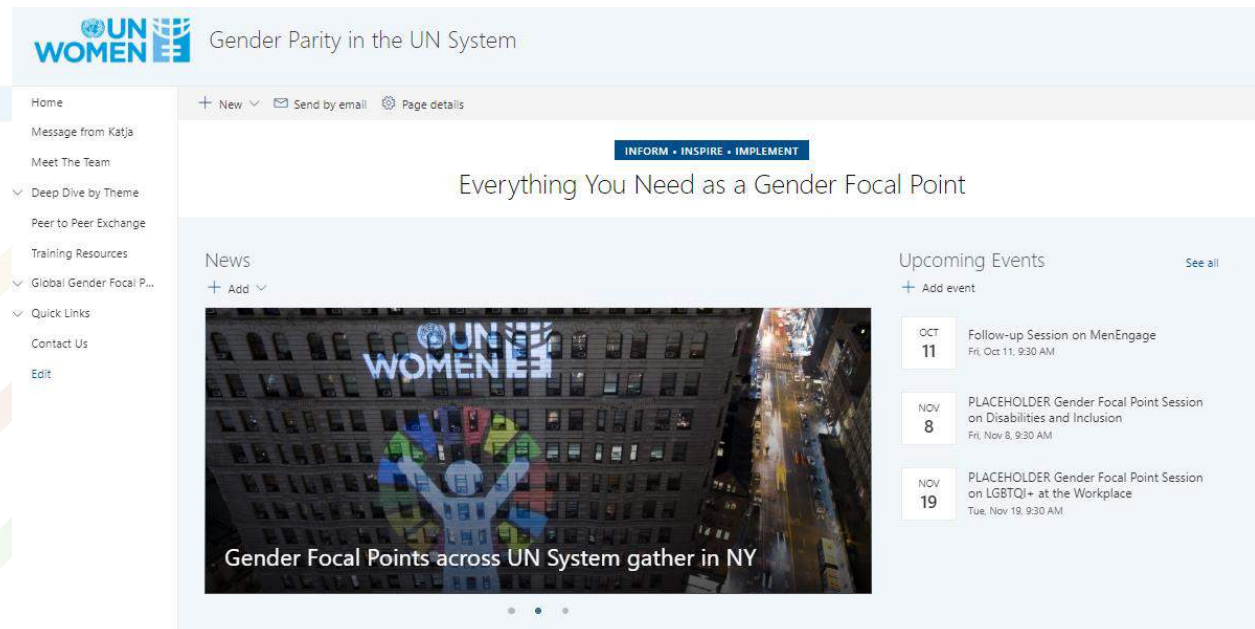
Mr. Michael Kaufman, author, advisor and educator, emphasized the need for increased male visibility in the current gender parity discourse and a better understanding of men and their relation to gender in order to advance sustainable change for all. According to Mr. Kaufman, men are often caught in a so-called “Men Box”, producing expectations that nobody can live up to. This dilemma is often dealt with through aggression and humiliation because gender parity appears to some men as a threat to their power. Mr. Kaufman emphasized that the efforts for gender parity are not about losing: gender parity is about a collective wellbeing that will benefit men to dismantle their own gender expectations. For example, through gender parity, many men will be able to release the burden of their gender roles and engage more in caregiving responsibilities for others as well as better care for their emotional health.

GFPs discussed questions and concrete strategies to bring back to their organizations in order to engage men further, expressing that many men are already very supportive of the gender parity agenda. They shared common issues raised by men and women colleagues: the unfounded fear that gender equality means a lack of opportunities for men; the myth that men now have limited scope for promotion as a result of parity discourse; and resistance from senior management that can lead to the exclusion of women from decision-making. GFPs shared examples of effective engagement in their organizations, including senior managers consistently embedding a gender perspective in planning and targets, hiring managers sending Vacancy Notices to GFPs to check for gender inclusive language, and gender champions encouraging other senior managers to speak about gender issues through their networks.

SESSION TWO: DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AMONG GENDER FOCAL POINTS

This session was designed to provide GFPs with relevant updates from UN-Women and to share a selection of good practices from different UN entities in working towards gender parity and an enabling environment.

Ms. Nicole Watson, Consultant, Gender Parity Team, presented an updated version of the GFP Extranet launched in early 2019. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the site has been enhanced as a hub of key information, learning and good practice from across the UN system and beyond. It is intended as a “one stop shop” where GFPs can go to find all the information they need to help to succeed in their role. In addition to outlining training resources, examples and templates, and key documentation related to gender parity and the enabling environment, it also contains educational material on relevant topics for GFPs to enhance their subject matter expertise. News, inspirational stories and examples of good practices from across the UN system will be featured regularly in the “news” section, and GFPs are invited to share content for the site.



Refreshed Extranet for Gender Focal Points

Five GFPs shared examples of good practice in their entities and addressed questions around their key achievements and lessons learned.

Ms. Sara Callegari, Gender Advisor at United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) discussed the Gender Challenge, launched in 2018, which awards teams who have implemented activities in support of gender parity. For the 2019 edition, participating teams were required to demonstrate implementation based on the Enabling Environment Guidelines and Supplementary Guidance. Linking the Gender Challenge with the Enabling Environment Guidelines helps achieve three objectives: i) managers and teams become aware of the content of the Guidelines, ii) the content becomes immediately applicable to respond to both central and local challenges and opportunities within UNDSS and iii) activities within the Department are further aligned with the Secretary-General's priorities. Given their comprehensiveness, both the Guidelines and the Supplementary Guidance include recommendations that can be implemented in all duty stations, regardless of size or location.

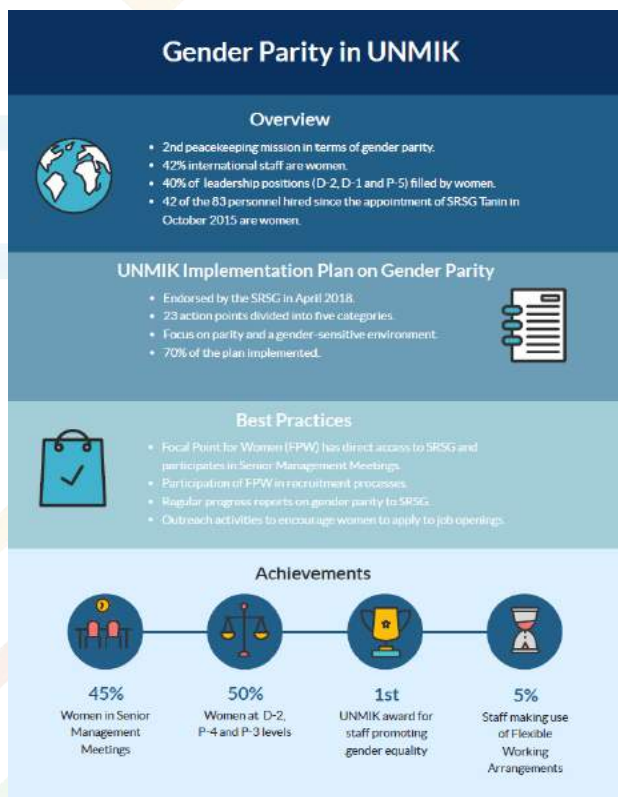
Ms. Javiera Thais Santa Cruz, Information Analyst at United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) shared a communication tool the mission has developed to raise awareness of gender parity. Visualizing progress on gender parity through infographics allows achievements to be presented in a clear, attractive and concise way that can be easily shared with internal and external interlocutors. Sharing the organization's progress in this area is key to holding ourselves accountable and encouraging everyone to do better. It shows how a committed leadership and the active engagement of staff can bring about real and positive change to come closer to the goal of gender parity.

Ms. Nicole Maguire, Chief, English Translation Section, at United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) discussed the entity's new dashboard which provides hiring managers with reliable gender-disaggregated data in a user-friendly platform. In the past, it was difficult to obtain such data in a timely manner, as the task often required additional manual processing from business partners who were already facing considerable time pressures. Managers now have the data they need to more easily understand gender parity targets when making recruitment decisions.

Ms. Nina Bowbridge, Gender Affairs Officer at Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) shared the organization's good practices for engaging senior leadership. DPPA-DPO commits to engaging senior leaders in the gender parity agenda through quarterly review meetings co-chaired by the Under-Secretary-Generals of DPPA-DPO, and workshops for D1 level staff and above to support their leadership around this theme

including managing staff, agenda setting and messaging. This initiative has strengthened senior leaders influence around changes in workplace culture, practices and the broader implementation of the Enabling Environment Guidelines.

Ms. Sajida Birhmani, Gender Affairs Officer at United Nations Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS) shared good practices for outreach in hazardous duty stations and promoting a gender-sensitive work environment. UNSOS has ensured that each staff member has mandatory gender sensitivity training through coordination between the newly established Gender Affairs Unit and Conduct and Discipline Unit. To create an enabling environment and attract female professionals to join UNSOS, the living and common spaces have been improved including ensuring that all female staff have accommodation with private washing facilities. As Mogadishu is a high threat non-family duty station and staff have limited scope for physical movement, UNSOS has focused on creating more welcoming physical spaces. The camps have a blackout policy at night, and to ensure protection and anti-harassment measures, UNSOS has installed solar lower lights along the pathways to facilitate safe movement at night.



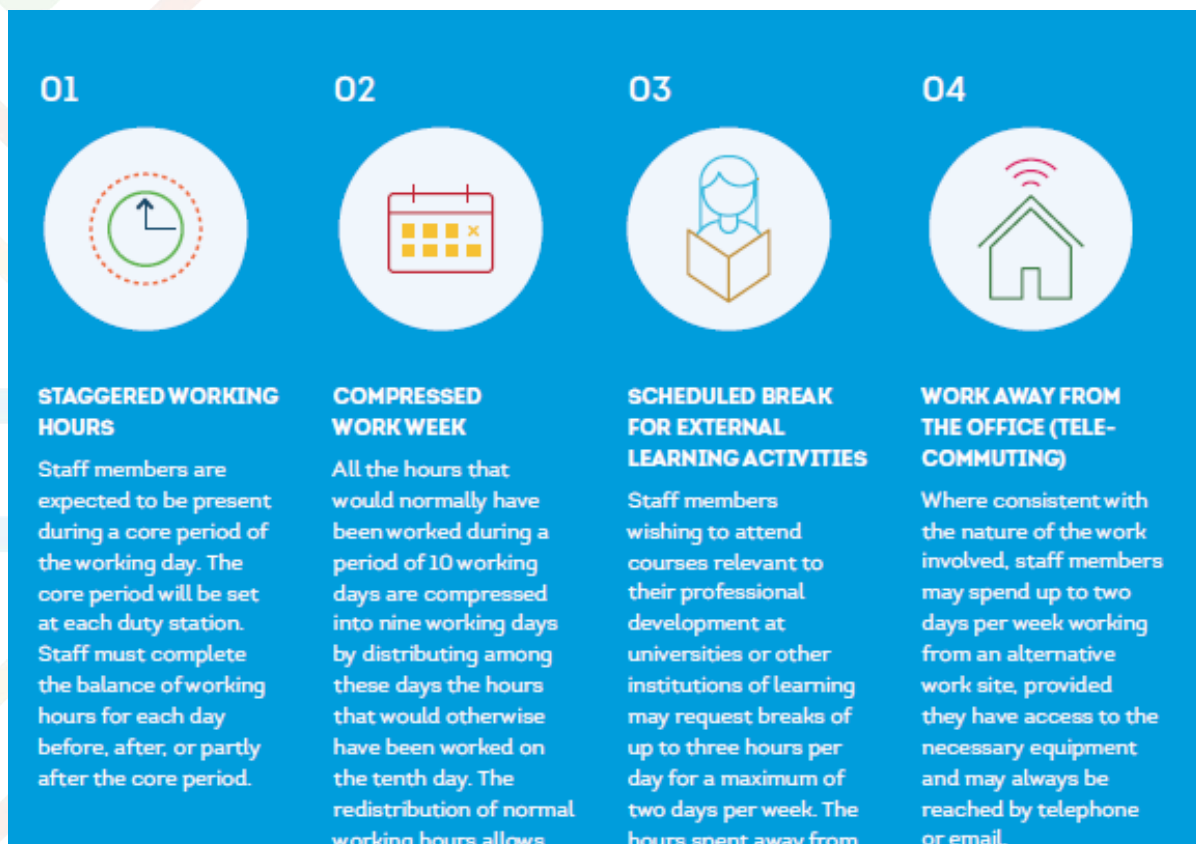
The communication tool of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)



The Gender Management Dashboard of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

SESSION THREE: FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

As outlined in the Supplementary Guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines, “Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are mutually beneficial arrangements between personnel and their managers in which both parties agree on when, where and how work is executed. They can greatly benefit the workplace through increased efficiency, reduced absenteeism, increased well-being, business continuity and decreased operating costs.”¹ Types of FWAs available to United Nations staff are outlined in the below excerpt from the Supplementary Guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines.



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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_21914

