



# Network

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## INTERVIEW WITH GAIL BINDLEY-TAYLOR SAINTE



Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte is a native of Trinidad and Tobago. Over the past 30 years, she has built an impressive career in broadcast journalism. Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte currently serves as the Information Officer in the NGO Relations Cluster of the Department of Public Information at the United Nations Secretariat, a position she assumed in June 2007.

Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte began her broadcasting career as a staff announcer at Radio Demerara in Georgetown, Guyana. She worked for seven years with the Trinidad Broadcasting Company Ltd., serving in various capacities including presenter, news reader, writer/producer, remote broadcaster and assistant to the Programme Director.

Over the years, Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte has held several positions in the broadcasting field as a newscaster for Trinidad and Tobago Television, Associate Information Officer in the Caribbean Unit of the United Nations Radio Service, Information Officer in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, and Chief of the Caribbean Radio Service in the Department of Public Information's Media Division. In her years with the Caribbean Unit, Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte interviewed almost every Head of State and Foreign Minister from the Caribbean. Her major achievements include: round-table discussions with seven Heads of State from the Caribbean on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations; a joint interview with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and CARICOM Secretary-General Edwin Carrington on the occasion of the signing of the cooperative agreement between CARICOM and the UN; and an interview with Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali in Jamaica on his first visit to the region.

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In April 2002, Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte was assigned to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea [UNMEE] where she served for almost four years, first as the Deputy Chief of Public Information of the Mission based in Ethiopia and shortly thereafter as the Chief of Public Information and Spokeswoman for the Mission based in Eritrea. Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte played a pivotal role in guiding the information efforts of this Mission during a critical phase in its development. On her return from Mission, she was reassigned to the UN Radio Service as the Senior Radio Producer for the Caribbean, and during that period was assigned to work as the Spokeswoman for the 61st President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikhha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, becoming only the third woman to serve in that capacity in the history of the United Nations.

Ms. Bindley-Taylor Sainte is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree. She also holds a graduate diploma in Mass Communications from the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica.

*Q: Can you share with us your background and work experience?*

*A:* I am a broadcast journalist with some thirty-plus years of experience both in the Caribbean (including my home country of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, where I began my career, and Jamaica where I studied mass communications) and in the United Nations Radio Service of the Department of Public

*(continued on p. 3)*

## *Letter from the Focal Point for Women*

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first issue of Network for the year 2010 as well as our very best wishes for a fruitful and satisfying year. We bring to you an interview with one of our Departmental Focal Points for Women, Ms. Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte, who will inspire you in her quest to bring forth the value of gender awareness in her department by mentoring other female staff and assisting them in their career progression. She also encourages women to adopt a holistic approach towards their lives—not only working on their careers, but also on nurturing a personal and spiritual life.

As in previous years, this first quarter issue features inter alia the panel discussion hosted by the Focal Point for Women of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues on the occasion of the International Women's Day on 3 March 2010. This year, the discussion evolved around "Beijing + 15: The Representation of Women: A fifteen year retrospect and hopes for the future". The panellists came from three different sectors and discussed the developments made in female representation since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action; identified persistent challenges; and made recommendations in order to foster women's empowerment.

We also draw your attention to a synopsis of a panel discussion on "United to End Violence against Women" as well as a short summary of The Shriver Report. The panel focused on progress achieved and future actions to improve the elimination of abuses against women. The Shriver Report analyses the shift in women's roles in American society and draws attention to the need for management to adopt work/life policies. It also calls on men to support the empowerment of women.

We hope that this issue adds to your awareness of different gender-related events and issues. We rely on your support, every little step counts.

In solidarity,



Aparna Mehrotra

## INTERVIEW WITH GAIL BINDLEY-TAYLOR SAINTE *(continued from p. 2)*

Information (DPI), where I have worked in various capacities since 1983.

In my home country, I worked in both radio and television. Although I have spent the bulk of my 25 years of UN service working in radio, I have also worked in the Committee Liaison Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information. Most recently, I have been transferred to the Outreach Division in the NGO Relations Cluster as an Information Officer.

I have always been involved in staff activities, first as a Staff Representative, then eventually serving the Staff Union as First Vice-President for two years and as Secretary for one year. I have also served on a number of staff-management bodies including the former Appointment and Promotion Committee, the General Service Classification Committee, and the Central Examination Board of which I am the head. I was elected just over a year ago as the Focal Point for Women by staff in my Department. I also belong to the mentoring programme at the UN; so far, I've had three mentees under my supervision, all of whom continue to do well in the system.

**Q: *What are your goals and aspirations as the Focal Point for Women in your Department?***

**A:** As Focal Point, I would like to see my Department continue some of the groundbreaking initiatives that began with my predecessor, Mita Hosali, particularly in the area of implementing a transparent and fair recruitment/selection policy, especially in areas where there are identified gaps. I would also like to see gender-sensitivity training made mandatory for all managers, heads of divisions and senior-level supervisors, and have it included in their e-pas. The Department head must also be held accountable for ensuring that agreed-upon gender targets are met, or consequences will be realized for failing to achieve their goals. I wish to see my Department less concerned with the numbers (which are fairly respectable) and to look more at the qualitative aspects of gender awareness such as: the under-representation at decision-making levels of women of colour and other minorities; the under or non-representation of men in some specific areas; and addressing the lack of career advancement and mobility for senior-level General Service staff, the

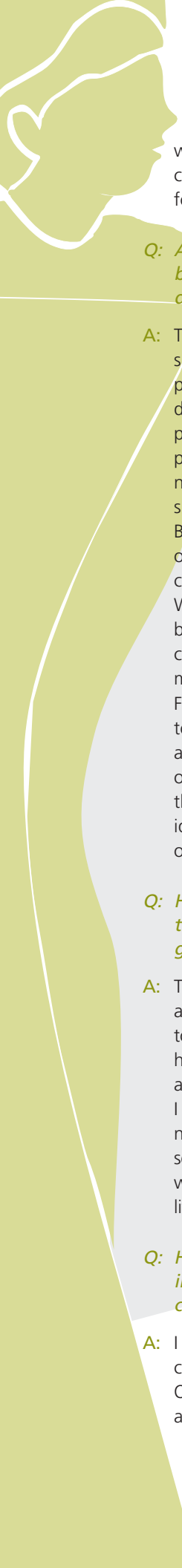
bulk of whom continue to be female. Mobility for women should also be looked at carefully, particularly for those who are stuck in a grade for more than six years. Concerted efforts need to be made to address the question of succession planning, as this holds the key to addressing many gender issues. I would also like to see greater awareness of gender within the Department as a whole.

**Q: *What is the current staff complement of your Department by gender? Could you provide feedback regarding the number of female/male staff? In what category are the highest concentrations of women? Could this change within the next five years?***

**A:** According to our most recent statistics as of 30 June 2008, there are 54 per cent females in the Department of Public Information from the P-2 to USG level. There are a total of 137 females compared to 119 males out of 256 staff members at the Professional level. The weakest gender balance is 41 per cent representation of women at the P-4 level. At the P-2, P-3, P-5 and D-1 levels, the Department's numbers are over 50 per cent with P-5 being 50/50 and D-1 having the highest level of representation at 65 per cent. At the D-2 level, we have a peculiar situation in that we only have three posts, which means we have a possibility of having 100 per cent, 67 per cent or 33 per cent, the latter being the present situation. We should not become complacent and lose sight of this. Furthermore, we've only had one female Under-Secretary-General in DPI's history. Though our numbers are good, we are concerned with the large numbers of women sitting at entry levels P-2/P-3 for long periods of time without having chances of being promoted. This, in turn, impacts the situation at the P-4 and P-5 levels.

**Q: *What are the main issues women face in your Department and/or in the United Nations with regards to upward mobility?***

**A:** In our Department, the main issues women face are a lack of upward mobility; lack of career prospects for those who are in specialized jobs; the need for training and retraining opportunities for those stuck in grades for long periods; not being able to take advantage of all the work/life arrangements with ease and without fear of injury to reputation or career; lack of adequate childcare support for



working mothers at all levels; lack of recognition for consistently good performance; and poor evaluations for which there is little recourse.

**Q:** *As a Focal Point, how do you think you can best communicate the importance of a gender-diverse environment within the Organization?*

**A:** The best publicity is by staff beginning to see visible signs of diversity, whether in posters the Organization puts out for the public or information promoting diversity through the Intranet. Videos can also be produced to raise awareness and distributed in key places around the Secretariat like the cafeteria or near the Credit Union, where people can see visible signs of what's happening regarding gender issues. Brown-bag lunches around gender issues could be organized across divisions, and panel discussions could be held on major occasions like the International Women's Day, at which time our scorecard could be published. Also, a major campaign could be conducted to identify the department with the most gender-diverse environment, involving all the Focal Points and their respective managers working together to come up with the winning ideas. Initially, a Diversity Day at Headquarters could be created and organized, which would be devoted to displaying all the achievements of equality to date. All of these ideas are aimed at communicating the importance of a gender-diverse environment.

**Q:** *How do you think we could get more men and top management to participate in achieving gender equality?*

**A:** This could be done by stressing how important they are to the process of understanding gender. If men and top managers as implementers of policy are able to see how they can also play a part in empowering women, and by doing so also empowering themselves, then I believe things will change. Men and top managers need to see themselves as part of the change and see it benefiting them as equal partners of qualified women working together to improve the quality of life within the workplace.

**Q:** *How would you describe the work/life paradigm in the UN and how do you assist your female colleagues in achieving a better balance?*

**A:** I think one thing that has changed very little in the UN culture is its lack of full support for work/life balance. On one hand, the Organization has put in place flexible arrangements that should ostensibly benefit women

who want to have both a career and marriage and must balance work/life, or face the demands of being a single parent or need to take care of a chronically ill or disabled sibling, parent or child. Despite the fact that the policy is in place, women are still afraid to ask to use these arrangements for fear of being discriminated against. We have also engendered a culture where women seem to feel that in order to be good managers they must have the same management style as their male counterparts or risk appearing weak. This top-down management style offers little room or tolerance for the give and take of developing a trust-filled, two-way communication, and, in particular, lacks good listening skills and the ability to look for ways to accommodate staff who may have problems

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with work/life balance. As a mentor, I encourage my mentees to consider their work/life balance and make sure it is working for both them and the Organization. I always ask them about their career goals and try to learn about whom they are and who they hope to be in five years time, both personally and professionally. I make sure they know I support them, and I find time regularly to meet with them in person or by phone to nurture that relationship. Within my office, I also encourage my female colleagues to develop their lives outside of work and to take advantage of work/life arrangements if they need them.

The UN is also not a very child-friendly culture—though I must admit the Organization has come a long way in 25 years, with at least a place now for mothers to breastfeed their babies. But much more could be done to assist mothers with young children, particularly with adequate childcare and short-term accommodation for sick children, as has been the norm in the private sector for some time. Some women are still nervous to admit they may want to have another child if they already have one or to ask for extended maternity leave.

Another area of concern for working women is being able to go on mission—particularly if the spouse is on a G-4 visa and is now required to leave the country if the UN G-4 spouse is sent on a non-family assignment. Is it fair to discriminate against a

woman who is unable to relocate if we lack policies to support her in going on mission assignments? Perhaps she could be offered a shorter assignment?

I try to encourage the women I work with to take advantage of all the Organization has to offer including classes, training opportunities, mission assignments—but we should now do a little more to support spousal employment and look at some of the remaining obstacles that prevent women from going on mission.

**Q: Do you encourage and facilitate staff in your office to avail themselves of flexi-time and telecommuting?**

**A:** Yes, however, as Focal Point, I have had to put up quite a struggle with management, as they are not particularly in favour of telecommuting, specifically for female managers.

**Q: What advice would you like to give to young women entering the UN system on mobility, spousal employment and how best to combine a career with family life?**

**A:** I would advise any young woman entering this Organization to make sure she plans her career and her family, not just let it evolve. I would suggest that she review where she is every three years and see where she would like to be and what skills she needs to advance her career at both a lateral level and higher. I would stress the need to look for new learning opportunities including language courses, considering temporary assignments that may be a little outside of her comfort zone, and getting involved in staff-management bodies as a way of knowing the Organization while at the same time giving back to it. I would suggest that she look at improving her skills and developing new ones. It is important to take advantage of what the Organization offers in terms of its sabbatical programme, opportunities for training on new technology, and going on mission assignments or reassignment. I also would recommend female staff members to try, as much as possible, not to get stuck at the same level for more than five years and, if that happens, to look for other job opportunities that will offer additional directions for growth and learning. I would stress the need to ensure that while she looks at what is happening with her career, she must also be acutely aware of the effects her career choices have on her family and ensure that the decisions she makes are also in their best interest. Most importantly, I would encourage her to develop a life, especially a

spiritual life, and hobbies outside of the UN, and find the time to cultivate and nurture those as well. Above all, I would advise her to carve out a little more time just for her to renew both mind and spirit.

**Q: What is your vision for the future with regards to the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations?**

**A:** My greatest vision is to see a gender strategy put in place that is taken seriously and implemented by all departments so that we can achieve a 50/50 parity within a reasonable amount time, not a generation from now. I would hope to see departments really examining the numbers and not just merely setting and attaining their targets, rather exploring some of the qualitative issues needed to ensure that gender parity is maintained in the future and in a facilitative culture sensitive to all. I would also like to see departments being held accountable for putting the policy in place and their achievements and failures made public so that staff themselves will be more aware of how their department is dealing with gender issues.

I envision spaces being created for men and women across the Secretariat to discuss family life and issues that remain obstacles to gender parity and present agreed-upon departmental suggestions that can be utilized to promote a gender-sensitive environment. This would ensure that change came not only from the top-down but horizontally as well. I also envision a strong network of active Focal Points across the Secretariat and the entire UN system whose views are well respected by the Under-Secretaries-General and senior managers they are meant to advise and support. I hope for an enhanced Office of the Focal Point for Women, which would be adequately staffed to carry out innovative promotion programmes and would have the monitoring and reporting capacity it needed. I also hope that gender would finally get one major office headed by someone at the USG or ASG level under which all the bodies that handle gender would be incorporated, and that this office would get the respect and political influence it needed to be an effective advocate of gender parity.

I hope that the next five years will see the issue of gender getting the attention it so richly deserves so that women can take their rightful places in this Organization and in society at all levels. ■

## FOCAL POINT FOR WOMEN PANEL DISCUSSION

To commemorate International Women's Day, the **Office of the Focal Point for Women moderated a panel discussion "Beijing +15: The Representation of Women: A Fifteen Year Retrospect and Hopes for the Future"**. The distinguished panellists, Ms. Heisoo Shin, former member of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative to the United Nations of Baha'i International, and Ms. Emma Sabin, Vice-President of Partnerships at Catalyst Incorporated discussed past progress and future requirements in women's representation in the public and private spheres. They assessed the progress that has been made since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and identified areas where improvement was needed, such as in: the visibility of CEDAW; the political participation of women; the percentage of women reaching higher levels of management positions; the Organization's commitment to change; and work satisfaction amongst employees. Nonetheless, all three panellists noted that some countries had progressed more swiftly than others, but that the final goal of equal representation had not been met.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Mehrotra, the moderator, briefly summarized the UN's response to the Beijing Platform's call for increased representation of women at all levels including in the United Nations system. She noted that in 1997, the Secretary-General created the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), placing the Office of the Focal Point for Women (OFPW) within it. The role of the OFPW is to assist the Secretary-General in increasing the representation of women in the United Nations system, prepare the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations, advise on gender-related issues, formulate gender relevant policies and undertake the requested advocacy and outreach programmes to ensure its effective implementation.

The discussion revolved around three central themes:

- I. The **progress** since the 1995 adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in the implementation of the improvement of the status of women;
- II. The **challenges** remaining;
- III. The **way forward** to accelerate the progress of women.

Ms. Heisoo Shin, a former member of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), noted that since Beijing,

1995 2000 2005 **NOW** 2015 ...

**BEIJING +15**  
**THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN:**  
**A FIFTEEN YEAR RETROSPECT**  
**and Hopes for the Future**

**Ms. Rachel Mayanja**  
Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

**On the occasion of International Women's Day**  
**Invites you to a panel discussion**  
**for all**

**Wednesday, 3 March 2010**  
**1:15 - 2:30 pm**  
**Conference Room 1**

**Moderator:**  
**Aparna Mehrotra**, Focal Point for Women, United Nations

**Speakers:**  
**Heisoo Shin**, former Member, CEDAW  
**Bani Dugal**, Principal Representative to the United Nations,  
Bahá'í International Community  
**Emma Sabin**, Vice-President, Partnerships, Catalyst

the Convention has enjoyed enhanced global visibility. It requires 186 member states to ensure that women enjoy equal participation in all areas and at all levels of society, including in public, political, economic, social, and cultural fields. State parties are required to provide equal rights to women within their jurisdiction. There has been some progress in the area of representation of women in Parliament from 11.3 per cent in 1995 to 18.8 per cent, at present.

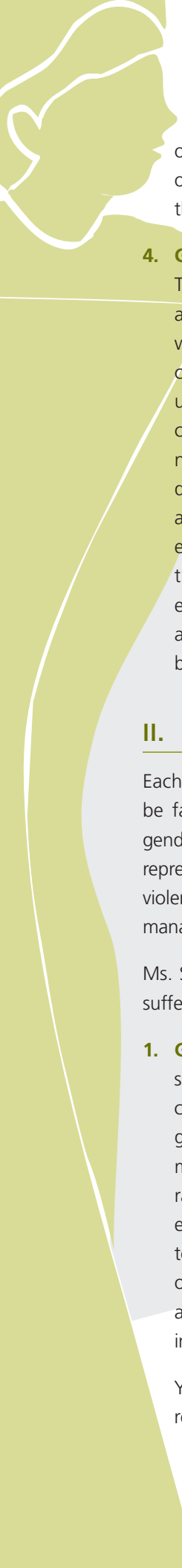
With respect to challenges, Ms. Shin pointed out that a myriad of issues continue to prevent progress. Discriminatory practices still exist, with women in many of the signatory countries yet to receive equal rights or access to proper employment, health care and education. In addition, women living in rural areas do not have a say in their own personal development, particularly regarding marriage and family relations.

Ms. Bani Dugal, representing the non-governmental organization's sector, and speaking as a human rights expert and Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations, reported that NGOs had been advancing legislation and mechanisms to promote women's issues and the concept of equality for men and women at the grass-roots level, nationally and internationally. She also emphasized that more women occupy leadership positions today than ever before, with many young women displaying a greater commitment to tackling gender issues than previous generations. Nevertheless, results are not uniform across the globe and are often characterized by the "two steps forward, three steps backward" trend. Using new technologies, NGOs are helping women to assume higher responsibilities in legislation and on the ground. NGOs are working at the local, national and international levels, to call for a positive voice within the new gender entity at the United Nations.

## I. PROGRESS

From the private sector, Ms. Emma Sabin, Vice-President, Advisory Services, Partnerships, at Catalyst, Inc., mentioned that progress since Beijing falls into roughly four areas:

- 1. Increased representation of women.** In 1995, women constituted 1 per cent of all CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Today, they constitute 3 per cent of Fortune 500 CEOs. In 1995, only 9.6 per cent of board seats in large corporations were held by women. Today, in 2010, representation has increased to 15.2 per cent. Catalyst research has also demonstrated a positive correlation between increasing the corporate number of women on boards and an increase in their representation at the senior-management level.
- 2. Greater commitment of management to workplace inclusion.** Large corporations show greater commitment to workplace inclusion not only in the United States but also in other environments where women face societal challenges. In Japan, for example, the Nissan Corporation has advocated to bring women forward from lower-management positions to middle-management roles. Consequently, this has created career advisors for women only, provided networking events for women employees to increase their visibility to upper management, and conducted management training so that both men and women better understand gender-related issues in the workplace. The culmination of these efforts led to Nissan winning the 2008 Catalyst Award.
- 3. Increased sophistication of the corporate sector's expression of commitment to the advancement of women.** The past 15 years have witnessed increased sophistication of how corporations express their commitment to diverse workforces. The progression of initiatives at Deloitte, a major international accounting and consulting firm, for example, demonstrated this growth. Deloitte received the Catalyst Award for advancing women in 1995 for its training programme entitled, "Women and Men as Colleagues". Deloitte won the Catalyst Award again in 2010, this time for a more sophisticated programme. One of the key components of their 2010 initiative, "Mass Career Customization", was a model of how to advance in today's workforce by considering career building not



only as a ladder, but as a lattice where one moves on and off, upwards, downwards, and sidewise, so that one's career can match one's current life stage.

#### 4. **Greater work satisfaction for employees.**

The current trend is not just about advancement and representation. Rather, employees increase work satisfaction because of what leading edge companies do in the workplace. In the early '90s, IBM underwent workforce challenges, leading them to conduct a global survey on work/life and flexibility needs. The survey findings reflected employee dissatisfaction in the area of diversity, inclusion, and flexibility amongst others. The company then embraced work/life balance, inclusion and diversity through various programmes, targeting increasing employee satisfaction. Follow-up surveys indicated a renewed and invigorated work environment benefiting IBM's productivity and effectiveness.

## II. CHALLENGES

Each panellist assessed remaining **challenges** to be faced. Challenges identified included: persisting gender roles and stereotyping; restrictions on women's representation in government; poor economic climate; violence against women; and outdated and regressive management styles and attitudes.

Ms. Shin mentioned that implementation of CEDAW suffered several challenges. Two in particular included:

**1. Gender-role stereotyping.** Gender-role stereotyping constitutes one of the greatest challenges to the advancement of women globally. Many societies continue to dictate what men should do and what women should not do, raising the younger generations according to those expectations. Women, for example are not expected to occupy high positions in politics, public positions, or the corporate world. That basic mindset remains also at the international level and the challenge lies in how to overcome it.

Yet, another area where the workforce either reinforces or does not approve/support women's

traditional roles lies in the area of the burden of care, responsibilities shouldered largely by women worldwide. Most societies still find it difficult to support women in their dual care and workforce responsibility. For example, sexual harassment still plagues the workplace and childcare facilities are minimal. With the exception of some Scandinavian countries, communities and workplaces worldwide rarely mention the necessity of balancing work and family for men, as men don't seem to see family as either a responsibility or an obligation.

#### 2. **Electoral systems' restrictions on women's representation.**

The electoral system stands as a more specific challenge to representation. It blocks women from advancing in the political arena. In some elections, for example, women candidates are threatened and murdered and female voters at the polls are intimidated, and threatened by conservative, religious and male communities. Thus, changing the male and conservative mentality remains a challenge. Without overcoming this, it will be difficult to achieve equal representation for women on a global scale.

In discussing the challenges remaining in relation to women's responsibilities, Ms. Dugal mentioned four categories:

**1. Political.** While some governments have acknowledged the key role of NGOs in the improvement of female representation, persistent government restrictions on NGOs and women remain. Several governments continue to ban women's rights activities and many religious extremists and military dictatorships continue to threaten women who express a desire to advance equality and empowerment agendas.

**2. Economic.** While dominant development paradigms favour privatization, extreme privatization does not, in many cases, assist women's advancement. Widespread unemployment particularly impacts women. Further, the often prevailing materialistic worldview contributes to the exploitation, marginalization, and limitation



of the development of women and girls. In many instances, their advancement has also been hampered by allocation of national budgets away from women's needs such as in education and health, to military spending.

- 3. Social.** Societies appear to suffer from a global pandemic of violence against women, creating a lack of security. Further, women's responsibilities are double or triple to those of men, as women working also in the labour force do not receive support for their domestic responsibilities. A general lack of understanding of the prevailing barriers facing women's participation in society constitutes a challenge.
- 4. Cultural.** Negative stereotyping of women continues to exist in all cultures, preventing women from progressing in their communities.

### III. THE WAY FORWARD

In this context, on the issue of stereotyping, Ms. Sabin added that the private sector is confronted with three obstacles as it moves to advance women: a decreasing rate of women's representation, stereotyping of male and female leaders, and outdated management styles and work attitudes.

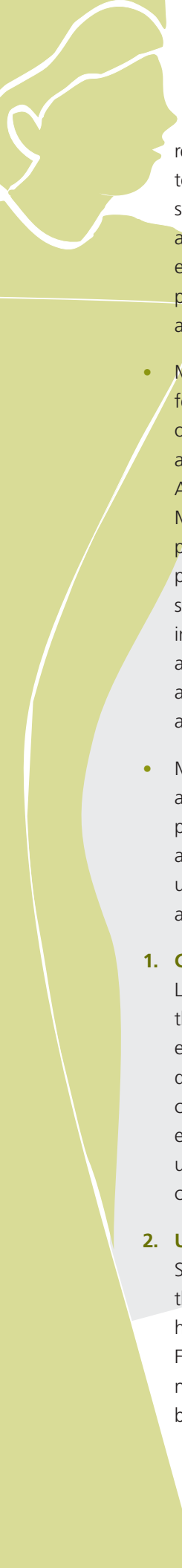
- 1. Decreasing rate of increase in women's representation.** Over the last 15 years, the increase in the representation of women in the private sector has averaged a mere 0.5 per cent per year, yielding an estimated projection of 70 years to reach parity. In contrast to Norway's encouraging progress, such low rates of progress prove very discouraging.
- 2. Stereotyping of men and women leaders.** Female leaders are stereotyped as possessing caring and nurturing attributes while male leaders are stereotyped as dominant and controlling, displaying "take charge" attributes. In a survey of organizational cultures, undertaken by Catalyst in Europe through various corporations, results revealed that the most valued leadership qualities were typically attributed to male rather than to

female leaders. In the United States, however, women surveyed were convinced that females are better problem solvers while men were similarly convinced that males are more competent in problem-solving. Ms. Sabin concluded that innate assumptions, which people do not discuss openly, ultimately influence the hiring, promotion, and developmental decisions impacting upon women. Talented women in the workplace miss out on opportunities, as do their employers.

- 3. Outdated management styles and work attitudes.** In both the industrial and manufacturing sectors, as well as in the military, outdated management styles and work attitudes pose a concern for women. Older management styles tend to base work assessments on "face time", which is the amount of time and commitment an employee gives to the firm on site. Consequently, women are at a disadvantage because of the non-work related responsibilities most women continue to shoulder, and which naturally diminishes the "face time" they can put in to the job.

The panellists discussed **recommendations** and future steps that would facilitate meeting the goals of the Beijing Platform. Chief among these was the implementation of affirmative action, in that organizations must not only "sell" the idea as a cornerstone of organizational success but also enforce implementation at all levels—through measuring progress and holding management accountable. Furthermore, panellists stated that general attitudes toward and treatment of women need to be improved in order to increase the likelihood of their promotion and to ensure that their participation does not endanger them.

- According to Ms. Shin, **temporary special measures or affirmative action** constituted the most effective way to increase the representation of women. The CEDAW Convention stipulates that each State party must adopt temporary special measures to ensure that women are well represented. Rwanda serves as a good example as



representation of women in its Parliament increased to 56.3 per cent, thanks to the implementation of special measures. If temporary special measures are adopted in other fields such as the judiciary, education and administration sectors, target percentages or quotas could be set for women in appointments in these areas.

- Ms. Dugal emphasized that some NGOs promote female leadership and work to ensure the safety of women. Women should become aware of and personify what effective leadership entails. Addressing the issue of security is paramount, Ms. Dugal stated, because women in leadership positions can be in danger as a result of their persistent participation in the public sphere. As such, men must become comfortable with the shift in the status quo of women's roles. Governments also need to realign their investment strategies and reorganize their priorities to assist in the achievement of this goal.
- Ms. Sabin emphasized the need for action in four areas to improve the representation of women in the private sector: change the way leadership is thought about; use a cultural change-management process; understand the organizational rationale; measure and be accountable for the change.

#### **1. Change the way we think about leadership.**

Leaders need to take the first step to encourage the change. They have to "sell" the change. Merely expecting an increased representation of women does not fulfil the objective of diversity. As women come into and advance within the workforce, enhancing workforce diversity cannot be sustained unless organizations' cultures also change in a constructive way—from the inside, out.

#### **2. Use a cultural change-management process.**

Selling change itself is not enough. The organizations that have advanced the greatest number of women have used guiding principles called changed drivers. First and foremost, leadership commitment is necessary at all levels. It is leadership itself which becomes a voice for the change.

#### **3. Understand the organizational rationale.**

Employees should understand the rationale for change—i.e. the business case for equal representation. People should hear about the case more often. Communication is key and needs to be interactive and integrated in order to instil change. Where there is resistance, it is crucial that the objections be heard, understood, recognized, respected and appreciated.

#### **4. Measure and be accountable for the change.**

A change that cannot be measured cannot be managed. Measurement and accountability enable management to determine what progress has been made and what steps are next to meet the goal or vision for the organization. More importantly, it is essential to address diversity and the inclusion needs of the organization and prioritize these needs. By using this strategic approach, heads of organizations can progress quickly from one challenge to the next.

### **Conclusions from the Focal Point for Women**

Ms. Mehrotra gave credit to all sectors, public, private and non-governmental for their advocacy and implementation of gender-related policies and programmes in the 15 years since Beijing. Further, the United Nations owes much to CEDAW. She pointed out that the United Nations itself greatly benefits from its close association with CEDAW as it provides an effective platform for advocacy. Ms. Mehrotra also highlighted that NGOs and the private sector remain valuable partners for the advancement of women in the United Nations and that they have many good practices that the UN can emulate. Ms. Mehrotra emphasized that without these sectors, it would be much more difficult to move forward to address issues related to gender equality in the United Nations system.

The United Nations General Assembly has been sensitive to issues of work/life balance. Several of its resolutions speak of representation of women in the context of gender balance as do organizational

policies. These, however, do not always translate into realities that benefit staff members' lives because policy has not been accompanied by strong implementation. As such, while "a balanced world is a better world", even in the workplace, much work remains, in order to achieve an organizational culture that routinely and easily embraces flexibility in work methodology.

Goals in UN Gender Parity have only been reached at the P-2 level in the United Nations. At the 10th year of UN employees' careers, ratios stagnate at approximately 35 per cent for females. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a strong advocate of the advancement of women, has placed women at the most senior levels in the Organization. This increase in representation at the highest level does not, however, automatically translate into increases at the lower levels or into improved implementation of gender-related policy.

Ms. Mehrotra mentioned areas which present challenges with respect to the advancement of female employees in the Organization: affirmative action; flexibility; a culture of implementation; and monitoring.

- Affirmative action. Affirmative action is needed to catalyze progress. In the United Nations, despite the availability of qualified women at the mid-management (P-4) level, their representation remained below 30 per cent. Women at the P-4 level are not advancing. At other levels, such as at the P-5 or D-1 levels, the representation of women is lower than it was several years ago. The Office of the Focal Point for Women prepared a gender strategy which includes effective implementation of affirmative action. The proof, however, will lie in effective implementation.
- Flexibility. The issue of flexibility is essential. Responses to several staff surveys recently conducted by the OFPW reveal that job satisfaction, production and retention in the workplace increase with flexibility. Further, a modern workforce increasingly demands it.
- A culture of accountability and implementation. A genuine culture of accountability and

implementation of policy is fundamental to improving the representation of women and encouraging flexible work arrangements. Many managers still equate productivity with control in face time. To encourage implementation therefore, flexible work arrangements are now part of each department's management compact to be reviewed by the Management Performance Board.

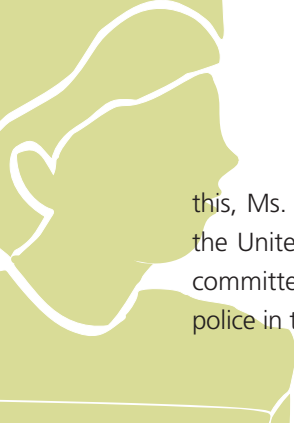
- Monitoring. Monitoring policy implementation is fundamental because what is not monitored is not measured and what is not measured remains invisible.

In conclusion, Ms Mehrotra said: "We have seen that we need improved affirmative action, flexible work arrangements, affirmative action, improved accountability and monitoring for both the men and women. This is about justice as much as it is about attitude. We all have a sphere of influence and we all control our attitude. Use both to keep the fire burning and to influence on change one person at a time. One seed planted at a time, eventually creates a forest". ■

## CONGRATULATIONS TO

**Margot Wallström** (Sweden) for her appointment by the Secretary-General as the **Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict**. Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Wallström served as a Member of the Swedish Parliament from 1979 until 1985, and as Minister of Civil Affairs, Minister of Culture, and Minister of Social Affairs in her Government. She was also an Environmental Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission and has a longstanding record of promoting awareness of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, focusing on the injustice of violence against women during armed conflict.

**Ms. Ann-Marie Orlor** for her appointment by the Secretary-General on 8 March 2010 as the **highest ranking United Nations police official**. Prior to



this, Ms. Orler served as the Deputy Police Adviser at the United Nations. A native of Sweden, Ms. Orler is committed to increasing the participation of female police in the UN civilian police operations globally. ■

## AROUND THE UN ...

### **Fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

The CSW, at its fifty-fourth session, carried out a 15-year review of the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the context of this year's theme "**Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities: Progress for All**". From 1-12 March 2010, representatives of Member States evaluated developments on gender issues, discussed good practices, policies and the remaining challenges to accelerate the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

More information on this session may be found on: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html> ■

### **International Women's Day**

United Nations offices all over the world observed International Women's Day, 8 March 2010, appealing for **greater support to women's empowerment** and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In his opening remarks, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted, "The Beijing Declaration remains as relevant today as when it was adopted. The third Millennium Development Goal—to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment—is central to all the rest. When women are denied the opportunity to better themselves and their societies, we all lose. On this International Women's Day, let us look critically at the achievements of the past 15 years so we can build on what has worked, and correct what has not. Let us work with renewed determination for a future of equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all."

The entire message can be accessed at [http://www.un.org/en/events/women/iwd/2010/sg\\_message.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/women/iwd/2010/sg_message.shtml) ■

### **The Gender Equality Fund**

The Governments of Spain and Norway created the **Gender Equality Fund**, a \$68 million multilateral initiative administered by UNIFEM to accelerate the improvement of the economic and political empowerment of women at the local and national levels. It will provide financial grants to government and civil society organizations of developing countries to fight discrimination, decrease poverty, advance the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW.). A Steering Committee composed of donors, government and non-governmental representatives, and the private sector, will advise on the design and focus of the Fund. In addition, an Advisory Committee will invite technical experts from different countries to support the review and selection of proposals. ■

### **UN helps pregnant women in Haiti after the earthquake**

As part of its emergency earthquake relief support, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is **assisting expectant mothers of Haiti** by distributing:

- Medical items to expectant Haitian mothers (a clean piece of plastic sheet, a razor blade, string to cut and tie the umbilical cord, soap, a diaper cloth to dry the baby and gloves);
- Emergency Caesarian section equipment (intravenous fluid and drugs);
- Instruments and medicines given to midwives to help stabilize a woman giving birth;
- Dignity kits (sanitary napkins, underwear, anti-bacterial soap and hygiene supplies) for women and children;

- Kits for post-rape care and treatment of complicated and unsafe abortions.

UNFPA is working with its local partners in Haiti to inform the people on where and how to get the medical kits. ■

### **International Day against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting**

On the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) 6 February 2010, **United Nations officials called on the international community to intensify its commitment to end this harmful practice.** Although there has been success in decreasing the incidence of FGM/C, approximately 120 to 140 million women have been subjected to this dangerous procedure. According to a joint statement made by UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Thoraya Obaid and Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), FGM/C is mainly undertaken for cultural and other non-medical reasons. Women and girls face harmful health effects from FGM/C, often lasting a lifetime. Still, many countries continue to practice FGM/C. Many girls consent to FGM/C in order for their families to avoid social exclusion. Furthermore, girls cannot forego cutting if they intend to be married as FGM/C increases a woman's chances of finding a husband. UNFPA, UNICEF and their partners have called upon different sectors in the community to speak out against FGM/C in the hope that their voices condemning such violating practices will reduce the number of cuttings in all affected countries by the year 2015. ■

### **International Corporate Philanthropy Day**

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) hosted a special event coinciding with the **celebration of the International Corporate Philanthropy Day** on 22 February 2010. UNIFEM and other prominent partners in the political, private, civil and entertainment sectors promoted women's rights, with the aim of empowering women. Together with

the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, the Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, opened the session. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of increasing economic opportunities for women and fighting violence committed against them worldwide, emphasizing the need to end violence against women, sex trafficking, "honour killings" and genital mutilation.

Award-winning actress, Geena Davis, highlighted that research shows that a three-to-one ratio of male to female roles exist in films for actors, with most female characters stereotyped and hyper-sexualized, warping the view of women's role in society. She remarked that female characters need to have a better image in the media.

UNIFEM's partner, AVON announced its additional pledge to donate \$250,000 (building on its previous pledge of \$1 million) to the U.N. Trust Fund for a project to combat gender-based violence in Mexico. Furthermore, in an effort to reduce violence against women, the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists launched its global initiative "Empowerment through Enlightenment" aimed to raise awareness among men and offer skill-building opportunities to women.

The Duchess of York, Ms. Sarah Ferguson spoke about, "the Mother's Army", her initiative inspired by the village halls operated by women in the United Kingdom during the Second World War, which were distribution centers for basic necessities, like sugar and butter.<sup>1</sup> Through this network, mothers will distribute information regarding available services provided by governments, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations, to women, whether they are victims of rape, abuse, poverty or otherwise in need of help.

In conclusion, the panellists recommended actions to:

- Promote concrete initiatives by the philanthropic community and initiate new partnerships to accelerate progress in reaching the targets set out in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3—to promote gender equality and empower women;

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6244U920100305>

- Expand multi-stakeholder engagement in the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign;
- Provide a platform for all actors involved in the work of ECOSOC to increase awareness among the philanthropic community on the progress made and the challenges faced in the achievement of MDG 3.<sup>2</sup> ■

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### “UNiTE to End Violence against Women”

The Commission on the Status of Women held a panel discussion on 11 March 2010 on “United to End Violence against Women”. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the session, followed by a statement by the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström Moderated by Mr. Roberto Storaci, Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, the panellists included Mr. Dean Peacock, co-director Sonke Gender Justice Network and co-chair of the Global Men Engage Alliance; Ms. Susana Chiarotti, Women's Human Rights Expert and Director of the Instituto de Género, Derecho y Desarrollo and Mr. Walter Füllemann, Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the eradication of violence against women has become a priority issue at global, regional and national levels, resulting in an increase in initiatives, identification of good practices and engagement of multiple stakeholders. Despite achievements, violence against women persists in all countries and regions, with devastating consequences for individuals, families and societies. Eliminating all forms of violence against women is crucial to the promotion of gender equality and the realization of women's human rights.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/phlntrpy/philanthropy10.shtml>

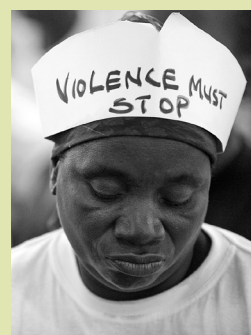
Women continue to be frequently exposed to sexual violence in times of war. While international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law offer protection to women in situations of armed conflict, many societies do not respect these laws. The Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, **Margot Wallström, whom the Secretary-General said “would be a powerful voice in helping countries translate commitments into actions”.**

Greater efforts are necessary to promote the eradication of violence perpetuated against women, including national media campaigns and changes to educational curricula. Support and services for victims of violence against women, including shelters and safe houses, national hotlines and centres that provide information, counselling, support and referral services, have increased. However, not all victims have access to adequate and sufficiently funded services. Governments and international organizations should make additional efforts to offer services in more locations and expand outreach programmes to victims who may not be aware of the support available to them.

Inadequate data and statistics on violence against women remain a major issue. National statistics offices must increase the collection of accurate data including statistics on the prevalence of violence against women, reported cases of violence, prosecutions and the use of services by victims, in order to develop and implement sound laws and policies.

Involving men and boys in efforts to end violence against women is essential. Worldwide action has improved the education of men regarding women's

**While international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law offer protection to women in situations of armed conflict, many societies do not respect these laws.**



rights using the media as a tool to make perpetrators accountable for their actions and thus promoting changes in men's sexual practices. However, efforts to involve males in gender reform have been small in scale and limited in impact. To make a tangible difference, it is imperative for policymakers and society to demonstrate a stronger commitment to ending abuse by engaging men and boys in this international struggle of violence against women.

Women, particularly survivors of violence, must play an integral role in developing and implementing all measures taken, in order to increase knowledge of their needs and priorities and ensure that these are addressed. Women themselves should be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes and initiatives as the power of inclusion makes women more competent decisionmakers and perceptive key players in determining their needs and priorities. ■

## Equality Now: An Update February 2010

### WORDS AND DEEDS:

#### Holding Governments Accountable in the Beijing +15 Review Process

Equality Now, an organization which works to end violence and discrimination against women around the world, updated its published 1999 report called, "Words and Deeds—holding Governments Accountable in the Beijing +5 Review Process". The Beijing +15 report lists examples of laws which discriminate against women in 45 countries. In addition, it highlights the following countries<sup>3</sup> which have **amended their discriminatory laws**:

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Legal provision repealed or amended since 2000</b>
Algeria	Wife obedience required
Bahamas	No inheritance rights for women unless there were no male heirs
Bangladesh	Women could not pass citizenship to their children

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action\\_1610\\_en.html](http://www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action_1610_en.html)

<b>(continued)</b>	
<b>Countries</b>	<b>Legal provision repealed or amended since 2000</b>
Colombia, Mexico, Romania, Turkey	Different minimum ages of marriage for boys and girls
Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay	Rapist exempted from punishment if he married his victim
France	Women prohibited from working at night
Haiti, Jordan, Morocco	Exemption from penalty for men who murdered their wives and/or female relatives in certain circumstances
India, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Serbia and Montenegro, Tonga	Allowed marital rape
Kuwait	Women did not have the right to vote
Latvia	Women prohibited from working overtime and travelling for work during pregnancy and one year after childbirth
Lesotho	Property could not be registered in the name of women married in community property
Mexico	Women prohibited from remarrying for a specified time after divorce or widowhood
Nepal	Restrictions on women's property rights
Pakistan	Discriminatory evidentiary standards applied to proving rape under the Zina Ordinance
Poland	Women restricted from passing their surname to their children
Republic of Korea, Turkey	Man designated as head of the family
Switzerland	Women not allowed to carry out certain functions in the army
Venezuela	Women prohibited from passing nationality to their husbands

Equality Now strongly urges advocates to communicate with the Heads of their Governments to review other discriminatory laws which are in force and to appeal for subsequent amendments. Effective laws are essential to protect women's rights. ■

### **First female President of Costa Rica**

Costa Rica elected its **first female President**, Laura Chinchilla, a former Vice-President and Minister of Justice for the country. Ms. Chinchilla, 50, won a landslide election victory in Costa Rica on 8 February 2010. She vowed to overcome rising crime rates, violence and drug trafficking in the country. She also promised to continue the free-trade policies of her predecessor, Oscar Arias. Ms. Chinchilla obtained her masters in Public Policy from Georgetown University. ■

### **Elections in Iraq**

Iraq held its second post-invasion parliamentary election on 7 March 2010. For the first time, 12 women led by **Ms. Jenan Mubark formed a political party** with the goal of defending the rights of women and finding employment for approximately 700,000 widows. The Constitution of the country calls for a 25 per cent<sup>4</sup> representation of women in the Parliament.

However, according to Shatha al-Musawi, an independent Parliamentary Member who is not seeking re-election, not all female politicians agree with an all-women party, as ideas, principles and theories cannot be addressed by a gender approach only.

There have been some major successes politically, according to Ms. Safia Taleb al-Souhail, a Member of Parliament seeking re-election: one is the suspension of legislation that would have given religious leaders partial authority over domestic matters, including marriage, divorce and inheritance; another is the establishment of the quota of women in Parliament. Ms. al-Souhail believes that there has been a change in the tone of Iraqi society over the last four years, in that female politicians are starting to participate in the political process and are becoming more accepted

<sup>4</sup> <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2010-02-17CREA-82RHNA>

by the people. However, on the whole, the impact of women in Parliament has not been significant, with women still excluded from decision-making sessions. This could be rectified by electing a female leader, which would send a positive message of hope to those women wishing to start a career in the political sector. ■

### **Legislative seats for women in India**

**One third of all legislative seats in India's Parliament are to be set aside for women.** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed this historical Bill. It is hoped that with the passage of this Bill, issues affecting women such as domestic violence, unequal access to health and education and female infanticide, will be addressed. ■

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines discrimination against women as any "distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights or fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field". ■
- The recent study of Ernst & Young entitled, "The Global Mindset" notes that scope of diversity is neither limited to aspects of race or gender nor merely a term used in human resources language linked solely to recruitment practices. Rather, it covers the entire dimension of human experience—age, culture, education, personality, skills and experiences. ■



### **Shriver Report**

"The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything", describes the shift in women's roles in the American society. Maria Shriver and the experts for the Center for American Progress, produced this report based on research, anecdotal evidence, reflections, and surveys.

Women now constitute around one half of the breadwinners or co-breadwinners in American families, creating a change in how families live, employees interact, bosses manage, and above all, how the media deals with the new realities faced by women. Women's active roles have transformed their communities and institutions alike, for example, the government, corporations and faith-based and social institutions. Further, while men have lost jobs in the United States during this financial crisis, women on the contrary, have become more central to the labour force. The Report states that the "battle of the sexes has ended", replaced by negotiations and discussions between spouses about domestic responsibilities, childcare and elderly care.

The Report highlights inter alia the struggles of women as their roles change: their increasing contributions to the world's economy; the need to achieve equality in the workplace; the importance of the workplace policies that occupy the new reality of family functioning; implications of women's health particularly in relation to their increased contributions and participation in the labour force; health-insurance systems that have failed women; and educational systems that foster women's career development. The Report emphasizes that the increasingly diverse workforce and changing lifestyles require management to adopt work/life policies such as flexible work arrangements, flexible career paths, and new leadership styles that support both men and women. The Report also calls for men to better support the empowerment of women.

Polls undertaken by fellows from the Center for American Progress indicate that both genders acknowledge the benefits to the country of women's growing participation in the workforce. Consequently, because women constitute half of the workers in the United States in today's society, it is imperative for policymakers, corporate leaders, the media and even religious institutions to adapt to these changes in the new life setting of the 21st century. According to Heather Boushey and Ann O'Leary who wrote the Executive Summary of the Shriver Report, "The ultimate goal is a more prosperous future for all women and all men in a nation that recognizes the unique value of each of us to contribute to the common good at work and at home."<sup>5</sup>

### **Workplace equality initiatives**

A global business consulting firm, Bain & Company, assists management in their decisions on strategy, operations, mergers and acquisitions, technology and organization. Its company chairpersons, Orit Gadiesh and Julie Coffman, partner and chair of Bain's Global Women's Leadership Council in association with the Harvard Business Review, conducted a recent survey of more than 1,800 business people on gender parity. An article entitled, "Why Workplace Equality Initiatives Aren't Helping Women", presents the findings of the study. The survey respondents:

- Confirmed their belief in the advantages of gender parity;
- Noted that while companies say they promote gender parity, the reality is that of the contrary, with employees stating that there is a lack of commitment from management in that women are not treated equally to men;
- Considered flexible work arrangements and mentorships initiated by companies ineffective;
- Felt they did not receive sufficient training on

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/10/womans\\_nation.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/10/womans_nation.html)

gender parity and in other leadership-training programmes;

- Noted that women's roles are still restricted to their image as mothers and caregivers which in turn limit their opportunities to move up the corporate ladder.

In conclusion, the authors stressed that “the survey sends a strong message: **if companies want to help more women climb the corporate ladder, they have to go beyond flex jobs or flex hours ... all companies need to develop less rigid promotion processes and career paths.**” With more women in leadership positions, the talent pool of the workforce has the potential to double, guaranteeing greater, dynamic organizations. ■

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

UNAIDS, the International AIDS Society (IAS) and 14 public and private organizations released a new report, “Asking the Right Questions: Advancing an HIV Research Agenda for Women and Children”, **as part of their commitment to women and children victims of the AIDS epidemic.** The report highlights the responses to HIV-related challenges facing women and children worldwide and recommends a four-fold plan to eliminate obstacles to access HIV prevention and treatment.

The four areas addressed include:

1. Clinical research to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and paediatric treatment;
2. Clinical research on women's treatment issues;
3. Operations research for women and;
4. Implementation research related to stopping mother-to-child transmission.<sup>6</sup> ■

<sup>6</sup> [http://data.unaids.org/pub/Agenda/2010/20100308\\_joint\\_consensusstatement\\_askingtherightquestions\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Agenda/2010/20100308_joint_consensusstatement_askingtherightquestions_en.pdf)

## WORK/LIFE

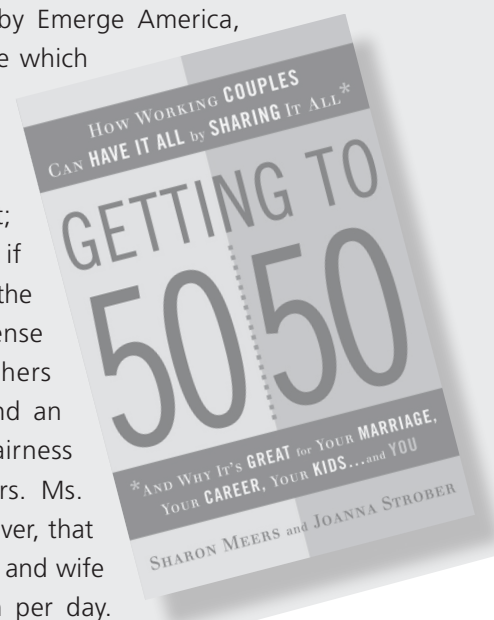
### Getting to 50/50 in your work and home

Sharon Meers, co-author of *Getting to 50/50* has published a book about men and women finding common ground such that men can be full parents and women can have full careers. Ms. Meers, a Managing Director at Goldman, Sachs & Company, serves on the board of the National Women's Law Center and on the Advisory Council of Stanford's Clayman Institute for Research on Gender and, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

In a discussion of the advantages of the 50/50 mindset in a webinar launched by Emerge America, Ms. Meers cited evidence which

illustrated: improved behaviour of a child in school if he/she interacts with more than one adult; a lower risk of divorce if there is more sharing in the household; a better sense of well-being if mothers work; and less stress and an enhanced feeling of fairness amongst family members. Ms. Meers emphasized, however, that it is not about a husband and wife contributing 50/50 each per day.

Couples can negotiate their day-to-day chores and hurdles. Ms. Meers suggested that the husband and wife make a master plan together, doing a list of tasks even once a month and engaging in regular conversations about their domestic responsibilities. Further, if outcomes rather than hours of work are taken as measures, women will emerge better both at home and in the workplace. If work is interdependent, men and women can both change the world. The point is that as a **team**—“**Together Each Achieves More**” and a couple set up **a better path in life for themselves and their children.** ■



## RECOMMENDED READING AND WEBSITES

### ***The new global mindset***

[http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Estudo\\_New\\_Global\\_Mindset\\_2010/\\$FILE/New\\_Global\\_Mindset.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Estudo_New_Global_Mindset_2010/$FILE/New_Global_Mindset.pdf)

### ***Driving innovation through diverse perspectives***

Ernst & Young, an assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services company undertook a recent survey of their clients on the issue of diversity. The results revealed that many companies lacked diversity in thought and culture when handling global businesses. The study defined diversity and illustrated its connection with innovation—concluding that **the outputs of a well-managed and diverse team are more exceptional than one which is homogeneous.**

### ***Female Factor***

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/world/series/the\\_female\\_factor/index.html?s=oldest&](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/world/series/the_female_factor/index.html?s=oldest&)

A series called “Female Factor” consists of articles and reports on **changes associated with the influence of women in various societies in the 21st century.** Examples cited include:

- The doubling of female United Nations peacekeepers worldwide during the past five years;
- Incorporation of educated Korean women into national Government due to the Government’s increased support for women’s rights;
- Formation by 12 Iraqi women, of an Iraqi political party to fight for women’s rights, particularly for the widows of the country;

- Promotion of women in public office by the Bulgarian Prime Minister;
- Increase in high-level representation of women in the Indian financial industry.

### ***Gender Balance Strategy for the United Nations Secretariat***

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/Gender%20balance%20strategy%20for%20the%20UN%20SEC.pdf>

To accelerate progress towards gender parity at all levels, the United Nations Secretariat formulated a Gender Balance Strategy in February 2010.

The Strategy outlines the basis around the implementation and monitoring of the Gender Strategy and the action plan in the following areas:

- Communication and increased awareness of the Strategy to managers and staff;
- Strengthened recruitment/selection;
- Improvement of the retention of female staff;
- Increased opportunities for career development/progression;
- Expansion of flexible working arrangements;
- Facilitation of spousal employment;
- Adequate day-care facilities;
- Addressing of informal barriers/working climate and culture;

The Strategy specifies the roles of the Office of the Special Adviser for Gender Issues, the Focal Point for Women and Departmental Focal Points in implementing the Strategy. It also includes a comprehensive communication campaign to promote the awareness of this Gender Strategy.

## RECOMMENDED READING AND WEBSITES (CONTINUED)

### ***The Worldwide War on Baby Girls***

[http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=15636231](http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15636231)

The article on “The Worldwide War on Baby Girls” raises awareness on the effects of technology, declining fertility, patriarchal culture, and prejudices on the creation of an **unbalanced gender population** in large countries such as India and China.

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<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/2010/index.html>

The official website with the theme, “Equal rights, equal opportunities: progress for all”, contains the background and history of International Women’s Day and provides the events and webcasts of discussions held from 1-12 March 2010. It also provides other relevant links and resources to International Women’s Day celebrations globally.

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<http://www.un.org/en/pseataaskforce/>

The Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) launched its new website in English, French and Spanish. The website covers an overview of

PSEA, tools on how to address sexual exploitation and abuse through engagement with and support of local populations, prevention, and response to populations. The information on the website is geared to different groups: first-time visitors, staff members, focal points and senior managers. ■

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**You can find a monthly list of senior vacancy announcements (P-5 and above) at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>**

**You can read online at**

*Network*  
**<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fpnetworks.htm>**

**To receive hard copies of *Network* please send an e-mail request to [network-newsletter@un.org](mailto:network-newsletter@un.org)**

INFO

**NETWORK—The UN Women’s Newsletter**

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