

# UNECE Gender Parity Strategy

## I. Introduction

The present policy document complements the UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women<sup>1</sup>. It further develops the Policy objective “To advance women’s equal representation with men as decision makers in the Organization and in all its areas of work”.

The UNECE Strategy for Gender Parity responds to the UN System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity<sup>2</sup> and provides a framework for the implementation plan to achieve gender parity in the Organization by 2022.

With this strategy and priority actions, UNECE reconfirms its commitment to the achievement and maintaining of gender parity as an urgent priority area, not only because gender equality is a basic human right, but also as it is essential to the UN’s efficiency, impact and credibility.

## II. Goal of the UNECE Gender Parity Strategy

The overall goal of the strategy is to achieve gender parity in UNECE at all professional levels at the latest by 2022. This is consistent with the UN System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. It is also aligned with the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To achieve this goal, strategic actions need to take place in the following areas:

- Monitoring, reporting and collection of sex-disaggregated data of staff
- Leadership and accountability
- Recruitment and HR management
- Career development
- Creating an enabling environment
- Working in partnership

Achieving the goal of gender parity in UNECE’s staff at all professional levels by 2022 is feasible. UNECE has advanced in attracting women in the professional categories and in general services as described in the section below.

## III. Where do we stand today?

To define the baseline of the UNECE Gender Parity Strategy the current representation of women and men at all professional levels was examined. Overall, out of the 190 UNECE staff (as of November 2017) women constitute 58 percent. However, women are less represented than men in the professional categories – they account for 47 per cent of all staff – and outnumber men in general services by far – 78 per cent of all staff (figures 1a and 1b respectively).

Figure 1a

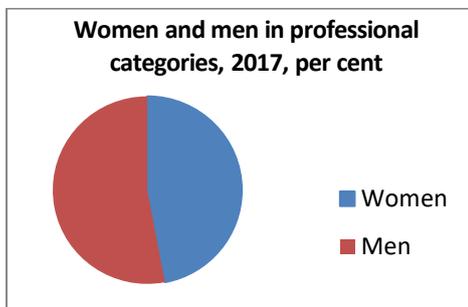
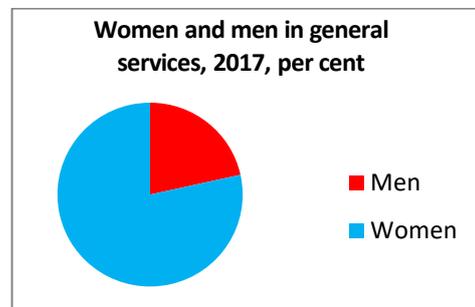


Figure 1b



<sup>1</sup> The UNECE Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is a five year framework (2016-2020) for the achievement and maintaining of gender equality in all areas of work and in the equal representation of women and men in the UNECE. It was endorsed by UNECE Senior management and EXCOM in June and September 2016 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity:

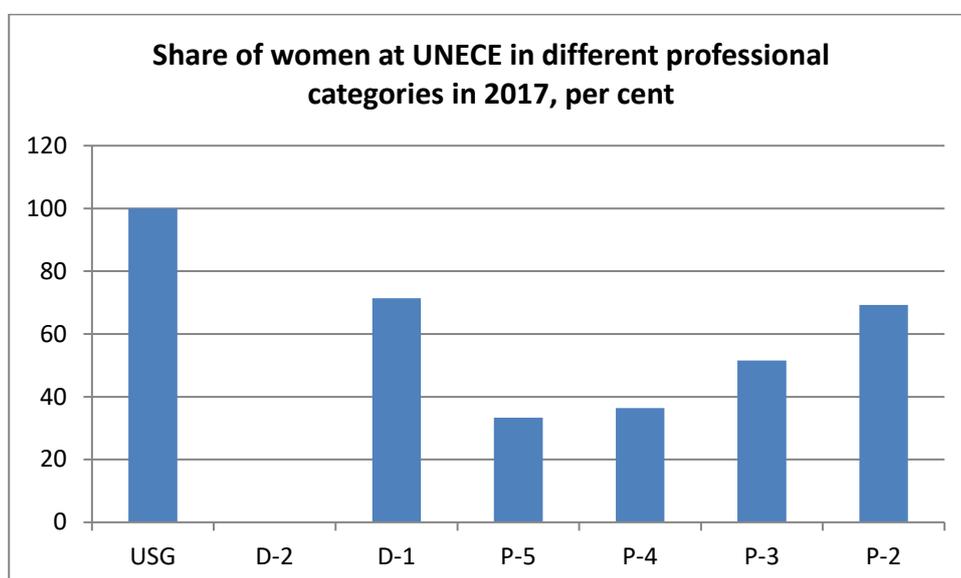
[https://iseek-newyork.un.org/system/files/17-00102b\\_gender\\_strategy\\_report\\_13\\_sept\\_2017.pdf](https://iseek-newyork.un.org/system/files/17-00102b_gender_strategy_report_13_sept_2017.pdf)

Within the professional categories the differences between women and men vary by levels as shown in figure 2. Women are well represented at entry-level positions and are significantly less than men at the middle and senior levels. At the level of P2 women outnumber men by far, and at P3 level gender parity has been reached. The situation is reverse at the levels of P4 and P5, where women's representation is 36 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. This inverse relationship between seniority and women's representation – the higher the grade, the larger the gap in gender parity – persists and is most difficult to address. Achieving parity at the levels of P4 and P5 will need targeted actions to expand the opportunity for women to advance in their careers through consistent application of existing special measures and development of additional ones; increasing the pool of talented professionals, and other actions (see the section on recruitment).

Conversely, there is significant over-representation of women in UNECE at the level of D1, at 71 per cent (as of November 2017). Due to the small number of positions at D1 level, gender parity in UNECE is achievable in 2018 (see Table 1). The over-representation of women at P2 level, however, will require targeted actions.

At the highest professional levels, USG and D2, ECE has single positions; a female Executive Secretary at the USG level and a male Deputy Executive Secretary at the D-2 level. Therefore, at the highest professional level – USG and D2 – gender parity has been achieved.

Figure 2



The differences between women's and men's representation in the professional categories in UNECE vary by Divisions: in the ISU, for example women are only 25 per cent while in the Forestry, Housing and Land Management Division women are over 70 per cent. Divisions are relatively small in UNECE, and in many of them an increase of women's participation by 1 or 2 professionals may lead to significant change in parity. This requires timely and accurate information of the recruitment and selection processes to be available to the hiring managers, Directors, Senior managers and all staff.

During the recent years UNECE has made a steady progress on the achievement of gender parity in its staff. In the professional categories, the share of women as a percentage of all staff increased from 29 per cent in 2000 to 47 per cent in 2017, an increase of 62 % as a result of UNECE gender-focused recruitment policy, with the highest women's representation at D1 level and achieving gender parity at P3 level. The progress in the middle categories – P4 and P5 – however has been slow and uneven, calling for systemic actions to address women's underrepresentation at these levels.

#### IV. Implementation plan and strategic actions

UNECE recognises that to achieve its full potential the Organization has to involve women and men at equal terms and create a working environment conducive to their development. In line with the system-wide strategy for gender parity UNECE has developed an implementation plan for achieving and sustaining gender parity in all its international staff population, P1 level and above, on fixed term, continuous, or permanent appointments (identified as phase 1 in the system-wide strategy). This plan

includes setting up targets for parity at all professional levels and identifying strategic actions to achieve and sustain these targets:

#### 4.1. Setting targets

In setting up the targets annually for women’s representation in the professional categories in UNECE, the system-wide methodology was applied. In addition, the following elements are taken into account: (1) the current structure of staff at professional levels as analysed in the previous section; (2) the dynamics and structure of posts when vacated during the period 2017-2022. The number of UNECE staff in professional categories is kept unchanged and for the calculation of vacant posts, a retirement age of 62 is factored in. A deviation of the annual target – at 1-3 percentage points – is possible for some years if a retirement age of 65 is assumed but this will not lead to a postponement of parity in 2022.

While the goal is 50/50 parity, this number cannot be achieved in UNECE for some levels, for example in USG and D2, because of the single positions in the Organization at those levels. Hence, in the implementation plan we merged these two levels. As in the system-wide approach, we accept that parity is reached within the 47-53 per cent margin.

When applying the system-wide methodology to the base data as of December 2016, some adjustments have been introduced for 2018 onward to account for the structure in the positions in UNECE according to the most recent data, including the budget for 2018-2019, as shown in Table 1.

The targets set up for UNECE are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**Annual targets<sup>3</sup> to reach gender parity at respective levels as per the methodology described in the System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, per cent**

ECE					
Level	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
USG +D2	50	50	50	50	50
D1	50	50	50	50	50
P5	38	42	46	50	50
P4	36	40	44	48	50
P3	50	50	50	50	50
P2	60	56	52	52	52

Achieving the annual targets for gender parity in UNECE’s staff in professional categories will require systemic implementation of strategic actions.

#### 4.2. Strategic actions

##### Monitoring, reporting and data collection

In order for accountability measures related to targets to be operational, it is essential that sex-disaggregated data for UNECE’s staff is collected systemically, monitored and reported regularly to senior managers, hiring managers and staff. To this end, UNECE will improve the monitoring mechanism and provide the most current available data, which will be complemented by brief analysis.

To support monitoring on a regular basis the UNECE Executive Office will make current staffing data available to managers and all staff on a monthly basis, starting in May 2018, in the intranet of the UNECE Executive Office. This will further strengthen and ensure transparency of the hiring managers’ decisions.

<sup>3</sup> % Women staff targets are calculated as the total number of women staff divided by the total number of staff at the corresponding level as at 31 December of each year

Only international staff on fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointments are counted.

### Leadership and accountability

Within the UNECE, the Executive Secretary will lead the process to achieve gender parity of staff establishing real accountability for senior managers in relation to targets as well as supportive culture in the Organization. The commitments to this end will be integrated in the Senior Compact through concrete targets, and into the performance evaluations of the hiring managers to ensure that all hiring managers use targets and are aware of the consequences of their hiring recommendations. The Deputy Executive Secretary will support the Executive Secretary to meet the annual targets and implement measures whenever needed.

All staff with supervisory/hiring responsibility will be accountable for the achievement of targets on gender parity and will have to sign off on the statistical status on gender parity and the implications of their recommendation prior to final decision of the selection of a candidate by the Executive Secretary.

### Recruitment, and HR management

Recruitment policies in UNECE will focus on the following strategic actions:

- Update or revise the goals in the Senior Managers Compact for each level (P1/P2 to D2);
- Reinforce existing enabling policies such as gender diversity on interview panels and inclusion of the ECE Gender Focal Point in interviews for P 5 and above;
- Strive for 50/50 representation throughout the recruitment process (equal representation on all lists of recommended candidates);
- Enhance in reach and outreach activities to expand the pool of candidates in the areas of UNECE Sub-programmes, by means of public information and sending vacancy announcements to relevant networks;
- Organize training for hiring managers to eliminate unconscious bias in the workplace in general, and in job design, job description, vacancy announcement and selection;
- Better understand and address retention issues whenever such arise.

Following the system-wide recommendations UNECE will apply consistently policies and measures – existing special measures and develop additional measures where and when needed – to address equal opportunities for women and men and overcome any biases in recruitment and selection in the case whenever needed.

The following measures will be implemented immediately (first tier measures):

- Hiring managers will make every effort to recommend 50% women and 50% male candidates for selection of all types of jobs openings and at all levels. Where this is not possible a written justification should be submitted.
- To increase the pool of applicants, including the number of women to select from, job description requirements should hold no gender bias.
- Job openings that fail to yield a minimum of 20 per cent female applications will need a valid written justification from the hiring manager.
- UNECE will follow the recommendations of OHRM in line with the expected revision and update of ST/AI/1999/9 to reflect changes in contract modalities and selection rules, as well as all subsequent STAIs on staff selection policies and special measures.

In line with system-wide rules, UNECE will allow all staff to apply for positions where they fulfil the requirements. UNECE will extend the requirement for both women and men to be represented at all stages of the assessment and interview processes for appointment where the Organization has not reached parity to ensure 50/50 representation of women and men in all stages of the selection process and on interview panels and consider external panel members on senior level appointment panels.

### Career Development

UNECE will address the lack of career development opportunities by:

- Promoting career development opportunities for women by ensuring that there is a 50/50 balance in management and leadership development programmes;
- Division Directors promoting an environment of mentoring in the divisions in particular for female staff.

## V. Creating an enabling environment for gender parity

UNECE will continue to further advance an inclusive organizational culture that leverages diversity and gender equality and creates an enabling environment for all staff free from discrimination of all kind. Such an environment provides equal opportunities at the workplace and recognizes that staff also have a family life, and ensure a safe environment to work. Senior managers will demonstrate leadership and public championship of the Organization's commitments to this end.

In UNECE a set of facilitative policies have been put in place and their use by staff members are encouraged. Further reinforcement, review and transparent implementation of these policies – on maternity, paternity, adoption, family emergency leave, breast feeding, childcare, and flexible work arrangements – will strengthen the organizational culture. Information on these policies is available on the Executive Office Intranet.

All managers and supervisors will operationalize these policies. Senior managers will continue to ensure that their staff receive information on work-life policies with a view to support a balance between professional and family responsibilities. Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) including staggered working hours, telework, and compressed work schedules are all available to UNECE staff. In 2017, 34% of UNECE staff participated in the organizations flexible working arrangement policy and 76% of them were female.

UNECE has put in place a strong legal framework on sexual harassment which will continue to be strictly followed and regularly reported upon.

UNECE will continue to strengthen its support to balance personal, family and professional commitments of its staff and fully apply the respective policies in the Secretariat.

Strategic actions will be taken to support UNECE's gender architecture that facilitates the achievement of gender parity through:

- Setting up of a mechanism for collaboration among human resources management, senior management and the ECE Gender Focal Point on issues of gender balance;
- Providing real-time data that is regularly shared with staff and inform accountability mechanisms at all levels;
- Conducting and analysing staff engagement surveys;
- Consolidating all gender related activities into an integrated framework.

### Working in partnership

In line with the system-wide recommendations, UNECE will seek the support of its member States 'to effect any legislative changes but also to be active partners in the initiative, fund the investment in systems and staffing that will be needed to implement the strategy'.

UNECE will continue to work in partnership with UNOG and OHRM to strengthen the implementation of coherent system-wide policies and measures to achieve and sustain gender parity of staff.