Trends in the Representation of Women in the Professional and Higher Categories

30 June 1998 to 30 June 2008

Source: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women

According to the 2008 report of the Secretary General on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the United Nations System, the representation of women in professional and higher categories* within the UN staffing system has grown over a ten-year period at a “disturbingly slow rate.” The entire 10-year period from June 1998 to June 2008 witnessed a growth rate of only 3 per cent, from 34.6 per cent (1,141 out of 4,164) in 1998 to 37.61 per cent (2,641 out of 7,288) in 2008. That represents an average annual growth from 1998 to 2008 of only 0.3 per cent, a growth rate yet slower than the average annual growth during the period 1998-2006 (0.35 per cent).

Women representation in professional and higher categories (%).

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Percentage of women vs men in the UN Secretariat, as of June 2008

The bar chart illustrates the percentage of women versus men across different grade levels in the UN Secretariat as of June 2008. The chart shows a comparison between men (in blue) and women (in maroon) across various positions, highlighting the gender distribution at different grade levels.
*The Secretary General names all persons occupying top positions at the level of Under Secretary General (USG) and Assistant Secretary General (ASG). The tenured International Civil Service ranges from D-2 (the upper-level "Director") and D-1 (the lower-level "Director") through the “Professional” levels of P-5 to P-1. D-2 ranks as the highest level within the International Civil Service, while P-1, the lowest level, does not exist as of 2008.

The table above does not include UN non-professional (“General”) staff.