



Gender Parity Strategy

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Introduction

Despite governments, businesses and the UN adopting many policies expressing commitment to gender equality, there is still a long way to go to make this a global reality. In 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed the need for reform – to revitalize the way the UN works, with a pledge to improve gender parity system-wide. UNOPS welcomes this opportunity as now is the time to change our approach to achieve gender parity.

Across the UN, the extent of this challenge differs. It is influenced by many factors, including the different mandates and structures of many members of the UN family. Operations in the field, particularly in conflict-affected settings, are areas where the under-representation of women remains a stark challenge.

At UNOPS, our operations, in particular in conflict-affected countries, also clearly show that women are under-represented. As part of our efforts to be a more sustainable organization, and to better represent the people we serve, this strategy outlines our commitment to ensure women, at all levels, see a future for themselves at UNOPS. I pledge to call on expertise from all sectors of society, and to put policies and safeguards in place, to change. Achieving gender parity is non-negotiable.

I have introduced mandatory gender performance targets. I now report to our board on gender. We will change the way we approach recruitment. And while some of the steps necessary may seem trivial or common sense, they are much more than that. When added up, they can contribute to a shift in thinking – one that empowers women.

In a world beset by humanitarian challenges, now more than ever, we need a strong commitment to empowering women and girls in our societies. There is much to be done, but we hold ourselves accountable to high standards. I firmly believe our gender parity strategy will improve our contributions to the implementation of Agenda 2030. In addition, we plan a range of actions to address gender concerns across our project planning, design and implementation.

Achieving gender parity is a leadership issue. The responsibility lies with senior leaders across the organization, and ultimately with me. We have set ambitious targets, but above all else, this strategy is driven by a simple principle: To do what is right, and provide equal opportunities for women in all areas of our work.

We are committed to this challenge.

Grete Faremo

Under-Secretary-General,
UNOPS Executive Director.

1 UNOPS is committed to Gender Parity

1.1 The Case for Gender Parity and Inclusiveness

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Sustainable Development Goal 5 declares our common intent to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

As a UN organization, UNOPS therefore has a responsibility for achieving gender parity amongst its personnel, acting as a model of inclusivity and diversity to our partners and beneficiaries.

Within the societies in which UNOPS works, women's empowerment is essential for economic growth, social development and increased business performance. A variety of studies have suggested that improving gender parity may result in significant economic dividends.¹

Increased gender parity in education has been shown to lower infant and child mortality rates, increases labour force participation rates and earning, and fosters further investment in children's education.²

It is not only the wider society that benefits from gender parity. Organizations have found that there is a business case for tackling barriers to equality. Female talent is one of the most under-utilized business resources.³ Women bring different leadership skills and behaviours to the organization and employees are more likely to stay at an organization when it has a work culture that is diverse, inclusive and encourages flexibility⁴.

Whilst there is agreement on the criticality for organizations to inclusively integrate women, there is no singular approach to resolving gender disparity. Furthermore, gender parity by definition should not focus on women alone, rather it aims for equal gender representation and should address instances of over-representation. UNOPS therefore intends to take a holistic approach appropriate to its specific context to achieve gender parity, by developing innovative approaches, deploying shared resources and collaborating with our counterparts to deliver on the mandate and measures set forth in the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

¹ See McKinsey & Company, The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion To Global Growth

² See Chaaban and Cunningham, Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls

³ 'The Gender Dividend: Making the business case for investing in women', Deloitte, 2011

⁴ 'The business case for gender equality', Workplace Gender Equality Agency, March 2013

2 UNOPS CONTEXT

2.1 Gender Parity at UNOPS

UNOPS leadership has made gender parity a priority for the organization. This strategy reconfirms the organization's commitment to targets beyond the initial, Phase One targets set by the Secretary General's UN System-Wide Gender Parity Strategy. UNOPS is committed to exceeding the UN System-Wide targets by not only meeting the targets for parity amongst International Staff members, but it is also committed to achieving parity amongst all its international personnel regardless of contract type. Additionally, UNOPS is committing to gender parity across the entire, global UNOPS workforce including both national and international personnel.

At UNOPS, our people are the central driving force behind our success. Our personnel work in a variety of roles, ranging from construction and human resources to legal services and procurement. With personnel working across 80 countries, our workforce represents a wide range of nationalities and cultures. We promote a diverse workforce to better understand and address the needs of our partners. The vast majority of our personnel are nationals, working in their own country and developing local capacity.

UNOPS has made continuous and steady progress towards gender parity since 2013, and as initiatives continue to be implemented, gender targets become increasingly achievable. Now we have set more ambitious and concrete targets. UNOPS leadership is committed to ensure implementation across the whole organization.

UNOPS has implemented several initiatives in the organization, including measures to support work life balance, flexible working, a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment, and an integrated approach within people strategies for diversity and inclusion. UNOPS competency framework outlines the importance of diversity and inclusion, and this is integrated in leadership development programmes, recruitment, selection and assessment processes and performance management.

To achieve our ambition, UNOPS will need to adopt a dual approach – growing female talent within the organization, through leadership development, succession planning processes and by providing an enabling environment, as well as by attracting female candidates to join our organization through talent acquisition efforts, in particular at senior levels.

UNOPS ongoing efforts have already resulted in achievement of near gender parity in some locations including in Headquarters and the Europe and Central Asia region, where representation of women in our workforce is already at a rate of 48%.

However, even in locations with near-parity, turnover of women remains high and an increased focus is still needed to achieve gender parity in senior roles, as well as within specific age groups. Specific regions and countries have their own local challenges.

The gender parity strategy is part of a wider effort to increase diversity in the organization, and gender parity is seen as an integral part to workforce diversity, in its broader forms.

UNOPS gender strategy is designed to provide equal opportunities for women to compete and be assessed for roles, and to develop and grow within the organization. Our focus is on providing the space and opportunity for women to contribute at the same level as men.

3 Results

This plan is intended to achieve the following results:

3.1 Key Objectives

UNOPS has defined three sets of targets outlined below:

1. Obligatory targets for International Staff by level (Table 1, below). These targets are set by the UN System-wide Strategy and will be reported on to the Secretary General.
2. UNOPS Global Gender Parity target of 50/50 (Table, 2 below) as presented to the Executive Board. This covers all UNOPS personnel at all levels both UNOPS staff members and ICA personnel. It is a global target that is not segmented by levels.
3. All International Personnel (Table 3, below). Recognising the specific challenges of achieving gender parity at more senior levels, these targets are for all UNOPS International Personnel, both staff and other international personnel (IICA), and give visibility to these particularly challenging groups.

Target Table 1: Targets set by the UN System-Wide Strategy:

UN System-wide Obligation by Level for All International Staff	Baseline % Women (31 Dec 2016)	Total Number All Women International Staff	Total Number All International Staff	Target	Target Date for Achievement
P1	-			-	-
P2	50%	30	60	47% - 53%	Achieved
P3	36%	72	198	47% - 53%	End 2021
P4	29%	40	136	47% - 53%	End 2026
P5	29%	20	70	47% - 53%	End 2026
P6, D1	20%	7	35	47% - 53%	End 2026
D2	25%	4	16	47% - 53%	End 2026

*As per criteria and methodology outlined in UN System-Wide Strategy

Target Table 2: UNOPS Target Agreed with Executive Board:

UNOPS Ambitions for All Personnel	Baseline % Women (31 Dec. 2016)	Total Number All Women Personnel	Total Number All Personnel	Target	Target Date for Achievement (UNOPS defined)
Total Women in the Global Workforce	37%	1500	4065	47% - 53%	End 2019

* As per UNOPS 2016 Annual Report

Target Table 3: UNOPS Targets for All International Personnel:

UNOPS Ambitions for All International Personnel by level	Baseline % Women (31 Dec 2016)	Total Number of International Women Personnel	Total Number All International Personnel	Target	Target Date for Achievement
ICS 8 P1 + IICA-1	59%	93	158	47% - 53%	Achieved
ICS 9 P2 + IICA-1	54%	66	123	47% - 53%	Achieved
ICS 10 P3 + IICA-2	39%	217	555	47% - 53%	End 2021
ICS 11 P4 + IICA-3	26%	76	295	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICS 12 P5 + IICA-3 / IICA-4	23%	22	96	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICS 13 P6 + D1 + IICA-4	22%	8	37	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICS 14 D2 + IICA-4 / IICA-5	24%	4	17	47% - 53%	End 2026

*As per criteria and methodology outlined in UN System-Wide Strategy

4 Approaches

In order to ensure a comprehensive set of enabling approaches are deployed with clear accountabilities, the actions that are to be developed and implemented are categorized according to the five enablers of the UNOPS Excellence Model – Strategy, Leadership, People, Partnerships and Resources, Processes.

4.1 Strategy

UNOPS has engaged with external as well as internal stakeholders to build a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities going forward. Informed by this – and in particular by the UNOPS Global People Survey – we have built the Gender Parity Strategy as well as the supporting Gender Action Plan.

Equally, it is based on a sound understanding of UNOPS internal capabilities and the need to develop, review, update and communicate supporting policies and processes:

4.1.1 Needs and Expectations of Key Stakeholders

The UN Secretary-General, through the System-Wide Parity Strategy has set targets and raised expectations to the overall UN gender parity efforts.

The UNOPS Leadership is committed to achieving gender parity globally before 2020.

The expectations of key stakeholders have been the critical inputs into developing this strategy.

The UNOPS Global People Survey results continue to show that UNOPS personnel have lower levels of engagement from women. These expectations have been subject to analysis by UNOPS Gender Advisory Panel, a senior group representing personnel from across the organization that has formulated a comprehensive list of recommendations (The Action Plan).

The UNOPS People and Change Group will champion the strategy and provide regular updates on its effectiveness and any necessary revisions.

4.1.2 Understanding Internal Performance and Capabilities

The People Survey has provided important input to understand better UNOPS current strengths, trends and areas for improvement with respect to gender parity.

The Gender Advisory Panel has consulted widely and made resultant recommendations for improving UNOPS performance under four key areas:

- Recruitment and Outreach
- Mobility and Retention
- Professional Development
- Inclusive Leadership

These recommendations are supported by the UNOPS Corporate Operations Group, its senior management team. They will be implemented over a 12 month period.

UNOPS People and Change Group will ensure the Action Plan is communicated and deployed throughout the organization.

The Gender Advisory Panel will continue to consult and recommend actions, as well as to monitor progress against the recommendations.

4.1.3 Revision of Strategy and Supporting Policies and Processes

UNOPS has strengthened its approaches to Governance, Risk and Compliance with the aim to simplify its governance documents and structure. This work is overseen by the Legislative Framework Committee chaired by the UNOPS Executive Director.

The People and Change Group via UNOPS Legislative Framework Committee - and using the UNOPS Process and Quality Management System (PQMS) - has a thorough understanding of the processes that support its People Policies. It will build on this knowledge to ensure successful deployment of the policies necessary to implement this strategy.

The People and Change Group has revised its Policy on Human Resources, Ethics and Culture (OD.PCG.2017.01) and continues to develop relevant Operational Instructions and the supporting work processes in order to support the implementation of this strategy.

UNOPS works with partners and provides HR Management services to partners and hosted entities. As part of the gender strategy UNOPS will advocate for and encourage these partners to achieve the same ambitions on gender. UNOPS will provide advice and guidance to our partners to support their efforts.

4.1.4 Communication and Implementation of Strategy and Policies

UNOPS Executive Office has already communicated the importance of achieving the targets set out in this Strategy from a principled as well as an operational perspective and will continue to do so over the life of the strategy. Key stakeholders – in particular the Executive Board – will be updated on the progress that UNOPS is making.

The UNOPS Communications Group, supported by the People and Change Group will develop a Communication Plan to support the roll-out of this strategy within UNOPS with the aim to keep all personnel informed on progress.

Additionally, the Communication Plan should give personnel across the organization the opportunity to give feedback on the effectiveness of the actions being taken through 'pulse' surveys that complements the People Survey.

New HR Management Reports will track UNOPS progress to meeting its gender parity targets.

4.2 Leadership and Accountability

Whilst the People and Change Group will champion and monitor the implementation of this strategy, its success will require leadership at all levels.

The Global Leadership Group will be crucial in the successful deployment of this strategy and will be held accountable for implementation of these actions in the field based on the guidance and input from the People and Change Group.

The Gender Advisory Panel will play a vital role in evaluating the effect of the Action Plan items and suggesting and developing revised tactics and approaches where necessary.

4.2.1 Role Model Behaviour

All UNOPS People Managers will be held accountable for ensuring that all the planned initiatives are put into action and that the people under their supervision understand their commitment to the objectives of this strategy.

4.2.2 Monitor, Review and Drive Improvement

The goals for gender parity are integrated into UNOPS management results framework and corporate and regional business targets. Individual COG members will report on progress at each Quarterly Business Review (QBR) meeting.

The People and Change Group will monitor and regularly review the progress of this strategy.

The Group will provide analysis and insight at corporate levels and proactively provide advice on how to refine approaches to gender parity where these need to be made more effective, championing and driving change.

The Gender Advisory Panel, in collaboration with The People and Change Group, will inform the Corporate Operations Group on progress against the strategy and advise the Global Leadership Group on results and potential new actions.

4.2.3 Managing External Stakeholders

UNOPS will continue to monitor the expectations of key stakeholders, revising its gender strategy where appropriate. It will do this through its membership of forums such as the UN High Level Committee on

Management (HLCM) HR Network, the guidance it receives from the Secretary General and the Executive Board, and from its relationships with other key stakeholders such as the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

The path to gender parity will have challenges. To some extent these challenges are being faced by many other organizations.

UNOPS will therefore 'share what works' by both contributing to, and learning from other organizations such as UN Women, Governments and "Lean In"⁵ that have existing track records of achievement or expertise and experiences to share.

UNOPS will continue to expand its usage of talent acquisition networks and partners in order to reach out to potentially qualified women candidates.

Attracting women to work at UNOPS will be important, and efforts will be made to ensure that the recruitment process, including website and vacancy announcements appeal to this target group, encouraging women to apply for roles at UNOPS, including highlighting the possibility to work flexibly, and communicating our aim to achieve gender parity, and using gender neutral language in advertisements.

4.2.4 Culture

Leadership will be required at all levels to drive the cultural change needed to make this strategy successful. UNOPS existing work-life balance policies will be re-communicated to all personnel. Corporate policies to address inclusiveness and work life balance will play an increasingly important role and will require consistent implementation.

We will reinforce UNOPS commitment to a culture of inclusiveness and ensure that both leaders and personnel are aware of the organization's position and commitment.

4.3 Our Personnel – An Enabling Environment

UNOPS is committed to rewarding, recognising and caring for its personnel in a way that motivates and builds engagement regardless of gender.

4.3.1 People Planning

UNOPS will adapt its recruitment processes where necessary to ensure parity of women in all stages of the recruitment and selection process, implementing 'special measures'⁶ where most appropriate for UNOPS and developing strategies for their deployment.

Key initiatives to support planning and to strengthen the recruitment process will be developed, including but not limited to:

- workforce planning and staffing targets,
- new talent acquisition and outreach efforts,
- strengthened policy requirements for representation of women applicants,
- shortlisting and standardisation and professionalization of selection,

⁵ An initiative of the Sheryl Sandberg & Dave Goldberg Family Foundation

⁶ See [System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#), 2017

- assessment methodologies.

UNOPS is also addressing concerns around job security to better attract and retain women.

4.3.2 People Development

Women's careers show greater likelihood of them leaving the organization, specifically at the mid-career point. UNOPS is continuing to analyse the reasons for this in order to put in place mitigating approaches. UNOPS will put in place a number of approaches to ensure that women in its workforce are given the development opportunities that encourage them to stay with the organization.

For example, UNOPS will create a mentorship programme to allow mid-career women personnel to connect with senior personnel for mentorship and career guidance. It will also implement a peer network for experience sharing.

UNOPS is present in many challenging locations. Non-Family duty stations are so far more often taken up by men and less frequently by women. We recognize balancing family commitments with serving the organization too can have a significant impact on our ability to attract and retain women in our workforce. Many of UNOPS senior leadership positions are in this type of duty station and UNOPS will need to ensure that women can build a track record of field experiences during their careers if it is going to build a cadre of eligible candidates for these senior positions.

UNOPS will continue to enhance its conditions of employment where possible to allow for parents to balance the demands of work and family. In particular, it will consider how parental leave policy could better suit working parents and how child care provision could be enhanced.

UNOPS will work with the International Civil Service Commission and the UN Secretariat to explore innovative solutions around the traditional classification of some duty stations as non-family. These solutions may include flexibility depending on an individual member of personnel's particular family situation.

5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Continual Improvement

The Gender Parity Strategy does not exist in isolation. Partnerships and networking with other sources of knowledge, expertise and inspiration will greatly add to the likelihood of the successful implementation of the strategy.

Successful implementation of the strategy will require continual assessment of progress, the assessment of the impact of individual approaches and the review and refinement of the overall strategy.

UNOPS will therefore monitor and review the implementation through an 'assess and refine' process within PCG which will report on progress via the Quarterly Business Review as a standing item on the agenda of that forum.

The Gender Advisory Panel will play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the strategy 'on the ground'.

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