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**Executive Board of the United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme  
First session of 2022  
Nairobi, 29–31 March 2022  
Item 4 of the provisional agenda\***

**Financial, budgetary and administrative matters,  
including the implementation of the resource mobilization  
strategy in accordance with the strategic plan for the  
period 2020–2023 and action by UN-Habitat to address  
geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of  
its staff**

## **Recruitment, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. By paragraph 9 of its decision 2021/8, the Executive Board, at its second session of 2021, held on 15 and 16 November 2021, decided that the agenda for the first session of 2022 would cover actions by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff. The present report covers equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the Programme, including progress in the achievement of its gender parity target for positions financed through all sources of funding. It supplements the information set out in the report of the Executive Director on the staffing of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) as at 31 December 2021 (HSP/EB.2022/2/Add.1).

#### **II. Equitable geographical distribution**

2. It is helpful to recall what the principle of equitable geographical distribution means to Member States and how it is applied in practice. A review of the concept can be found in paragraphs 2–5 of the addendum to the report of the Executive Director on the staffing of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2019 on recruitment, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity (HSP/EB.2020/3/Add.1), which was submitted to the Executive Board at its second session of 2020.

#### **III. Gender parity**

3. The term “gender parity” refers to equal representation of women and men, in this case among the staff of UN-Habitat. The initial goal, which was not met, was to reach gender parity among professional-level staff by the year 2000. Over the years, legislative and procedural provisions have been introduced into the recruitment process, with the aim of supporting the achievement of gender parity, with varying degrees of success. A full account of the operating definition can be found in paragraphs 7–9 of the addendum to the report of the Executive Director on the staffing of UN-Habitat

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\* HSP/EB.2022/1.

as at 31 December 2019 on recruitment, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity (HSP/EB.2020/3/Add.1), which was submitted to the Executive Board at its second session of 2020.

## IV. Update

4. Since the last update on staffing, provided to the Executive Board at its second session of 2021 in the report on staffing of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme as at 31 July 2021 (HSP/EB.2021/13/Add.2), the situation has remained stable. Efforts continue to secure new recruits from underrepresented regions and to achieve gender parity.

5. Gender parity is of paramount importance to the Secretary-General, and UN-Habitat aims to comply with his latest instructions to ensure parity at all levels. As at 31 December 2021, the overall staffing of UN-Habitat was 52 per cent men and 48 per cent women. In the General Service staff category, 49 per cent of staff were men and 51 per cent were women.

6. In terms of professional staff, the ratio is currently 63 per cent women to 37 per cent men at the P-2 level, 49 per cent women to 51 per cent men at the P-3 level, 54 per cent women to 46 per cent men at the P4 level and 10 per cent women to 90 per cent men at the P-5 level. At the D-1 level, the ratio is 13 per cent women to 87 per cent men and there is equality at the D-2, Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General levels. Overall, there are 46 per cent women to 54 per cent men at the Professional level.

7. In 2021, the Executive Director made a concerted effort to improve gender parity, selecting three women for positions at the P-5 level and one for a position at the D-1 level. Unfortunately, all the women candidates concerned turned down the appointments. Had they accepted, the gender balance at the P-5 and D-1 levels would have improved substantially.

8. With regard to geographical distribution, as at 31 December 2021, based on the analysis and information provided by United Nations Headquarters, UN-Habitat was close to average, with 25 per cent of Member States represented within the desirable range, 57 per cent overrepresented, 9 per cent underrepresented and 9 per cent unrepresented. In terms of numbers, 148 staff members are from Africa, 51 are from the Asia-Pacific region, 17 are from Latin America and the Caribbean, 4 are from Eastern Europe and 93 are from Western European and other States.

9. Human resource planning is key to ensuring that every recruitment process becomes an opportunity to meet Member States' guidance on improving gender and geographical balance. The Executive Director has issued instructions to all hiring managers to take measures to advocate for and seek out qualified women candidates and candidates from underrepresented and unrepresented countries to support a transparent and equitable recruitment process.

10. The following actions are being taken to improve the recruitment process:

(a) The secretariat advocates with Member States, within the United Nations system and with partner organizations to expand the pool of candidates;

(b) The secretariat provides training for hiring managers to make them aware of the need to improve productivity by diversifying the workforce;

(c) The secretariat takes measures to streamline the relationship with the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which provides human resources support services, to avoid duplication, encourage efficiency and improve monitoring;

(d) The secretariat participates in job fairs to build the pool of candidates and improve the existing roster of candidates;

(e) For job openings at the P-5 level and above, the Office of the Executive Director contacts the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Development Coordination Office for assistance in distributing advertisements to their networks of qualified candidates;

(f) The Executive Director seeks advice from the Office of the Secretary-General with regard to male candidates selected for openings at the P-5 level and above, providing the Office with the documentation relating to the advertising of such posts, long- and short-listing procedures, the written test and interview process, and a detailed explanation of the selection made;

(g) All hiring managers are required to ensure that an equal number of men and women candidates are short-listed and interviewed.

11. An updated report, taking into account key human resources activities up to 28 February 2022, will be provided as a conference room paper at the first session of the Executive Board of 2022.

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