



UNITED NATIONS
BANGLADESH



Photo: UN Women/Asiatic

Gender Parity Strategy 2023-2028

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BACKGROUND

UN System-Wide Framework for Gender Parity

The 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR, A/75/233) emphasizes that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is crucial to progress across all the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the QCPR calls on the UN system at country level to promote gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, accelerating gender mainstreaming through the full implementation of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard (UNCT-SWAP), which under indicator 4.3 requires all UNCTs to put in place a mechanism for monitoring gender parity in staffing at all levels. To date, gender parity has only been reached in the senior management group of the Secretary General and among Resident Coordinators. However, the organization has the highest number of women as of heads of missions and deputy heads in peace operations in its history.

With the commitment to be a gender balanced and inclusive organization whereby all its people — women, men, and other gender identities — have equal opportunities to grow, progress in their careers, and make a difference, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity in mid-September 2017. It includes a series of actions to reach gender parity by creating an enabling environment across the UN system and achieving ambitious targets. It addresses monitoring and data collection by recommending that entities use platforms such as an HR Dashboard to make data available to managers and staff in real-time to facilitate analysis. Following the launch of the system-wide strategy, UN Women and UNDP therefore decided to jointly fund and develop a UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity. The dashboard is the first of its kind to monitor gender parity progress across the UN system, using the latest available data, with participation from near 40 UN entities.

Purpose of the Gender Parity Strategy for UN Bangladesh

The Gender Parity Strategy aims to improve women’s representation at all contract levels, through measures for recruitment, retention, and career advancement, create an enabling environment, and advance UN accountability. The strategy specifies commitments and action areas for localizing and operationalizing the global UN System-wide Strategy. It also specifies mechanisms for ensuring accountability by the UNCT for empowering and encouraging staff and managers alike, to assist and support the UN in Bangladesh to implement the strategies and targets set in this strategy. The gender parity strategy will tie back to the commitments made by UNCT in the UNCT SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard dimension 4 on leadership and organizational culture and in the Business Operations Strategy (BOS). The strategy is linked to the UN in Bangladesh’s Gender Capacity-Building Plan (GCBP, 2022-2026) that aims to strengthen the capacity of UN staff and personnel to, among other things, facilitate the implementation of the UN Bangladesh Gender Parity Strategy.

In Bangladesh, the UN Gender Equality Theme Group (GETG) is co- chaired by UN Women and UNFPA. The Gender Parity Strategy was drafted by Kareem Buyana, expert Consultant with technical support from GETG Secretariat (UN Women), in coordination with RCO, Operations Management Team (OMT), and the Human Resources Working Group (HRWG). The strategy was reviewed by UN agencies and endorsed by UNCT in February 2023.

Status of Gender Parity in UN Bangladesh

The UN in Bangladesh is obliged to strive towards and maintain full gender parity among staff and amongst the broader workforce — which also includes service contractors and UN Volunteers (UNVs). Moreover,

the UN Bangladesh Business Operations Strategy (BOS) commits the UNCT and OMT to ensuring gender responsive joint recruitment panels –with a combination of male and female personnel.

To establish the status of gender parity in UN Bangladesh, the UNCT – the GETG, the OMT and the HRWG – conducted a quantitative assessment in 2021, as part of the gender scorecard assessment exercise. This was for the purpose of obtaining baseline information that could facilitate consensus-building around the targets to be set, and have data that could be made integral to the UN system-wide dashboard on gender parity, jointly developed by UN Women and UNDP.

As shown in table 1, the gender scorecard assessment exercise for 2021, found that there is an absence of gender parity across all three categories of staff (GS, mid-level, senior level). Thirty-five percent (35%) of all UN personnel in Bangladesh are women, which indicates that gender parity results remain far from the '50/50 by 2026' goal set out by the UN Secretary General. Significant variations were found between agencies, contract types and levels, and duty stations. It also important to note that within some contract types, there are less men than women. For example, within the category of P1-P3, women are 104 and men are 93 in number. For international UNV, women are 9 and men are 3 in number. However, in many of the contract categories, especially at top management level (P4-P6 and D1-D2) men out-number the women. The assessment also revealed that the UNCT does not have a mechanism to monitor gender parity in staffing, while some UN agencies keep track of gender representation at individual level.

Table 1: Status on Gender Parity in UN Bangladesh

Gender scorecard assessment exercise for 2021 showed that 35% of staff and personnel in UN Bangladesh are women.

2021			
Category	Female	Male	Women's representation
G1-G3	32	169	15.9%
G4-G7	219	388	36%
P1-P3	104	93	52.7%
P4-P6	46	71	39.3%
D1-D2	4	8	33.3%
NOA-NOB	147	250	37%
NOC-NOD	32	43	42.6%
Nat. UNV	100	136	42%
SB1-SB5 (SSA1-9)	270	620	30%
LICA 4-7 (UNOPS)			
International UNV	9	3	75%
Total	962	1787	35%

Good Practice Examples from UN Bangladesh

Since the goal of gender parity is not just about numbers, but also transforming the institutional culture, the UN in Bangladesh has made several efforts to domesticate global standards for gender-sensitive leadership, gender equality in recruitment and creating an enabling workplace environment. As shown in table 2, agencies have implemented flexible working arrangement that support personnel in balancing their personal and professional lives. Dedicated breastfeeding time for mother and child has been accorded, and in some cases, corners have been created at UN premises for lactating mothers. Regarding recruitment, some of the agencies have ensured that in the case of equally qualified candidates, the female candidates are prioritized for appointments. Gender-balanced recruitment panels have also been put in place, alongside ensuring that job adverts have gender-sensitive language. Outreach internship programmes for attracting youth from universities have been implemented. In October 2022, women vendors and potential consultants were sensitized about UN recruitment and procurement procedures, in a joint effort by GETG and OMT. As part of the PSHEA policies and standards, anonymous leadership dialogues by HoAs, have collected stories from female staff about harassment and gender-based discrimination, to facilitate decision-making at UNCT level. All these initiatives are attributable to the findings from the Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey undertaken in 2021 as part of the gender scorecard assessment of indicator 4.2¹. From this survey, majority female respondents agreed (56.69%) that HoAs demonstrate leadership and commitment to GEWE in the workplace, whereas majority male respondents strongly agreed (53.26%).

Table 2: Good practice examples across UN agencies in Bangladesh

Gender and Equity Responsiveness in Recruitment, Retention, Advancement, and Talent Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If equally qualified, female recommended candidates are prioritized for appointments. • 50% of candidates being interviewed should be female. • At least one member of the interview panel should be female. • At the country level, there are peer mentoring sessions for women. • Internships from female universities to build capacity and develop future staff members. • Training to staff and selection panel members on biases including related to gender. • Gender balanced recruitment panels. • Equal treatment of all candidates in recruitment processes • Vacancy announcement includes the following statement: “The UN values diversity among its staff members and aims at achieving gender parity. We welcome applications from qualified women and men, including those with disabilities”. • Gender training/refreshers arranged every quarter in both Bangla and English

¹ The survey gauge perceptions of organizational culture within three categories: gender equality; discrimination; and work-life balance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female drivers recruited for both Dhaka and Cox' Bazar
An Organizational Culture and Enabling Environment for Advancing Gender Parity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working arrangements (Up to 3 days a week) • Provide 1.5 to 2 hours of breastfeeding/nursing time until the child reaches the age of six months. • Established a Breast-Feeding Corner on UN premises in 2018. • Mothers are allowed to travel with their infants (up to 2 years) and bring a caregiver while travelling. The office will bear 10% of the cost for infant and caregiver. • Flexible working arrangements; nursing rooms and creche; parental benefits • PSHAA and PSEA policies and guideline are shared regularly, and trainings are conducted for staff and personnel. • Effective backup system when staff/personnel are on leave. • Office of the Ombudsman is available for all UN funds and programmes to support staff with work life concerns and employment-related disputes. The Office of the Ombudsman has also set up the 'Respectful Workplace Facilitator (RWF) programme' as an informal mechanism for every staff member to ensure that they have a respectful workplace free of harassment, discrimination and intimidation. In Bangladesh, the RWF programme is currently being piloted in UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF. It functions as a network of peer volunteers in the office, whose goal is to help colleagues help themselves by listening and providing problem-solving guidance in confidence.
Gender-Sensitive Leadership and Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting to senior management and all staff on gender parity; gender parity report is part of each recruitment case report. • Established a Gender Equality and Diversity Committee (GEDC) in 2015 which is fully effective from 2017. The GEDC committee has representation from HR, admin, Staff Union, all projects, and CO of ILO • Raising awareness, sensitization, campaign, and advocacy on gender equality issues in the workplace. • Organizing sessions on gender equality, sexual and gender-based violence issues and observe different days within office and with different stakeholders (i.e., IWD. 16 days activism, C190 day etc.)

GENDER PARITY TARGETS FOR UN BANGLADESH

The UN System in Bangladesh is committed to achieving gender parity at all staffing levels. To achieve gender parity, the UN in Bangladesh has set a goal to increase the overall number of female staff with 5

percentage points every 2 years to reach gender parity by 2028. These collective targets are articulated in table 3.

Table 3: Gender parity targets for UN Bangladesh

Female	Male	Women's representation			
2021 Baseline		Target for 2024	Target for 2026	Target for 2028	
962	1787	35%	40%	45%	50%

In working to achieve these targets, the UNCT is mindful of the significant disparities across levels at the sub-national level.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

This strategy applies an intersectional lens to advance not only gender equality but also diversity in the workforce. While making progress on gender parity, attention will be paid to underrepresented groups subject to multidimensional discrimination, including geographic minorities, people with disabilities, youth, and sexual and gender minorities.

In the 2021 Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey, around 80% of staff and personnel opined that the UN system in Bangladesh adequately facilitates the equal participation of staff and personnel irrespective of sex, gender, or sexual orientation at all levels of the organization. The UN in Bangladesh strives to be an organization that grants equal opportunities irrespective of gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. This could be strengthened by ensuring certain standardized products and procedures in the UN clearly reflect this commitment to diversity. It is strongly recommended to ensure that recruitment processes are inclusive of underrepresented and marginalized groups.

In order to simultaneously advance the corporate goals of gender equality and inclusivity in the workforce, as per Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion standards set by the Secretary General's Office², it is also recommended that each agency carry out an accessibility audit to flag and rectify any limitations.

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY IN UN IN BANGLADESH

Four specific focus areas have been identified to achieve the gender parity targets set above. These are (1) strengthened leadership and accountability to gender parity, (2) enhanced gender-responsiveness in recruitment, retention, advancement, and talent management, (3) an organizational culture and enabling environment for advancing gender parity, and (4) strengthening gender parity in field and mission settings. In the following sections these focus areas are elaborated on along with their respective priority actions.

1. Strengthened Leadership and Accountability to Gender Parity

Overcoming gaps in gender parity starts at the top. The Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey in 2021 revealed that around 87% of the staff and personnel surveyed, believe that Heads of

²[HR Portal: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

Agencies in this UNCT demonstrate leadership and commitment to gender equality in the workplace. It is therefore essential for UNCT to reinforce their commitments on gender parity, with robust mechanisms for holding managers, HoAs, and OMT/HRWG accountable for gender parity targets. While strong leadership is important across all strategies, this strategy focuses specifically on strengthening accountability and leadership.

Under this strategic area, the OMT, through the HRWG, will build on the existing reporting template to track and report on the status and actions for gender parity. The template will not only capture gender parity by sex and category of contractual arrangement, but also age and geographical location/workstation of staff, across agencies. HoAs will present data in UNCT annually to track progress and discuss actions required to reach the targets set. Based on UNCT agreement, the agencies may present agency-specific data during the UNCT to showcase the progresses and discuss the common challenges with other HoAs. This will also be of support to the reporting on indicator 4.3 of the UN SWAP Gender Scorecard Assessment, which requires UNCT to: a) have in place a mechanism for monitoring gender parity in staffing that is regularly used to monitor parity levels for General Service staff and all professional levels; and b) to demonstrate positive trends towards achieving parity commitments.

Box 1: Key issues raised during the consultative workshop on gender parity

1. Sensitize senior management on gender parity and mind-set change on gender stereotypes.
2. Senior managers and HoAs should have gender parity targets in their PMDs.
3. UNCT/HoAs should issue an annual staff memo on actions taken in response to surveys on the conduciveness of the work environment.
4. HRWG and OMT should update UNCT, on an annual basis, the status of gender parity.

In line with the UN Performance Management and Development (PMD) guidelines, operations managers at agency level will facilitate dialogue with their respective HOAs and Human Resource Units about integration of gender parity objectives and targets in their performance plans and assessments from 2023-2028 and completed in the online PMD tool. This is not limited to including gender balance in staff recruitment but may also entail adopting special measures and practices contributing to gender parity. This will be backed up by an inter-agency office memo from the Resident Coordinator (RC), to all HoAs requesting them to include at least one key result on gender parity in their PMDs, based on the targets set in this Gender Parity Strategy.

The UN family in Bangladesh, and indeed globally, seeks a culture where every person is respected and valued, and everyone is safe, feels included and has access to opportunities. The UNCT will ensure that all their communications, via memos, emails, meetings, capacity building sessions, annual retreats, public speeches, and social media engagements, set a tone that demonstrates conviction and commitment to equality and inclusivity. They should also advocate for change in social norms that create barriers to the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, sexual and gender minorities, and other disadvantaged groups. An inter-agency memo from the RC will also reiterate UN policies on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH), workplace harassment and abuse of authority, which includes following the clear guidelines and procedures to address allegations and complaints.

In addition to internal cultural shift on social norms, it is critical to promote the corporate image of UN in Bangladesh as an attractive and reliable workplace that reflects its feminist values and commitments

within and outside the UN. This will, among other things, require UNCT's external communication to reflect the commitment to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination, including the content on UN websites. The Gender Capacity-Building Plan includes a component on strengthening staff capacity on inclusive and gender sensitive communication to ensure gender is mainstreamed in external communication and messaging of the UNCT. Using such key messages, RC and HoAs will be supported with the evidence base and insights to make the case for social norm change in Bangladesh and within UNCT.

Table 4: Priority actions under focus area 1

Actions	Responsible group	Timeline
1.1 Annual tracking and reporting on agency-specific status and actions for gender parity (disaggregated by sex, type of contract and duty station)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRWG secretariat to compile data, with input from HR focals. • HoAs to present annual data at UNCT to track progress. • GETG and IAT³ to collect data from HRWG for Scorecard reporting on indicator 4.3 	Annually
1.2 Include at least one key performance indicator (KPI) on gender parity in the performance reviews (PMDs) of relevant senior managers (HOAs, Deputy Representatives, Operations, HR Managers and Programme managers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC to ensure KPI of HoAs • OMs to facilitate conversation with respective agency's senior management to ensure KPIs are in place and regularly evaluated. 	Annually
1.3 Disseminate inter-agency office memo from the Resident Coordinator on UN policies on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC to circulate the memo to all staff • RCO and PSEA inter-agency team to facilitate this. <p>Focal point: RCO</p>	2024

³ IAT: Inter-agency assessment team is formed with members of different inter-agency groups and UN agencies assigned to ensure UNCT SWAP Gender Scorecard Annual and Comprehensive Reporting.

2. Enhanced Gender-Responsiveness in Recruitment, Retention, Advancement, and Talent Management

Temporary special measures have long been recognized as critical elements to level the playing field and overcome inherent gender bias, whether in national governments, private sector, or the UN. These measures are based on international treaty law, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which is the most ratified international treaty⁴. In this strategy, these special measures focus specifically on the recruitment, retention, advancement, and talent management of under-represented groups, including women, youth, and people with disabilities.

To continue the parity efforts and improve equal representation, the hiring managers and HRWG must be capacitated on ensuring gender mainstreaming in recruitment processes. Hence, a workshop will be held with OMT and HRWG in 2023, as per the Gender Capacity-Building Plan, to strategize on the special measures in box 2, which should be streamlined with existing HR policies on agency level. The workshop will aim at strengthening the HR capacity on gender mainstreaming in recruitment processes and to jointly create guidelines, a “cheat sheet”, building on the special measures in box 2. The cheat sheet will then provide the base for HR focals to support HoAs, hiring managers, and recruitment panels to go through a gender-sensitive and inclusive process.

Unconscious bias and gender stereotypes negatively impact recruitment, retention, and career advancement. Mitigating systematic bias in the HR processes would allow the system to capitalize on each employee’s potential to optimize the overall impact of the UN’s work.⁵ In the proposed workshop, and in their annual updates to UNCT on gender parity, the HRWG can share good practices of career progression support measures available at the agency level for ensuring that all staff and personnel get equal chances to develop and advance their UN careers. Such measures include, but are not limited to, opportunities for detailed assignments, online and physical training courses, and ways of reintegration after career breaks with the UN system, particularly for female employees who experience layers of systemic barriers to

Box 2: Key issues raised during the consultative workshop on gender parity

1. There should be a harmonized and gender-sensitive standard operating procedure for recruitment.
2. Induction and training arrangements for new staff should include sessions on gender parity.
3. Staff retreats and town hall meetings should include sessions on gender parity.
4. The long-listing guidelines should adopt 50/50 gender representation.
5. Training HRWG on gender mainstreaming in recruitment processes.
6. HR WG can share gender parity status reports on quarterly basis to inform hiring decisions.
7. On-going support and targeted training for female drivers and security guards.
8. Equitable access to capacity development opportunities for personnel in junior positions.
9. Internship programmes targeted at youth will also be implemented at agency level.
10. Nurture leadership skills amongst female staff.

⁴CEDAW requires the UN to take ‘all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women’ (Article 3). This includes temporary special measures to accelerate ‘de facto equality between men and women [which] shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objective of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved’ (Article 4.1).

⁵ [Advocacy Brief: Why Gender Parity?](#)

transition back to work after having children. Examples of innovative initiatives for career advancement is suggested in annex 1.

To reach women interested in a career in the UN, a human resource outreach programme targeted at women will be implemented. This will be in form of an 'HR Open Day' on the theme of building a career/entering the UN system. The workshop will address a number of career issues, including i) what to consider before pursuing a U.N. career; ii) what different roles entail; iii) the skills and experience needed

Box 3: Suggested special measures and guidelines for recruitment for fostering gender parity

1. A gender-neutral language should be used in vacancy announcements and Terms of References.
2. It should be specified in vacancy announcements that women (or men) and minority groups, including people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, and ethnic- and religious minorities, are encouraged to apply.
3. Job openings that fail to yield a minimum 20% applications from the under-represented gender should be extended or reopened, alternatively a written justification should be provided by the hiring manager.
4. Consider removing the requirement of having prior experience in working with UN.
5. All candidate selections during both long- and short-listing must include at least one woman and at least one man
6. Jobs should be advertised broadly - far beyond the UN - and ideally to a mailing list which includes civil society, private sector, and other institutions within Bangladesh.
7. All interviews must include at least one question that contains a gender perspective to ascertain and score knowledge on GEWE issues in Bangladesh.
8. Interview panels should be gender balanced.
9. Interview questions should be gender sensitive, avoiding insensitive and stereotypical questions such as "are you planning to have children soon?". A sample list of gender-sensitive questions should be available.
10. When candidates are equally qualified, preference should be given to the candidate from the under-represented gender.

to succeed; iv) how to network your way to your goals; v) CV and application tips; and vi) the contractual nuances in the UN based on a position's category, grading, and location. This will ensure that the targeted groups obtain knowledge and guidance on what prospective UN employees need to consider before beginning a potential UN journey. The HR open days must be attended by senior colleagues and management, particularly women, who can share experiences and guidance on adaptive and feminist leadership.

For the retention and advancement of female staff and personnel already in the system, a mentorship structure will be set up for support. This programme will offer staff and personnel the chance to find a mentor or mentee based on preferences. Female staff and personnel will be able to sign up as either mentors or mentees; a mentee or a group of mentees will then be matched to a mentor and will then be able to schedule sessions together- either virtually or in person based on their convenience. It will allow a chance to network and reflect on career advancement directions.

In addition to achieving gender parity in human resources, the UN in Bangladesh is committed and has laid the foundation to becoming a gender-responsive purchaser. Gender-responsive procurement is the

selection of services, and goods that considers their impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Many of those that work for and with the UN in Bangladesh is hired as vendors through procurement, including consultants. In October 2022, the OMT procurement subgroup and the GETG organized a workshop to increase the participation of women in UN supply chains. Moving forward, potential women vendors and consultants will continue to be engaged to enhance their knowledge on doing business with the UN and the UN Global Marketplace. This will be based on the global guidelines set by the Procurement Division of the United Nations Secretariat.⁶ The HRWG and OMT procurement sub-group will ensure that the recruitment of short-term and long-term consultants, including Special Services Agreements (SSAs), Individual Contract (IC) agreements, National Personnel Services Agreements (NPSAs), and International Personnel Services Agreements (IPSAs)⁷, considers the special measures and guidelines articulated in box 2.

Table 5: Priority actions under focus area 2

Actions	Responsible group	Timeline
<p>2.1 Organize a workshop for HRWG and OMT on gender mainstreaming in Recruitment, Retention and Advancement, with an emphasis on eliminating gender bias (linked to Gender Capacity-Building Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMT-HRWG to organize workshop with technical support from GETG • OMT-HRWG to standardize and disseminate special measures “cheat sheet”. • HoAs to implement measures and monitor results. <p>Focal point: OMT-HRWG chair and GETG Secretariat</p>	<p>2023</p>
<p>2.2 Organize HR open days, targeted at women, youth, PWDs, and other under-represented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMT-HRWG to organize • GETG to be consulted in planning stage • HoAs and deputies to participate actively <p>Focal point: OMT-HRWG chair and GETG Secretariat</p>	<p>Annually starting from 2023</p>
<p>2.3 Launch a mentorship programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GETG to create application forms • HoAs to encourage staff and personnel to sign up • HRWG to do the matching • GETG and HRWG to follow up with mentors/mentees after 3-6 months 	<p>2023</p>

⁶ [Doing Business with the United Nations Secretariat](#)

⁷ [Contract types](#)

3. An Organizational Culture and Enabling Environment for Advancing Gender Parity

The transformation of an organization’s culture for advancing gender parity takes on a multitude of dimensions. These include work–life balance arrangements, where there is flexibility to accommodate staff and personnel’s family life. The approachability and accessibility of senior management are also crucial aspects, and it is important that management is committed to frequent interaction with staff and personnel in both formal and informal spaces. Moreover, affirmative action to eliminate gender bias and equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision-making will contribute to an equal workplace where everyone is valued. UN staff and personnel also need to demonstrate commitment to gender equality in the workplace, so that accountability for corporate standards on enabling environment is broad-based, and stems from a culture of collaboration across teams in both programmes and operations. Strengthening a culture of inclusion is also critical to ensure small grievances are not piling up, and that any conflicts are resolved amicably and fairly. All these issues are embodied in and tracked periodically through staff perception surveys and leadership dialogues with UNCTs, under UN-SWAP 2.0 alignment indicator 13 on organizational culture.⁸

It is important to highlight that the whole UN family in Bangladesh benefits from a more open and respectful organizational culture, and that it is not ‘a women’s issue’. Improving organizational culture also contributes to becoming an attractive employer, and therefore to attracting and retaining the best talent. Therefore, the UNCT Bangladesh commits to take a proactive approach to foster a diverse workforce and harmonious enabling workplace practices, to give each person the opportunity to contribute their skills, experiences, and perspectives to the UN’s work in the country.

The findings from the 2021 Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey shows that 22.29% of female staff respondents are dissatisfied with the work-life balance support in contrast to 8.31% of male respondents. Flexible work arrangements are a key policy for work-life balance in the UN system. The UN corporate policies reflect a recognition of the care responsibilities of both female and male employees and incorporates flexible work arrangements and support measures that allow employees to contribute to the organization even during times of personal crisis or family pressure. This means being open to adjustments for flexible workplaces that are responsive to professional and personal needs. The HR teams within their respective agencies will ensure that UN personnel and staff are aware of these provisions and encouraged to take advantage of the available facilities and flexibilities.

The Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey (Scorecard indicator 4.2) will be used to obtain feedback from staff and personnel. In addition to the dimensions of gender equality, discrimination, and work-life balance, the survey will include questions on annual internal screening and reporting on fairness and justice in the implementation of UN policies on work-life balance, and family-friendly policies. The survey will also provide an opportunity to monitor the success of the initiatives and measure the effectiveness. The results of the survey will be discussed in UNCT to determine actions needed to uphold and improve the organizational culture. This will be targeted at soliciting innovative ideas and participatory ways to address how gender intersects with multiple forms of discrimination that stem from age, disabilities, migration status, sexual identity, and geographic location, among other things.

⁸ [UNCT SWAP GE Scorecard 2018 Technical Guidance.pdf](#)

Box 4: Key issues raised during the consultative workshop on gender parity

1. Separate room at UN Office to keep school-age children and support lactating mothers.
2. Annual PSHAA refresher sessions for UN personnel.
3. Creating safe spaces for frank and candid experience-sharing on the work environment.
4. One-UN parental leave policy where parental leave (maternity, paternity, adoption, and surrogacy) is equal in length.
5. Human resource trainings should include dedicated sessions on cultural bias and gender stereotypes.

To enhance organizational culture and facilitate a basic understanding on gender equality across the organization, a selection of GEWE material will be included in the induction package for new hires. The package will be developed by GETG and aims to give a snapshot of the context when it comes to GEWE, along with resources for mainstreaming and further learning.

To create an enabling environment, respective agencies will ensure improvements on the structural and physical environment of UN offices. As such, OMT will recommend that each agency conduct an accessibility audit once in the cycle to identify areas where premises and environment can be made more inclusive and accessible, including in respective field offices. An enabling environment will also include creating safe spaces, where staff and personnel can interact, sharing personal experiences of, for example,

parenting, division of domestic labour, traditional norms, bias, and other concerns. Inter-personal communication will help UN personnel and staff to understand gender concepts and ideas in terms of their personal realities, while motivating and inspiring them to act for change. This could, advantageously, happen in the form of a peer-to-peer network that would give colleagues the opportunity to support each other, not only with regards to personal matters but also professionally. Peer-to-peer networks can be encouraged on multiple levels and for different categories of staff and personnel. For example, to foster the notion that gender equality is not a women's issue, a peer network of male champions for gender equality could be formed. This would enable to an informal space for male staff/personnel and encourage informal dialogue, exchange of good practices and actions that contribute to transforming the gender norms that reinforce patriarchy and inequality between women and men.

Through the Inter-Agency Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network, UNCT will roll-out an action-plan on PSEA and monitoring mechanisms on compliance with global policies. The Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey will also assess the implementation of UN policies for prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of authority (PSHAA) and PSEA. In 2018, GETG led a process to collect the information and made a list of mandatory gender training of all agencies. With support from their HR colleagues in respective agencies, the gender focal points updated the completion rates and shared with GETG and UNCT. Additionally, the PSEA annual staff survey 2021 saw a number of national staff members not completing mandatory PSEA training. To address and monitor this, the HRWG will build on the process to track and report on gender parity status to also report to UNCT on staff completion rates of the mandatory online PSEA, PSHAA and gender courses. Complementary to the online PSHAA training and Gender trainings monitoring, the UN Gender capacity plan includes refreshers on the PSHAA Training of Trainers module to ensure a comprehensive package of training and awareness for staff and personnel, contributing to improving the organizational culture.

Table 6: Priority actions under focus area 3

Actions	Responsible group	Timeline
3.1 Conduct all-staff Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey, with additional questions on internal screening and reporting on fairness and justice in the implementation of UN policies on work-life balance and family-friendly policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GETG and IAT to lead the process during scorecard reporting. • GETG co-chairs to present and discuss findings with UNCT. <p>Focal point: GETG secretariat</p>	As per gender scorecard annual reporting on indicator 4.2
3.2 Ensure UNCT induction material includes gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) commitments and related development challenges of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GETG members to develop the GEWE induction material. • HoAs to circulate among agency staff. • HRWG to ensure it is included in staff induction package. <p>Focal point: GETG secretariat</p>	2023
3.3 Annually track and report to UNCT on staff completion rates of mandatory online trainings: e.g. I know Gender, PSHAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRWG secretariat to compile data, with input from HR focals. • HoAs to present annual data to UNCT to track progress. <p>Focal point: HRWG secretariat</p>	Annually

4. Strengthening Gender Parity in Field and Mission Settings

The UNCT in Bangladesh will prioritize targeted measures to address the challenges faced by UN personnel and staff in field and mission settings, including humanitarian operations in Cox’s Bazar. As such, data and on staff and personnel ratio in field offices should be included in the tracking and reporting on agency-specific status and actions for gender parity. Measures will be targeted at creating an improved environment to attract, retain and guarantee the safety and security of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minorities in field and mission settings.

A flexible work-life balance is critical to staff retention, especially in field duty stations. Due to the nature of field work it is important to assure flexibility in leave, rest and recuperation, and remote work policies to allow for family

Box 5: Key issues raised during the consultative workshop on gender parity

1. Regular safety and security audits and action plans for field offices.
2. Family-friendly working arrangements for UN personnel in rural settings.
3. Special leave for personnel who work in stations far-away from their families.
4. Common platform for timely reporting of security and safety incidences.
5. Awareness raising sessions for field personnel on gender parity and overcoming gender stereotyping.
6. Just and fair implementation of policies across all types of contract holders

visits or to receive specialized health care. To better understand the needs and experiences on GE issues in the workplace, a recent survey was conducted with humanitarian actors in Cox's Bazar. Discussions from the GIHA Workplace survey indicate that duty stations in the field, particularly in humanitarian contexts such as Cox's Bazar, can sometimes be a difficult environment. Being a male dominated space, it is extra important that harmful gender norms and behaviours, like sexist jokes or derogatory comments undermining female co-workers' capabilities, are questioned and eliminated. As such, a gender sensitization training will be held for male staff and personnel in Cox's Bazar, led by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) with support from Head of Sub-Offices (HOSOs). The final report of the survey will provide an overview and specific recommendations for further actions required by the HOSOs.

With regards to safety and security concerns, a Women Security Training was held for female staff and personnel in 2019. UNDSS will arrange refreshers of the Women Security Trainings, with technical support from GETG and with special emphasis on staff and personnel in field settings. The UN agencies will lead the implementation of a safety and security audit for field offices and discuss the security measures for staff and personnel in field regularly. The UNDSS will provide technical support in implementing the gender-responsive safety and security audit that addresses the gender specific needs and challenges of staff and personnel in field settings. This includes safety measures in places with a heightened security risk. For example, in refugee camps all staff and personnel might need to carry radio phones, something that currently is not a common practice.

The Aide Memoire for Immediate Response to Gender-Based Security Incidents for Bangladesh UN personnel and dependents is a useful guidance for both country offices and field offices. The aid memoire provides specific information on support measures, referral pathways, information on local medical support, who to contact, actions and procedures to be followed, as well as available resources to support UN personnel and dependents affected by gender-based security incidents. Moreover, the Aide Memoire is useful for both responders and the affected person(s). The SMT and UNCT will ensure all staff and personnel receive the aid memoire and have equal access to quality services regardless of duty station.

UNDSS has established a global reporting system, Safety and Security Incident Recording System (SSIRS). All security and safety incidents happening in the country are being recorded in the system under different categories (terrorism, crime, civil unrest, hazard related). UNDSS Bangladesh reports regularly to SMT and if required suggests specific advice or security measures. In addition, all incidents are included in the General Assembly annual report.

UNDSS has developed a checklist against which hotels and accommodation for staff on mission are assessed. This checklist should include aspects related to gender and inclusivity, such as gendered safety concerns, accessibility for persons with disability, and suitable accommodation for staff and personnel travelling with children. In addition, evacuation and relocation plans should be gender-responsive, see annex 3 for a sample list of consideration. GETG will support UNDSS in reviewing the checklist to ensure gender sensitivity in the UNDSS approved hotels and accommodations and in evacuation and relocation plans.

The Bangladesh PSEA Action Plan 2023 represents the first effort to coordinate activities between the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar and the rest of Bangladesh. This combination allows for lessons learnt and trainings to be shared on a new level. It also allows for engagement with CSO partners to be

expanded, including the training of senior-level management at Dhaka-level. This also includes more UNCT-wide training of development partners in basic PSEA principals and more advanced investigations trainings. Furthermore, the new common risk assessment tool for SEA has been rolled out as of November 2022 and will enable risk assessments to be shared amongst all agencies and scrutinized by all.

Table 7: Priority actions under focus area 4

Actions	Responsible group	Timeline
4.1 Conduct gender-responsive safety and security audits and action plans for field offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOSOs with their respective operations team and UNDSS to lead process. • Exchange experiences and good practices at OMT and SMT. 	Once in the cycle by 2028
4.2 Circulate GBV aid memoir to all staff and personnel, regardless of duty station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCT and OMT to ensure that GBV aid memoir is circulated to all staff and personnel, including in the field. 	Annually
4.3 Hold refresher for Women’s Security Training, particularly for female field staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDSS to organize with technical support from GETG. 	2025
4.4 Hold Gender Sensitization Training with male staff and personnel in Cox’s Bazar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GiHA to organize training • HOSOs to facilitate participation of respective agencies male staff and personnel. 	2024
4.5 Integrate gender-relevant questions in the UNDSS checklist for approved hotels and accommodation, and for evacuation and relocation plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDSS to ensure gender-responsive questions are included in evaluations of accommodation and in evacuation and relocation plans (Annex 3). • GETG to review. 	2023

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Summary of Priority Actions (2023-2028)

Actions in Green requires action at agency level

Proposed Action		Responsible Entity/Group	Time Frame	Key reference for monitoring
1.1.	Annual tracking and reporting on agency-specific status and actions for gender parity (disaggregated by sex, type of contract and duty station)	HoAs, HR focals in HRWG, GETG, and IAT	Annually	<i>BOS Implementation report; Gender Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan; UNCT meeting minutes</i>
1.2.	Include at least one key performance indicator (KPI) on gender parity in the performance reviews (PMDs) of relevant senior managers (HOAs, Deputy Representatives, Operations, HR Managers and Programme managers)	RC, HoAs, and OMs		<i>PMDs for HoAs, Dep Reps, Operations and HR Managers</i>
1.3.	Disseminate inter-agency office memo from the Resident Coordinator on UN policies on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH)	RC, RCO, and PSEA inter-agency team		<i>Inter-agency memo emails</i>
Focus area 2: Enhanced Gender-Responsiveness in Recruitment, Retention, Advancement and Talent Management				
2.1.	Organize a workshop for HRWG and OMT on gender mainstreaming in Recruitment, Retention and Advancement, with an emphasis on eliminating gender bias (linked to Gender Capacity-Building Plan)	OMT-HRWG, GETG, HoAs	2023	<i>GETG WP, HRWG WP, training report, BOS report</i>
2.2.	Organize HR open days, targeted at women, youth, PWDs, and geographically under-represented groups.	OMT-HRWG, GETG, HoAs	Every two years	<i>OMT annual BOS report</i>
2.3.	Launch a mentorship programme	GETG, HRWG, HoAs	Start 2023	<i>Evaluation surveys</i>

Focus area 3: An organizational culture and enabling environment for advancing gender parity				
3.1.	Conduct all-staff Scorecard Gender and Organizational Culture Survey, with additional questions on internal screening and reporting on fairness and justice in the implementation of UN policies on work-life balance and family-friendly policies.	GETG, IAT, UNCT	As per gender scorecard annual reporting on indicator 4.2	<i>Gender Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan</i>
3.2.	Ensure UNCT induction material includes gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) commitments and related development challenges of the country	GETG, HoAs, and HRWG	2023	<i>Gender Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan</i>
3.3.	Annually track and report to UNCT on staff completion rates of mandatory online trainings: e.g. I know Gender, PSHAA. This will be combined with the exercise for collecting gender parity data.	HoAs, HRWG secretariat, UNCT	Annually	<i>Scorecard reporting 4.3</i>
Focus area 4: Strengthening gender parity in field and mission settings				
4.1	Circulate GBV aid memoir to all staff and personnel, regardless of duty station.	UNCT, OMT	Annually	
4.2	Conduct gender-responsive safety and security audits and action plans for field offices.	HOSOs, operations team, UNDSS, OMT, SMT.	Once in the cycle by 2028	
4.3	Hold Gender Sensitization Training with male staff and personnel in Cox's Bazar.	GiHA, HOSOs	2024	
4.4	Hold refresher for Women's Security Training, particularly for female field staff.	UNDSS, GETG	2025	
4.5	Integrate gender-relevant questions in the UNDSS checklist for approved hotels and accommodation and for evacuation and relocation plans.	GETG, UNDSS	2023	

Annex 2: List of Innovative Practices to be Considered

1. **HR over coffee:** this is an informal space where senior managers interact with individual personnel over coffee outside office premises, as a backbone to frank and candid discussion about several organizational culture and HR aspects, including valuing the hard work, requests for even-distribution of tasks, mentorship about opportunities for promotion, and ensuring that small grievances do not pile up. HR over coffee can also be a chance to explore personal experiences of parenting, sharing of domestic work, dealing with traditional norms, challenging bias, and similar real-life concerns.
2. **UN Career Speed Dating:** It can be difficult for aspiring UN staff and personnel to get access to someone in the system to ask for questions and advice, especially when it comes to access to senior management. To make this more accessible the UN can hold “Career Speed Dating” events where interested parties, specifically women and underrepresented groups, can discuss career opportunities with UN staff/management in a speed dating format.
3. **List/roster of staff with gender expertise across agencies that are willing to act as panel members in recruitment processes:** Bangladesh can build a roster of experienced gender and HR interviewers who can participate as panel members in recruitment processes and evaluate candidates across agencies. The gender-sensitive recruiters’ roster could be very basic by having an excel spreadsheet that indicates the name, agency, email, functional roles, primary sector and gender competence of the interviewer or recruiter. Rostered gender recruiters can be notified by the HRWG every 6 months to confirm their availability and update their profile.
4. **Conducting stay and exit interviews:** besides the formal procedure of tracking targets in PMDs and SSA evaluations, during contract renewal, HoAs can conduct stay interviews in the form of structured discussion with each employee to learn the specific actions necessary to strengthen employees’ engagement and retention with the organization. Stay Interviews provide individual level information and allow for the identification of trends and themes among all employees and can encourage supervisor engagement with staff/personnel and the building of a trusting relationship. On the other hand, the purpose of an exit interview is: i) to provide closure for the individual by giving an opportunity for confidential feedback; ii) to give the organization a chance to listen and learn about what is being done well and where there is room for improvement.
5. **Generating photo story profiles on enabling environment for the website:** photo stories on enabling environment means interacting with UN personnel who have benefited from flexible working arrangement and other initiatives, to document their affirmations of change, in a way that sets an example on how fairly and justly corporate standards are being implemented. This can also take the form of coming up with a blog from stories of different UN personnel who have benefited from corporate standards on enabling environment, to demonstrate how the UN in Bangladesh places a strong focus on creating a healthy work environment, including implementing Flexible Working Arrangement policy and promoting staff career and development.
6. **Instituting Gender Parity Champion Awards:** The RCO, with support from UNCT, can come with bi-annual awards to honour agencies and UN personnel who have taken significant steps towards gender equality in the workplace, in ways that have contributed to reaching the set targets in this Gender Parity Strategy. Staff members can be invited to give in nominations, with the winners selected through a voting process or by a small panel. The awardees can also be profiled on agency and one-UN websites, and via social media for corporate visibility of the gender parity commitments and results
7. **Visuals on gender equality messaging in common UN premises:** As part of demonstrating commitment to gender equality practice at the workplace, the UNCG can work on installation of positive visual images and that promote mindset change and facilitate in-house conversations on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This should use non-stereotypical images that depict women and men in empowering and transformative roles that make it possible to achieve equality at and beyond the workplace.

Annex 3: Sample of Gender Considerations in Evacuation and Relocation Plans

Country Security Plans detail evacuation and relocation operations for UN personnel and eligible family members. The checklist below provides additional gender considerations to support evacuation and relocation planning.

Gender Considerations	YES	NO
Assembly Points		
Is there adequate lighting in assembly points?		
Are assembly points accessible to pregnant personnel and eligible family members?		
Are gender-segregated lockable latrines available at assembly points?		
Are feminine hygiene products available at assembly points?		
Is there a safe and private space for breastfeeding personnel and family members at assembly points?		
Are provisions in place to ensure medical assistance can be provided privately?		
Concentration Points and Bunkers (if required in SRM)		
Is there adequate lighting in common areas and rooms?		
Are concentration points and bunkers accessible to pregnant personnel and eligible family members?		
Is there an option to have gender-segregated sleeping areas or are there separate beds to cater for personnel and eligible family members?		
Are there gender-segregated lockable latrines available at concentration points and bunkers?		
Are concentration points and bunkers stocked with feminine hygiene products?		
Is there a safe and private space for breastfeeding personnel and family members?		
Are PEP kits available in concentration points and bunkers?		
Are provisions in place to ensure medical assistance can be provided privately?		
Travel Arrangements (if required by the Host Government or the customs of the location)		
Do women require to be accompanied by a male guardian to undergo internal or external travel? If yes, are administrative provisions in place to accommodate the male guardian?		
Do women require a certified written permission of their male guardian to undergo internal or external travel? Are personnel reminded of this requirement?		
If children are accompanied by one parent during the evacuation/relocation process, does the Host Government require a certified written permission of the other parent? Is there a specific requirement to have a certified written permission of the father? Are personnel reminded of this requirement?		

Annex 4: List of Additional Resources on Gender Parity

- [System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#)
- [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#)
 - [Supplementary guidance](#)
 - [Mentoring as Part of Creating an Enabling Environment](#)
- [Make Parity a Reality: Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#)
 - [In brief](#)
 - [Video: Walkthrough Presentation for System-wide Colleagues](#)
 - [Summary of Key Recommendations for Organization](#)
 - [Summary of Key Recommendations for Managers](#)
 - [Summary of Key Recommendations for Personnel](#)
- [Making Parity a Reality at the UN: Video Series](#)
- [Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System: Report of the Secretary-General \(2021\)](#)
 - [Secretary-General's Report and Resolution Summary: How to Improve Representation of Women at the UN](#)
- [Podcast Series on Flexible Working Arrangements](#) (in collaboration with the WorkLifeHub)
- [In Brief: Why Gender Parity?](#)
- [2021 Infographic: Representation of Women in the UN system](#)
- [Vacancy Announcements: Examples of Good Practice](#)
- [Exit Survey Model Template](#)
- [Enabling Environment in Focus/Intersectionality Documents](#)
- [In Brief: Flexible Working Arrangements for the United Nations – Why it Makes Sense](#)
- [In Brief: Benefits of Flexible Working Arrangements](#)