

THE GOAL OF GENDER BALANCE

EFFORTS TARGET HIGHER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN PROFESSIONALS

BY ANNICK CARNINO, BEVERLEY YOUNG & SILVIA NEMETHYOVA

Women in the United Nations system is a subject rising on the agendas of many UN bodies. Gender issues were raised to the highest level in October 2000, when, for the first time in UN history, a Special Session of the Security Council "Women, Peace and Security" took place. In Security Council Resolution S/RES/1325(2000), the important role of women both in the prevention of conflict and their role at the decision-making level was reaffirmed.

Among the variety of issues relating to women and their empowerment is the participation of women in the decision-making process, an area long defined and dominated by men. The equal participation of women in decision-making is the bottom line for equal opportunities. To meet this demand, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/55/69) which states: *The General Assembly reaffirms the urgent goal of achieving 50/50 gender distribution in all categories of posts within the UN system, especially at senior and decision-making levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the continuing lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition.*

In addition, the urgent goal of achieving 50/50 gender balance in all categories of posts within the UN system was reaffirmed at the General Assembly Session in October 2001.

At the IAEA, increasing the role and contribution of women has long been a matter of concern to its senior management. This concern is intensifying as the pool of candidates, and particularly professional women candidates in the field of nuclear science, is decreasing. On 1 July 2001, the total number of female staff in the Secretariat was 909, representing 41.9% of overall staff in the Professional and General Service categories. The share of women in the Professional and higher categories was only 17.6%.

At its meeting in September 2002, the IAEA General Conference again adopted a resolution in which Member States reiterated their commitment to improving the representation of women. It is hoped that their full support will be provided to enable the Secretariat to meet this goal.

Furthermore, the subject of increasing the share of women in the Professional category in the Secretariat was presented in more detail to the January 2002 IAEA Senior Management Conference, by a presentation made by Ms. Annick Carnino, the Focal Point for Gender Concerns and Director of Nuclear Installation Safety at the IAEA. Ms. Carnino pre-

sented recommendations for action at the first meeting by the International Advisory Group for Gender Issues (IAG-GI), established in 2001. The Director General also reiterated his commitment to the goal of increasing the number of Professional women staff. Subsequently, recommendations were made on appropriate actions to be taken.

While the overall long-term target remains 50% of women among Professional staff, interim targets will be set for the end of 2003 for each Department (within the range of 20% to 25%, depending on retirement/vacancy statistics). These targets will be met through the introduction of the innovative new measures to be taken by the Agency listed below:

■ **Survey to Determine Root Causes of Women's Under-Representation.** With support from the IAG-GI, the Focal Point for Gender Concerns together with the Division of Personnel will prepare a questionnaire to identify "road-blocks" to women applying for

Ms. Carnino is the IAEA Focal Point for Gender Concerns and Director of Nuclear Installation Safety. Ms. Young is head of the Human Resources Planning Section, Division of Personnel. Ms. Nemethyova is a staff member in the IAEA Division of Personnel. Photo, next page: Some of the women working at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna. (Credit: Calma/IAEA)



professional posts in the Agency. It will help to determine the root causes of their under-representation. The survey is planned to be carried out in early 2003 and will be distributed to all staff and at a later date to women in WIN – Women in Nuclear (an association of professional women in nuclear fields; see the web site at <http://213.130.43.103/win-global>.)

■ **Elimination of Possible Gender Bias.** The IAEA's Management Certificate Curriculum training programme will include methodologies for sensitizing managers to possible gender bias in the evaluation of candidates in the recruitment process.

■ **Job Announcements and Recruitment.** Appropriate staff members on duty travel will be instructed to take with them a recruitment travel kit for a short presentation on job opportunities for women at the IAEA. Formal notification of actions taken are to be noted in their travel reports.

■ **Mentoring and Fellowship Programmes.** It is planned to establish a fellowship to support

the training of women scientists. Secondly, a mentoring programme will be established, in order to familiarize inexperienced women scientists with the work of the Agency and to provide role models through this medium.

■ **Management Accountability.** All Department Heads will be instructed to report annually to the Director General on measures taken to improve the representation of women in their programme, the proportion of women participants/chairpersons at meetings, and the number of women experts selected. The Division of Personnel will develop a roster of competencies on professional women.

■ **Web Site on Women.** To raise awareness about women working in nuclear fields, the IAEA is developing a web site on women. More articles related to women's issues, role models and job opportunities will be included. The site is planned to open in 2003.

■ **Gender Mainstreaming.** Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the impact on women and men of any planned action, including legis-

lation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. Therefore, Agency projects, especially those related to women, will be identified in future programmes. It is hoped that the implementation of measures will bring progress, *inter alia*, in the Agency's contribution to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment within the United Nations System. To raise awareness of these issues among all Member States, a letter announcing initiatives and requesting cooperation will be sent to all Member States.

The IAEA has the clear goal of reaching 50% gender balance in the Secretariat. Even though this goal may not be immediately achievable, many changes are scheduled for the near future. The Agency is strongly committed to increase the percentage of women in the Professional category, reflecting the changing face and opening opportunities at the Agency and within the international nuclear community. Such a target can only be reached by a joint collaboration between the IAEA and its Member States. □

WOMEN OF NUCLEAR POWER

TOP NUCLEAR REGULATORS REDEFINE THE “GLASS CEILING”

The world's nuclear industries, like many others, have long been a man's world when it comes to job opportunities and advancement. But times are changing – women are breaking through proverbial “glass ceilings”, and rising to top positions.

Six of the nuclear industry's most powerful women met in Vienna at a Senior Regulator's meeting, as part of the IAEA General Conference in September 2002. They comprise the seven women who head Nuclear Regulatory Authorities in Argentina, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Canada, Spain, Slovakia and South Africa. They are responsible for overseeing the use of radiation and nuclear energy in their States and enforcing safety regulations.

Ms. Louisa Zondo, CEO of the National Nuclear Regulator, South Africa, welcomes the changing face of the nuclear industry. “Based on our historical experience the nuclear industry in South Africa has essentially been white male. Those are things we are working on. The focus is on keeping the expertise but transforming the institution,” she says.

Ms. Zondo comes to the nuclear industry from a background in human rights law. “As a woman who is also not a scientist, I have particular challenges of being understood and accepted in the leadership position I am holding. I find things are progressively improving. There is a lot of work ahead but we are making good progress.”

For Ms. Linda Keen, CEO and President of Canada's Nuclear Safety Commission, gender has not been a barrier in her work as chief regulator. Ms. Keen has one of the largest mandates of any regulator in the world – she is responsible for overseeing and issuing 4,500 licenses, which cover 22 nuclear reactors, Canada's uranium mines and hospitals. “There has to be visibility to the issues of women going forward,” she says. “If you are interested in gender equality then you have to make



some bold moves, and that's not just the job of human resources. That's the job of the leadership of the organization.”

Sweden's chief Nuclear Regulator, Ms. Judith Melin, says the skill sets of regulators and scientists are different. “Regulators do not necessarily have to come from a scientific back-

ground. They can have a broader education and work history, with strong management and leadership skills,” she said.

One who does come from a science background is Argentina's Nuclear Regulatory Authority chair, Ms. Diana Klein, whose background is in chemistry. She says with hard work today's women can have it all. “My message to young women in the nuclear profession is to work hard, and if you want it, you can make it to the top and still have a family,” she says.

And why not? After all, the founding “mother” of nuclear science and technology was a woman. Marie Curie helped discover radioactivity winning two Nobel Prizes in 1903 and 1911 for her efforts.

Despite the changing workforce, the gender imbalance in the nuclear profession remains evident. A report commissioned by the European Union in 2000 found a lack of women, particularly in top jobs in science, throughout the EU. Of the professional staff at the IAEA, less than one in five employees is female. Just over 12% of professional women (funded from the Agency's regular budget) fill the scientific and engineering posts. The Agency's Member States have called for measures to improve the balance, and a wide range of steps are being taken to raise the representation of professional women at the IAEA.— *Kirstie Hansen, Division of Public Information. This story first appeared on the IAEA WorldAtom web site at www.iaea.org.*

Photo: From left to right, Ms. Zondo, Ms. Keen, Ms. Melin and Ms. Klein. Foreground: Ms. Drabova, the chief nuclear regulator in the Czech Republic. (Credit: Calma/IAEA)