



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

**C/105/CRP/21**

English only  
3 November 2014

---

**CONFERENCE ROOM PAPER**

**COUNCIL**

**105th Session**

**GENDER COORDINATION REPORT 2014**



## **GENDER COORDINATION REPORT 2014**

### **Introduction**

1. In 2014, the Gender Coordination Unit continued to focus its efforts on three main initiatives:

- (a) Working on implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SWAP);
- (b) Contributing to general knowledge about gender inequalities in specific migration sectors and suggesting possible corrective actions by fostering multiregional high-level expert meetings;
- (c) Enhancing operational partnership with United Nations agencies and other international organizations in work on gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

2. The Unit also pursued its regular activities in the areas of integrating gender into IOM programmes and projects and gender equality, including gender balance in IOM staffing. The Unit also has devoted constant effort to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

### **System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

3. IOM is completing its third year of participation in SWAP, an inter-agency initiative designed to provide stronger accountability and commitment for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the United Nations system. Beginning in 2012, IOM was among the eight entities that piloted the reporting framework. Now, more than 60 different United Nations agencies – along with IOM – participate in the annual mandatory reporting. In 2014, the Gender Coordination Unit continued to lead IOM's participation in this critical initiative. Following submission of the Organization's 2014 remedial plan, UN-Women recently described the plan as being "excellent" and "exemplary among UN entities".

4. Foremost among SWAP initiatives this year, the Unit has launched an initiative to adopt a new gender policy. With the support of UN-Women, IOM has contracted a leading expert on SWAP who is working closely with the Unit to draft the policy in coordination with key staff members at Headquarters and in the Field. The Unit has organized a number of senior management meetings to discuss a new gender policy and has launched selected surveys of Field staff members designed to elicit input.

5. The Gender Coordination Unit actively supports other IOM units as they take steps to implement their SWAP-related commitments. For instance, in 2014, this included revising the gender focal point (GFP) network (see below). It also worked closely over many months with the Office of the Inspector General to organize and conduct a groundbreaking gender audit in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The Unit also has collaborated repeatedly with the IOM Development Fund during the year in an effort to systematically evaluate draft project proposals to ensure that they effectively include more gender mainstreaming.

6. The Unit is also actively involved in inter-agency collaboration and participated in a number of SWAP-related workshops throughout the year, including workshops on reporting, resource allocation and tracking, gender policy, gender markers, and capacity development and organizational culture.

## **Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**

7. The Gender Coordination Unit continued to provide advice about and advocate for implementation of mandatory sensitization sessions on PSEA for all IOM offices. The awareness-raising sessions were first rolled out globally in 2011. In September 2014, the Director General wrote to all Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office stressing the importance of PSEA and urging Country Offices to continue their awareness-raising efforts. The Unit also led training sessions in 2014 on PSEA that were specifically designed for Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office. The Unit has distributed to all Field Offices copies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) new training film on PSEA, *To Serve with Pride*. The film was revised, strengthened and re-released in 2013, and speaks directly to the type of work that IOM performs in humanitarian and development settings. The Director General provides a statement in the film, as one of the featured international organization Principals. As of late 2013, more than 7,300 staff members had been trained worldwide, representing a compliance rate of 84 per cent of the IOM workforce.

8. The Gender Coordination Unit continued to support the Office of the Chief of Staff to ensure an efficient and timely implementation of the IOM Plan of Action on PSEA. The Unit worked in coordination with the Human Resources Management Division to revise the accountability competency indicator in the Staff Evaluation System so that it now applies PSEA to all staff members. The Unit also has continued to provide support to the ongoing effort to update the IOM Standards of Conduct, including revised PSEA language. The Unit has also encouraged public awareness of PSEA and has sent to all Field Offices a new PSEA poster in the three IOM languages. The Unit continued its work with resettlement programme managers to adopt beneficiary protection plans that can serve as models for other areas of IOM's work. Furthermore, IOM has been heavily involved in developing a pilot community-based complaints mechanism and the Unit participated in a workshop held in Geneva about the effectiveness of complaint mechanisms.

9. In 2014, the Director General continued his role as the IASC Principals focal point on PSEA. He originally shouldered this role in November 2011. In May 2014, the Director General sent the IASC Principals' progress report on PSEA to the Secretary-General of the United Nations which summarized the work previously done by the PSEA senior focal points. The Gender Coordination Unit is now taking steps to coordinate a new round of reporting about implementation by the senior focal points in the PSEA network. Looking to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the Unit is providing support for IOM's action plan to prepare for the Summit which includes a focus on PSEA.

10. The Unit is also actively involved in supporting the investigation of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment received from Field Offices. The Unit has participated in the initiative launched by the Ethics and Conduct Office to develop an internal case-tracking tool. The Unit has coordinated with the Ethics and Conduct Office to strengthen intake procedures and internal reporting routes.

## **Gender-based violence**

11. The Unit is partnering with Vital Voices – a non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C. – which is leading a high-profile consortium of organizations to provide emergency assistance to victims of extreme forms of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices.

12. The Unit also supported several different initiatives on gender-based violence throughout the year in which either the Director General or IOM participated, including the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which was held in London, and an event held in September on the US State Department's initiative on preventing and responding to gender-based violence in emergencies.

### **International Women's Day: Equality for women is progress for all**

13. On International Women's Day 2014, the theme of which was "Equality for women is progress for all," the Gender Coordination Unit published an animated infographic illustrating migrant women's experiences in relation to the eight Millennium Development Goals, migrant women's specific experiences and IOM's programmatic efforts to support them. This was accompanied by a press release and an op-ed by the Director General. The Unit also organized a panel discussion at Headquarters with women in senior positions at IOM who shared their stories about being a woman in the international civil service.

### **Expert group meeting on skilled migrant women's underemployment**

14. Building on the Gender Coordination Unit's previous in-depth work in this arena, the Unit organized and held, in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, an expert group meeting on 3 and 4 April 2014, entitled *Harnessing Knowledge on the Migration of Highly Skilled Women*. The meeting was a follow-up to the 2012 publication *Crushed Hopes: Underemployment and Deskilling among Skilled Migrant Women* and workshops and seminars held in 2013. The expert group meeting brought together a select group of key stakeholders from around the world, including academics, practitioners and experts from international organizations to review the evidence on the migration of highly skilled women, share good practices, examine policies and challenges, and identify practical solutions to overcome these challenges.

### **Training on working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender migrants**

15. Working in coordination with the Human Resources Management Division, the Gender Coordination Unit helped to organize a training session in September 2014 entitled *Effective Approaches to Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (Forced) Migrants*.

### **Knowledge-sharing and global outreach**

16. The Unit continued its efforts to use knowledge-sharing activities to improve stakeholders' understanding of key gender and migration challenges (e.g. trafficking, access to sexual and reproductive health care, underemployment and deskilling of migrant women, female genital mutilation among migrant populations). The Unit regularly disseminates newsletters, fact sheets, photo stories, press releases, research publications and good practices from IOM Field Offices via a wide range of traditional and social media channels, including the IOM website, Facebook, Twitter and blog accounts, the United Nations system Pinterest account on gender and WomenWatch.

## **Other inter-agency involvement**

### ***Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality***

17. The Gender Coordination Unit continued to be an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The Unit also participates in the informal network of Geneva-based United Nations gender advisers.

### ***IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse***

18. The Unit continued to support IOM's participation in the IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which submitted a report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 19 May 2014. The report covers the work of the Task Force from its inception and makes recommendations on measures that require further attention, such as safe, accessible and collective complaints mechanisms, recruitment procedures and investigations.

### ***Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women***

19. The Gender Coordination Unit contributed to the fifty-ninth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by providing the Committee with confidential country reports on the situation of migrant women and girls.

## **Gender in human resources**

20. In conjunction with the Human Resources Management Division, the Unit proposed that certain aspects of the Staff Evaluation System be revised to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of gender-related competency indicators, including for accountability, and that a new key performance indicator be created for gender equality.

21. The Unit monitors and disseminates data on gender balance in the Organization, including through information sheets directed at both management and staff. In 2014, it conducted an in-depth analysis of senior management selections over a number of years and moderated several discussions on this topic.

## **Collaboration with service areas and Field Offices**

22. Based on survey data from the Field, the Unit has been developing a two-day training module for Regional Thematic Specialists on the subject of mainstreaming gender into project development. The training will be piloted in December 2014 for the Vienna and Brussels Regional Offices.

23. In 2014, the Gender Coordination Unit continued to provide expert advice to service areas and Field Offices upon request.

## **Gender focal point network**

24. In 2014, the Unit led an important initiative to reform the GFP network and to better align it with inter-agency practices and standards, including SWAP. Early in the year, the Director General approved a reform to create minimum qualifications for GFP positions

which was successfully implemented throughout the Organization. At the same time, the Unit created a system of regional GFPs to assist and work with the GFPs in their region. The Unit continued to lead its network of GFPs, not only providing bilateral and collective guidance, but also drawing on the network to better understand, use and promote Field work.

**Ongoing activities**

25. The Gender Coordination Unit continues to attend meetings of the Appointments and Postings Board and the Rotation Appointments and Postings Board as a non-voting ex officio member as part of the strategy to ensure that proper attention is given to gender considerations and to assist in achieving a gender balance in the Organization.