

INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS 2017
ANNUAL REPORT



205 CHAMPIONS

united by our
commitment to break
down gender barriers
a unique network of leaders
from over 60 countries

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
AMBASSADORS
CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUSINESS



600 COMMITMENTS

together
we have made
some
to advance gender equality

RELATED TO

- GOOD GOVERNANCE
- LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY
- SELECTION & RECRUITMENT
- WORK-LIFE BALANCE
- ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
- MEETINGS, CONFERENCE & DELEGATIONS
- PROGRAMMATIC & FIELD WORK

FOREWORD

Our community of **INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS** is a growing network of female and male decision makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence. Our fundamental **PANEL PARITY PLEDGE** has now spread throughout our institutions, making it unacceptable to have single-sex panels on any topic. Together, we have made a total of nearly 600 **COMMITMENTS** to introduce real change in the way we work and the programmes we deliver.



Caitlin **Kraft-Buchman** Michael **Møller** Veronika **Bard**

In 2017, our network **EXPANDED** with new hubs in **NEW YORK** and **VIENNA**, and “soft launches” of hubs in Nairobi and Bonn-Berlin. In all, there are now 205 Champions. Secretary-General António Guterres and many of his senior colleagues at United Nations Headquarters are also on board, with his new System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity explicitly referring to the Gender Champions.

As the network expands, it remains focused first and foremost on its **IMPACT**, which it achieves both through the Champions' individual **COMMITMENTS** and through groups focusing on specific topics for which collective action is needed. In 2017, these **IMPACT GROUPS**, led by Champions, delved into the issues of **REPRESENTATION**, **CHANGE MANAGEMENT**, **HEALTH** and **TRADE**. In December 2017, some 120 member States and observers at the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires joined the **JOINT DECLARATION ON TRADE AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**, which had been conceived in Geneva. Our first publication, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, a compendium of best practices for balanced delegations, written in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), was released and shared with Governments and heads of international organizations. We also organized targeted training and issued A **“How To” Checklist for International Gender Champions**, outlining activities to embed gender equality across structures and systems.

Despite the powerful impact we had last year, much more remains to be done. According to the World Economic Forum, we will achieve gender parity only by 2234 at the current rate of change. This is just not good enough. This is not to say that there has been no progress. Indeed, judged on access to opportunity, today is a better time to be a woman than it was a decade ago and a decade from now the situation will very likely be even better. Still, more than 20 years after the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we are not yet where we should be, nor are we moving there fast enough.

We need to do more, starting with changing mindsets, whether openly discriminatory attitudes or more unconscious biases. This is exactly why the International Gender Champions initiative was launched in Geneva in 2015. Two years on, we are proud of what it has already achieved and humbled by the energy, passion and commitment that many of the Champions have brought to it.

Without gender equality, the world can be neither just nor decent, economies can be neither stable nor resilient, societies are less peaceful and conflicts are infinitely more difficult to resolve. This means **THAT ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5 IS NOT SIMPLY A GOAL IN ITSELF, IT IS A PRECONDITION FOR ALL OTHER GOALS**. Let us, therefore, all champion gender equality in our work, our homes, our schools and our lives.

Veronika Bard Michael Møller Caitlin Kraft-Buchman

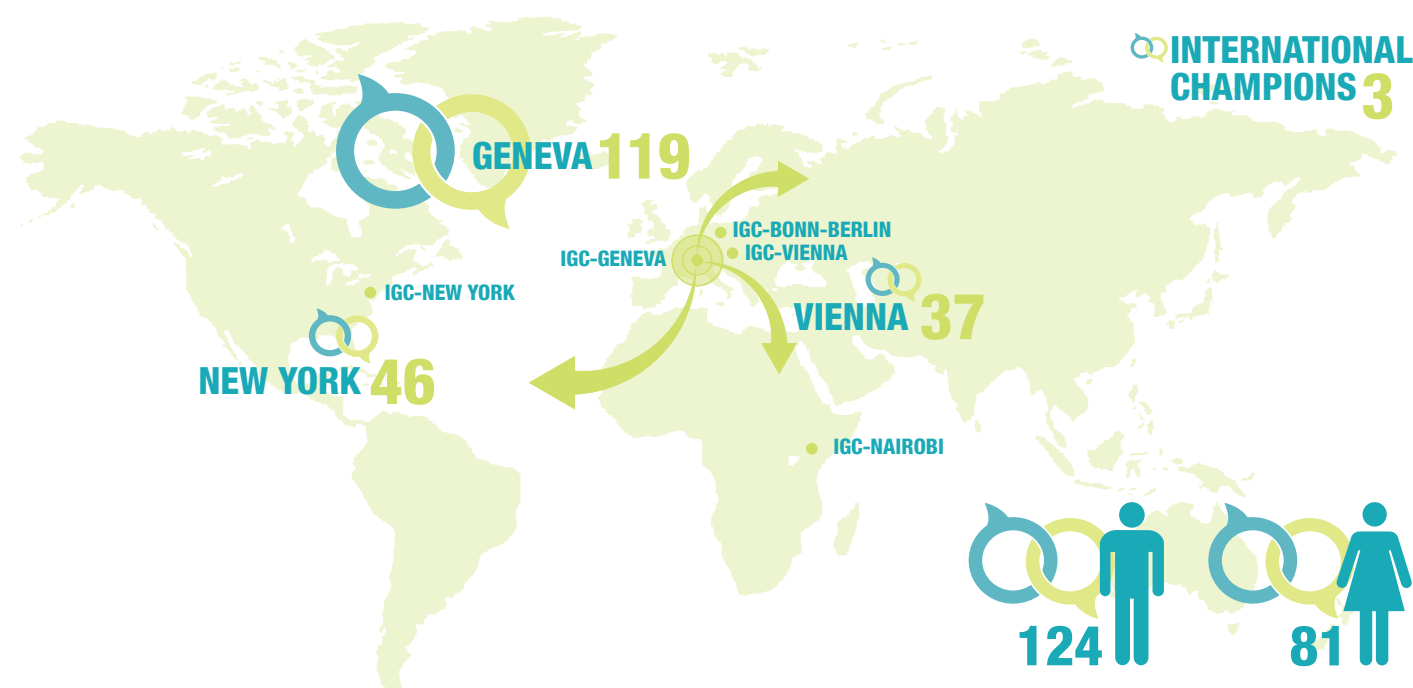
GOING GLOBAL

In 2017 the International Gender Champions experienced rapid growth, as the initiative spread from its original base in Geneva's international community to other cities and sectors, and 112 new Champions joined, raising their number to 205.

In March, the **INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS – NEW YORK**, led by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Jürg Lauber, was launched, adding more than 40 new Champions. Among them was Secretary-General António Guterres and several of his senior colleagues at United Nations Headquarters, including the Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. At the opening of the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, the Secretary-General encouraged other senior leaders to join the initiative.



Jürg Lauber, Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, António Guterres, Azadeh Khalili and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka



Andrew J. Schofer

In June, the **INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS – VIENNA**, led by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, Pilar Saborío de Rocafort, the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, Andrej Benedejčič, the Chargé d'affaires of the United States of America, Andrew Schofer, the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna, Yury Fedotov, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Li Yong, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory

Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Lassina Zerbo, and the Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Simonetta Di Pippo, was launched, adding 30 new Champions.

In December 2017, prior to the opening of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Erik Solheim, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Sahle-Work Zewde, and the Permanent Representative of Finland, Tarja Fernández, announced the formation and soft launch of a new hub in Nairobi. The **INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS – NAIROBI** will be launched officially in early 2018. A hub will also be launched in Bonn-Berlin in 2018. It will be led by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Patricia Espinosa.



Michelle Bachelet, François Longchamp and Micheal Moller

The network also welcomed two outstanding leaders as **HONORARY GENDER CHAMPIONS** for their groundbreaking work on gender equality: the **MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN, MARGOT WALLSTRÖM**, for leading a bold feminist foreign policy, which aims at ensuring women's rights and participation in central decision-making processes, including in peacebuilding efforts and peace negotiations; and the **PRESIDENT OF CHILE, MICHELLE BACHELET**, for her tireless efforts in promoting the full equality, inclusion and participation of women in Chile and in the world as the first Executive Director of UN-Women (2010–2013). During her presidency, Chile established the Women and Gender Equity Ministry in 2016 to end gender inequality and promote women's political representation, and introduced a gender approach to labour legislation.



Christophe De Kepper

The network marked International Women's Day in Geneva with a special focus on gender equality and sports. The heads of nearly 50 international sports federations and international organizations based in neighbouring Lausanne participated. Several **LEADERS OF WORLD SPORTS FEDERATIONS** have since become International Gender Champions, including the heads of the Fédération Equestre Internationale and of World Sailing, as well as the Director General of the International Olympic Committee.



KEEPING THE PLEDGE

All International Gender Champions sign the Panel Parity Pledge to no longer sit on single-sex panels and the Pledge remains at the core of the International Gender Champions initiative.

Throughout multilateral settings and international conferences, an expert's participation on panels can often boost that person's professional opportunities and lead to peer recognition. Hundreds of such panels take place each year in Geneva, New York, Vienna, Nairobi, Bonn and other multilateral hubs across a great breadth of substantive expertise. Yet there has been no widespread international awareness or focus on the need to ensure gender parity in organizing these events.

RESPONSES TO OUR ANNUAL SURVEY SHOW THAT GENDER BALANCE ON PANELS HAS IN FACT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED: PARITY WAS ACHIEVED IN 44 PER CENT OF THE 328 PANELS REPORTED ON, COMPARED TO ONLY 18 PER CENT LAST YEAR.

WHY: Because 50 per cent of the population warrants the same visibility as the other 50 per cent. Visibility is key for role models in the public space and the workplace, and women's distinct and expert voices must be elevated through gender parity on panels. Single-sex panels are obsolete!

IMPACT: Diverse points of view offer twenty-first century results, generate sustainable solutions and lead to a change in culture and a mind shift

Although 32 per cent of panels still had more men than women, this is a major improvement on 2016, when 54 per cent of the panels were male-dominated. The proportion of single-sex panels has also decreased, from 9.5 per cent in 2016 to 8 per cent in 2017, of which 5 per cent were all-male and 3 per cent all-female.

Comparison of Panels in 2016 and 2017

2016

18%
Women = Men

54%
Men > Women

9.5%
single-sex panels

2017

44%
Women = Men

32%
Men > Women

8%
single-sex panels

3%
all-female panels

5%
all-male panels

PANEL ORGANIZERS SEEM TO HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE THAT SINGLE-SEX PANELS ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE

and that they must aim for gender balance. The Champions had to intervene in only 11 per cent of cases, down from 42 per cent the previous year. Half the time, their interventions proved to be successful in improving the composition of panels. Fourteen respondents stated that they absolutely refused to take part in single-sex panels. According to the survey, Champions who inadvertently found themselves on single-sex panels always mentioned it to the organizers, with some commenting from the podium. Even with regard to panels that were not single-sex but on which women were underrepresented, many Champions raised the issue of gender balance with the organizers.

Responses also show, however, that **all-female panels on issues related to gender equality and women's rights are still too common**. It is vital to ensure men's participation in these discussions and the Panel Parity Pledge is an additional means to invite male experts to join the international search for solutions.



ACCOUNTING FOR COMMITMENTS

Each Gender Champion makes two personal commitments to galvanize behavioural change at an individual and an institutional level. These commitments seek to catalyse innovation and implement best practices to achieve gender equality in measurable, results-oriented and time-bound increments.

The Gender Champions made 597 commitments in 2017 and reported on 209 through the annual survey.

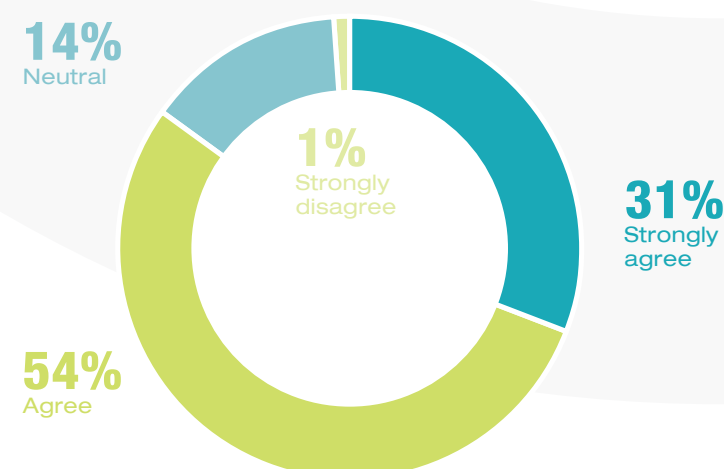
According to their responses, **THEY MET TWO THIRDS OF THEIR COMMITMENTS IN FULL AND ONE THIRD IN PART.**

No commitment was deemed unfeasible. This is encouraging progress.

Equally encouraging is the fact that

THE CHAMPIONS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEY RECEIVED A HIGH RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENTS, WITH THEIR COMMITMENTS HAVING A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN 85 PER CENT OF CASES AND LEADING TO TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE IN 70 PER CENT OF CASES.

Commitments made a significant impact



Nevertheless, 90 per cent of respondents said they would continue working on their commitments in 2018 to achieve long-term results, aware that lasting progress requires sustained efforts over the long run. Their responses may also underline continued shortcomings in the definition of the commitments, **MANY** of which **STILL LACK MEASURABLE TARGETS** and can therefore be extended indefinitely. In 2018 efforts should be focused on ensuring that such measurable targets are included and that commitments are genuinely time-bound.

With regard to the focus of the commitments cited in the survey, half fell into the category of leadership and accountability, which is consistent with the very nature of the International Gender Champions as a leadership network. There was also a strong focus, once again, on organizational culture (48 per cent), and increasing women's participation in meetings, conferences and delegations (41 per cent), as well as good governance (28 per cent) and selection and recruitment (27 per cent).¹

¹ Some commitments may fall into several categories.

Examples of commitments made by the Gender Champions in 2017

Good governance (28%)

That the budget submissions and budget allocations for the Geneva Mission will be gender-responsive, and that all submissions to the Fijian Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget, shall set out the proportion of the proposed budget which is designed directly and indirectly to empower women.

(Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations in Geneva)

Leadership and Accountability (50%)

To ensure that the system reaches gender parity at the most senior levels (Under-Secretary-General/Assistant Secretary-General) for posts over which I have direct authority by the end of 2021, and across the system well before 2030.

(António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations)

To ensure the undertaking of a consultative process through which an updated and expanded UNAIDS Gender Action Plan will be developed and launched by 8 March 2018.

(Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS)

Meetings & Conferences (41%)

In invitations to the International Labour Conference and any regional meetings, I will reiterate my call for a minimum critical mass of 30 per cent women delegates - with a parity goal of 45-55 per cent - and include a relevant sex-disaggregated infographic.

(Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization)

Incorporate a gender perspective in the country profiles analysed by the Permanent Mission during the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, so as to assess the advancement and observance by countries of international obligations of women's human rights.

(Elayne Whyte Gómez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva)

Organizational Culture (48%)

Commission a gender audit of the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations in New York and publish a gender compact, setting out commitments to improve our organizational and corporate culture and to increase our engagement on gender equality across the Mission.

(Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations in New York)

ACCOUNTING FOR COMMITMENTS

Programmatic and field work (26%)

To promote the inclusion of women and girls and gender mainstreaming in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund to prevent violent extremism.

(Khaled Khoser, Executive Director, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund)

Promote the consideration of gender issues in hazardous chemicals and waste management at the national and regional levels through pilot projects and side events at the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

(Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions)

Meet with at least one women's organization or woman human rights defender in each of my field visits.

(Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Selection and recruitment (27%)

Ensure that all selection panels for new positions in the Mission include at least one man and one woman.

(Antje Leendertse, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations in Geneva)

For side events held at the conferences of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, selection criteria will continue to include the applicant's track record of gender balance on previous side event panels. All applicants will be made aware of the Panel Parity Pledge.

(Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)

Work-life balance and other facilitative policies (23%)

To promote work-family life balance through: (a) early information and advance notice of meetings to enhance predictability and planning; and (b) avoid calling meetings during evenings, weekends and public holidays.

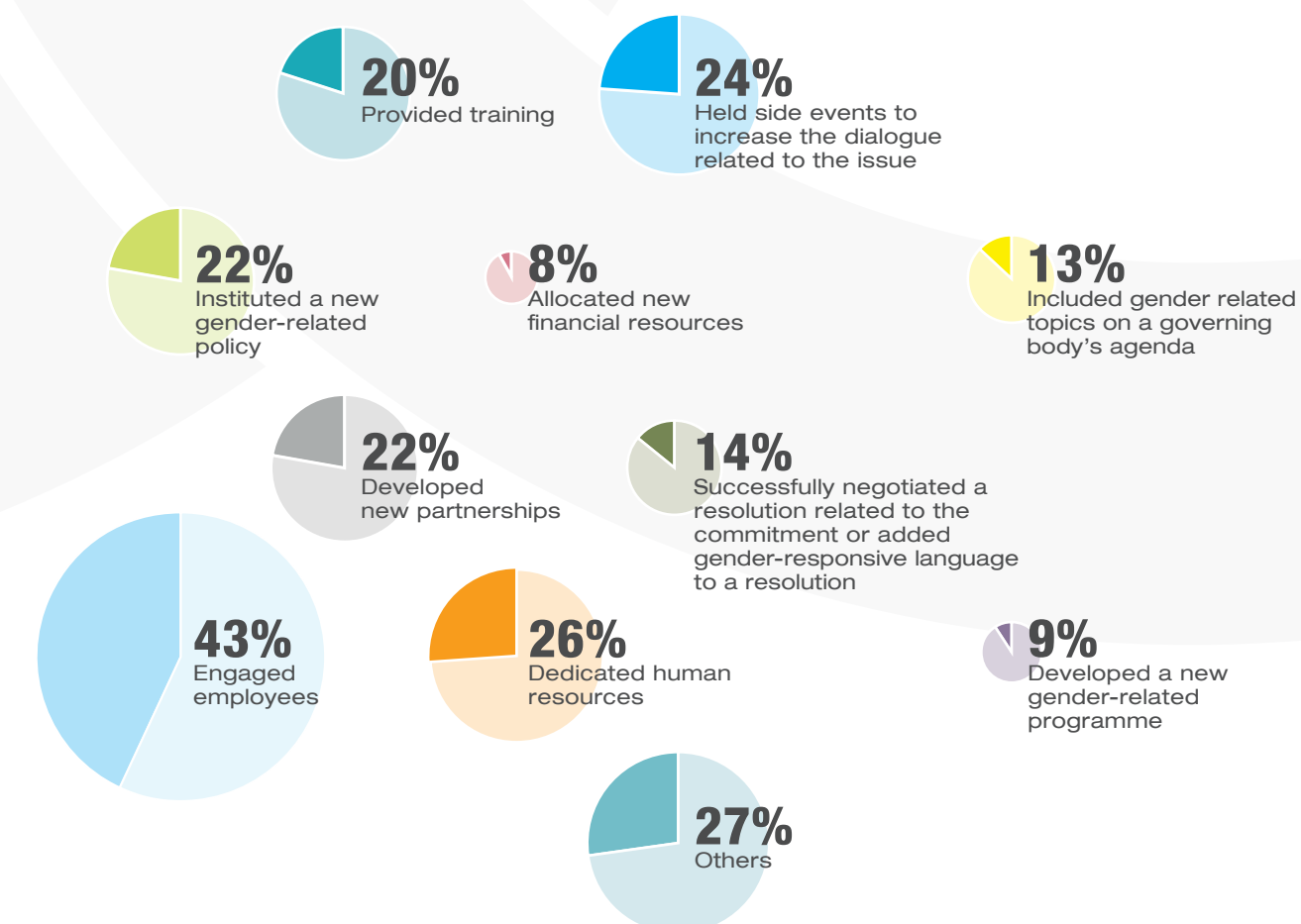
(Joint Nordic pledge in Geneva)

What are S.M.A.R.T. Commitments?

Specific; Measurable; Achievable (Action-oriented & Ambitious);
Realistic (Relevant & Resourced); Time-Bound.

THE TYPES OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAMPIONS TO IMPLEMENT THEIR COMMITMENTS SHOW SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER EFFORTS DEDICATED TO ENGAGING EMPLOYEES AND ALLOCATING APPROPRIATE HUMAN RESOURCES THAN IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR. THERE WAS ALSO A STRONGER FOCUS ON OUTREACH, THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION OF SIDE EVENTS, AND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARTNERSHIPS.

Action Taken to Achieve Commitments



The Champions still cited the lack of resources as the main obstacle to achieving their commitments. Many Champions also simply highlighted the need for time for change to be embedded and to truly assess progress.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE, CHANGING MINDSETS

Beyond the Panel Parity Pledge and the commitments, Gender Champions have repeatedly highlighted the value of the International Gender Champions initiative in shaping a community of practice among themselves and among their focal points. **IN THE LATEST ANNUAL SURVEY, THEY RATED BEST PRACTICE-SHARING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHAMPIONS AND FOCAL POINTS AS THE MOST USEFUL OF THE INITIATIVE'S ACTIVITIES**, along with convening and providing networking opportunities and raising the profile of their work on gender equality through public events.

This may be a reflection of the increased level of activity carried out by the International Gender Champions in 2017 to foster such a community of practice. Regular **BROWN-BAG MEETINGS** were held with focal points to share best practices on issues such as gender-responsive language and gender analysis or to discuss the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. **ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS** were organized on gender-balanced delegations to governing bodies, engaging men and boys, collaboration among smaller permanent missions or smaller organizations and suggested responses to invitations to single-sex panels. These provided key opportunities for focal points to meet and share best practices, pool resources and increase the collective impact of their work on gender equality. The International Gender Champions also endeavoured to make gender equality an essential topic of all negotiations taking place in their multilateral hubs, by promoting and heightening the visibility of Champions' events, statements and actions during key conferences and meetings.

The International Gender Champions also appear to have contributed **TO A SHIFT IN MINDSETS** and to greater attention being given to gender equality within organizations. Of the Champions who completed the survey, 93 per cent agree or strongly agree that gender equality is now integral to achieving their organizations' strategic objectives and programmatic outcomes. Up to 88 per cent state that policies have been instituted to further promote gender equality in their organizations and

81 PER CENT THAT SENIOR LEADERS IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE TO GENDER-RELATED ISSUES SINCE THEY JOINED THE INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS NETWORK.

It is particularly encouraging to note that the Gender Champions are now devoting more time and resources to gender equality: two thirds now believe that their organizations have the necessary staff working on this issue, and three quarters say that they have devoted more time to meeting with their gender focal points.

It seems that there are still opportunities for progress at the lower echelons, as middle managers have become more responsive in only 62 per cent of cases. Continued internal communication will be required, therefore, building on some of the actions already taken by Champions in 2017, such as videos, messages to the staff, new training provided to managers on unconscious bias or the establishment of an organizational "gender champion of the year" award.

At the same time, one of the energizing consequences of the International Gender Champions network is the empowerment of staff in organizations led by Gender Champions to tackle gender inequality within their individual spheres of expertise and influence so as to move creative initiatives forward.

ENCOURAGING ACTION – ON STANDARDS

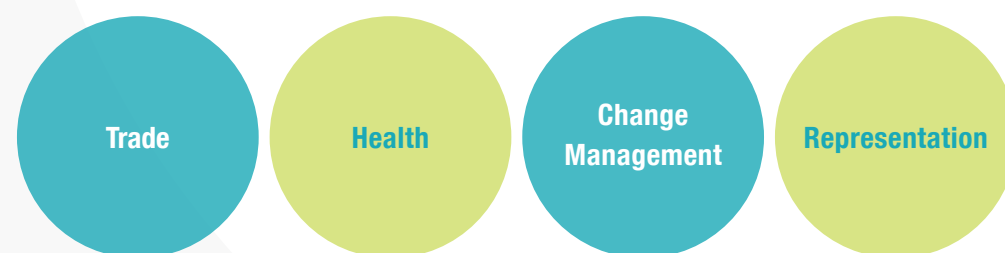
In 2017, the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe worked to mainstream gender into one of the Commission's core activities: the development of standards and norms, which are behind almost every product and, increasingly, behind most traded services as well. A first preliminary estimate shows that the participation of women in the bodies tasked with developing standards – both at national and at international levels – is, on average, between 15 and 20 per cent (with large variations). There are no guidelines for these bodies to assess whether a standard is gender-biased or to correct any possible bias. Neither are there any guidelines to determine the impact of a standard on different genders.

The secretariat raised awareness of the International Gender Champions initiative among the heads of the other standards bodies in Geneva. The General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the International Electrotechnical Commission, Frans Vreeswijk, became a Gender Champion in 2016 and the new Secretary-General of the International Organization for Standardization, Sergio Mujica, has signalled his intention to do so in early 2018. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe also convened bimonthly webinars as well as two meetings and two round tables for government representatives and standards experts. These discussions resulted in a proposal for a "pledge for action on gender-responsive standards", suggesting examples of commitments that standard-setting bodies can make.



STRIVING FOR IMPACT

Impact groups reinforce collaboration and partnership across the network and leverage collective institutional capacity in pushing for meaningful change in key areas. In 2017, the groups were led personally by Champions, giving them strong momentum and a clear mandate.



TRADE IMPACT GROUP

The group, led by the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Arancha González, the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, Yvette Stevens, and the Permanent Representatives of Iceland, Högni Kristjánsson and Harald Aspelund, worked for a year on drafting and advocating **THE FIRST EVER DECLARATION ON TRADE AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**. At the World Trade Organization's Eleventh Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December, the Declaration was handed over to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina and Chair of the Ministerial Conference, Susana Malcorra, and to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Roberto Azevêdo, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson, Yvette Stevens and Arancha González. Some 120 members and observers joined the Declaration, showing that collaboration through the International Gender Champions can have an impact far beyond the network.



*First ever
Declaration on Trade
and Women's Economic
Empowerment*

In the historic Declaration, it is **ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INCORPORATING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO THE PROMOTION OF INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IS IMPORTANT**, and that gender-responsive policies can play a key role in achieving sustainable socioeconomic development. It is acknowledged that inclusive trade policies can contribute to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment, which has a positive impact on economic growth and helps to reduce poverty. In the declaration it is acknowledged that international trade and investment are engines of economic growth for both developing and developed countries, and that improving women's access to opportunities and removing barriers to their participation in national and international economies contributes to sustainable economic development. The need to develop evidence-based interventions that address the range of barriers that limit opportunities for women in the economy is further acknowledged. Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, is recalled and the commitment to effectively implement the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is reaffirmed.

Member States and observers to the World Trade Organization that joined the Declaration **AGREED TO COLLABORATE ON MAKING TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES MORE GENDER-RESPONSIVE**, including by:

1. Sharing respective experiences relating to **POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION** in national and international economies through World Trade Organization (WTO) information exchanges, as appropriate, and voluntary reporting during the WTO trade policy review process;
2. Sharing best practices for conducting gender-based analysis of trade policies and for the monitoring of their effects;
3. Sharing methods and procedures for the **COLLECTION OF GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA**, the use of indicators, monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and the analysis of gender-focused statistics related to trade;
4. **WORKING TOGETHER IN WTO TO REMOVE BARRIERS** to women's economic empowerment and increase their participation in trade; and
5. **ENSURING THAT AID FOR TRADE SUPPORTS** tools and know-how for analysing, designing and implementing more gender-responsive trade policies.

The International Gender Champions -as well as other members and observers of the World Trade Organization who joined the Declaration- will hold a series of seminars in coordination with relevant international organizations to explore the following themes related to trade and the economic empowerment of women:

- The promotion of female entrepreneurship and trade
- The identification of barriers that limit women's participation in trade
- The promotion of financial inclusion as well as the access to trade financing and financial assistance for women traders
- The enhancement of women entrepreneurs' participation in public procurement markets
- The inclusion of women-led businesses, in particular micro, small and medium enterprises, in value chains
- The impact of trade facilitation on providing equal access and opportunities for women entrepreneurs
- The inventory of information sources, their complementarity and the identification of data gaps.

At the next WTO Ministerial Conference, in 2019, members and observers will report on progress towards the implementation of this Declaration.

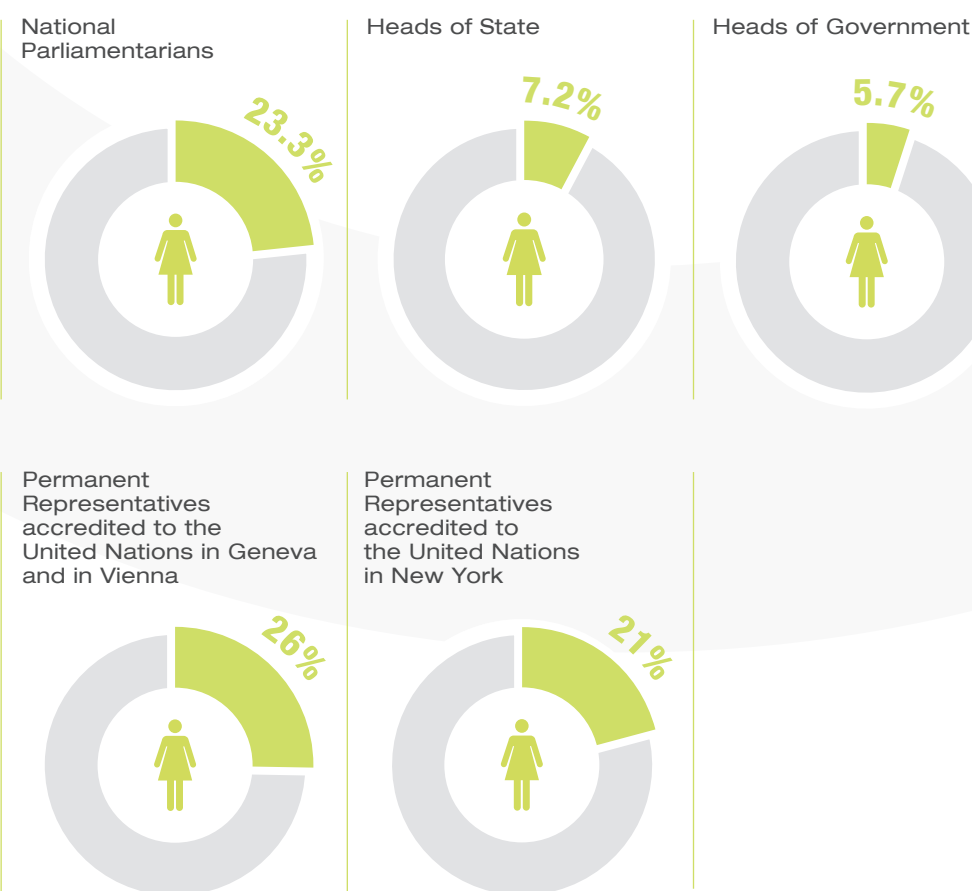
STRIVING FOR IMPACT

REPRESENTATION IMPACT GROUP

Without the equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels, peace, development, human rights and justice cannot be achieved. Yet women remain underrepresented in all areas, and by June 2017 they made up only 23.3 per cent of national parliamentarians, 7.2 per cent of Heads of State and 5.7 per cent of Heads of Government.

BY JANUARY 2018, ONLY 26 PER CENT OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES ACCREDITED TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA AND IN VIENNA AND 21 PER CENT OF THOSE ACCREDITED IN NEW YORK WERE WOMEN.

Source:
UN-Women and IPU data, available from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/3/press-release-new-ipu-and-un-women-map-shows-womens-representation-in-politics-stagnating> (accessed 15 February 2018).



Source:
Geneva, Vienna and New York
«Blue Book», January 2018

The representation impact group, co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of Sweden, Veronika Bard, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Suraya Dalil, and the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Guy Ryder, convened a number of discussions on such topics as gender balance among members of treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders or women's representation in international forums. At an event that the group organized during a session of the Human Rights Council, ambassadors and heads of international organizations took part as equals in a dialogue with young women.

In March 2017, the first publication of the International Gender Champions, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, was issued jointly with UN-Women. The publication showcases best practices to improve women's participation and leadership roles at the national and multilateral levels, and identifies concrete actions to improve their meaningful participation in the governing bodies of international organizations.

The findings of the publication have been leveraged to encourage Governments to send more gender-balanced delegations and organizations to collect and disseminate disaggregated data on the composition of delegations. In June 2017, for the first time, the President of the Human Rights Council requested Member States to reconsider the list of candidates for appointment as special procedure mandate holders because it included too few women. Although there are no aggregate data on women's representation in governing bodies of international organizations,

30 PER CENT OF CHAMPIONS RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY AGREED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE HAD HELPED IMPROVE THE GENDER BALANCE OF DELEGATIONS AND 55 PER CENT STATED THAT IT HAD RESULTED IN MORE FREQUENT REFERENCES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS, OUTCOME DOCUMENTS AND MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

In September, the International Gender Champions highlighted this pressing issue again during the **SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY THROUGH A SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN** to promote gender-balanced delegations to the Assembly. During the session, International Gender Champions also worked with iKNOW Politics,² convening: (a) an e-discussion on men as catalysts for improving women's political participation and influence; and (b) a round table with Gender Champions, streamed live, on the role that male Champions can play in actively promoting women's political participation and leadership.



Delegation of Switzerland to the United Nations General Assembly

² Established in 2007, iKNOW Politics is a joint project of International IDEA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Women.

STRIVING FOR IMPACT

CHANGE MANAGEMENT IMPACT GROUP

Co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Julian Braithwaite, and the former Deputy Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Jan Beagle, the change management impact group worked to overcome barriers to gender equality in the workplace through training on gender-responsive change management. At an all-day seminar, entitled “Nudge the unconscious mind: towards gender-responsive management”, 50 participants from 30 organizations sought to identify and overcome the institutional obstacles that prevent women’s influence and advancement in institutional settings. A follow-up event, “Unlock for change”, was held in July.

In November 2017, the impact group published A **“How To” Checklist for International Gender Champions, including tips on what Champions** can do as individuals and the top five things organizations can do, with practical steps that Champions can take in recruitment, staff development and performance management to ensure that gender equality is embedded in their organizations.

HEALTH IMPACT GROUP

The Permanent Representative of Colombia, Beatriz Londoño Soto, Veronika Bard, Julian Braithwaite and Professor Ilona Kickbusch of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, led a stand-alone action group that partnered with the non-governmental organization Women in Global Health to focus on women’s representation in international public health.

This collaboration led to the publication of an appeal in the **Lancet**,³ stressing the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in delegations to the World Health Assembly and the small percentage of women among ministers of health, contrasting these figures with the fact that in some countries women make up 75 per cent of the health workforce. At a special breakfast meeting, the health impact group’s co-chairs invited the Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the call to action, highlighting the leadership gender gap in global health, and to call upon WHO and its member States to take decisive steps to achieve gender parity both in leadership positions at WHO and in its technical programmes.

THE WAY FORWARD

2018. There is much to accomplish.

The Champions will renew, revise or replace their individual commitments for 2018 to reflect progress and the shift in priorities. We will encourage all to choose commitments that include quantitative targets against which progress can be measured. We will deepen the Panel Parity Pledge and work to systematize it throughout our institutions.

Impact groups led by ambassadors and heads of international and non-governmental organizations are now a road-tested model for collaboration and action, and will continue their work on representation, trade and change management. New impact groups will be established, some possibly spanning several hubs, on disarmament, environment, standards as well as peace, security and humanitarian affairs. Hubs will be formally launched and become operational in Nairobi and Bonn-Berlin. We expect more will follow.

The success of the International Gender Champions is built both on the initiative’s light administrative touch and its focus on the Champions’ personal accountability. Its rapid expansion, however, requires that its governance be strengthened and a global advisory board will be established to provide strategic direction, guidance and support. Canada will replace Sweden and join the United Nations Office at Geneva and Women@Thetable in leading the initiative.

Gender Champions have said that much of the initiative’s value resides in the opportunities provided to them and to focal points to network and share experiences and best practices. Renewed efforts will be dedicated to offering such opportunities and helping ensure that middle as well as senior managers embrace and implement the change championed by their leaders. We will examine whether a peer-review mechanism can be instituted among selected Gender Champions.

Academics at Stanford University have determined that there are three essential steps in moving towards gender equality. The first is to “fix the numbers” and increase women’s participation. The second is to “fix the institutions” and promote gender equality through structural changes in organizations that are inhospitable to women’s advancement and must be reformed for inclusion to become truly effective. The third step is to “fix the knowledge” and stimulate innovation and excellence by integrating gender analysis into research priorities, funding decisions, new methodologies and data collection, so that policies can be truly gender-aware and gender-responsive.⁴

In 2018, we will broaden and deepen our work to fix the numbers, fix the institutions and fix the knowledge.

WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO. MINDSETS AND INSTITUTIONS NEED TO BE CHANGED IN ORDER TO SURMOUNT THE CHALLENGES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. WE NEED EVERYONE’S DETERMINATION, INNOVATION AND INTELLIGENCE TO HELP FORGE A MORE GENDER-EQUAL, MORE JUST AND MORE EQUITABLE WORLD. THE INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS HAVE A VISION OF WOMEN AND MEN WORKING POWERFULLY TOGETHER AS EQUALS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND JUSTICE. PLEASE JOIN US.

³ Roopa Dhatt, Ilona Kickbusch and Kelly Thompson, on behalf of the Women’s Leadership in Global Health Strategy Roundtables, hosted by Women in Global Health and the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, “Act now: a call to action for gender equality in global health”, *Lancet*, vol. 389, No. 10069 (February 2017), p. 602.

⁴ See Barbara Wilcox, “Stanford historian explores how gender analysis leads to innovation”, *Stanford News*, 3 February 2015. Available from <https://news.stanford.edu/2015/02/03/gender-innovate-research-020315/>.

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www.genderchampions.com

  **@INTGenderChamps — admin@genderchampions.com**