Name of sender & title:
Roopa Dhatt, Executive Director
Kelly Thompson, Gender Specialist
Kris Ronsin, Operations Director
Mehr Manzoor, Research Director

Email:
roopa.dhatt@womeningh.org;
kelly.thompson@womeningh.org,
kris.ronsin@womeningh.org,
research@womeningh.org

Affiliation: Women in Global Health

Comments:

Women in Global Health (WGH) welcomes the reforms WHO is undertaking and applaud your leadership and commitment towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals, with Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as its critical foundation. The rationale for gender parity has been well documented as it improves organizational performance and makes teams more creative and innovative and contribute to better decision outcomes. Including women in health workforce will be critical to achieving the UHC targets and providing social protection for all. As WHO prepares its strategy for the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW), we propose the following options as strategies to achieve gender parity within WHO and strengthen gender equality in WHO’s work.

Internal Action

1. Submit to the Executive Board in January 2018 a budgeted plan for reaching the gender parity target Resolution WHA 50.16 (1997) with benchmarks, targets and clear accountability, including performance indicators for WHO HQ and Regional Offices.
2. Appoint a senior staff member reporting to you as the WHO Gender Parity Champion to drive organization wide actions and monitor progress for a more gender sensitive workplace and work culture at WHO, including meeting protocols.

3. Include achieving gender parity in your annual performance plan and review and make it a mandatory performance indicator for WHO Regional Directors.

4. Appoint a minimum of 50% women to posts at grade D1 and above in WHO by 2020 at the latest with the exception of elected posts.

5. Appoint a minimum of 50% women to posts in the DG’s Office by the end of 2017.

External Leadership

6. Ensure that WHO adopts the 60/40 Gender Parity Rule in all panels run and supported by WHO worldwide.

7. Urge WHO Member States to achieve gender parity in delegations to the WHA and regional policymaking meetings by including this in invitations and reporting back on gender disaggregated data in meeting reports.

WGH support on UHC

We applaud the priority given by the DG to UHC and recognise the challenges since only 30 countries have implemented UHC to date. Implementing UHC will require strong gender analysis as women and girls will be the majority of the poorest and vulnerable UHC must reach if cover is to be universal. WGH will be pleased to support WHO on UHC and gender.

Women are the majority of health workers and unpaid carers globally. Women therefore will deliver UHC. UHC will require rapidly scaling up the global health workforce. An estimated 18 million new health workers will be needed to deliver UHC. Attracting and retaining more women health workers and task shifting to make better use of existing Human Resources for health (HRH) will be critical. WHO needs to start work urgently on scaling up female HRH to meet UHC. WGH is ready to support WHO on this.

Engaging BRICS, particularly China and India, hard hit by the growing burden of NCDs. UHC includes health promotion and prevention, as well as curative medicine. Women have a key role to play in NCDs both because they are the majority of people with NCDs but also because they can be important health promotion influencers within families and communities.

In addition to these we propose WHO to prioritise ‘delivering as One UN’ and joint working within the UN system/Bretton Woods institutions. In particular, WGH urge close operational collaboration with UN Women (on gender equality and the UN wise SWAP); UNAIDS (exemplar on mainstreaming gender);
UNFPA and UNICEF (on gender equality and maternal and child health); Global Fund; WB and regional development banks; World Food Programme (nutrition); UNHCR and UNOCHA (health in complex emergencies).

In general, it is critical that WHO analyze gender aspects of all the work it does to lead to better global health outcomes. Gender equality is smart Global health. We are also sharing two examples from UN Feminist Network’s agenda for first 100 days of the new Secretary General as well as the civil society coalition’s 100-day agenda. As we discussed, these are an interesting mix of ideas that are relevant to diverse parts of the Gender at Work Analytical Framework:

i. https://www.gopetition.com/petitions/a-feminist-agenda-for-the-new-un-secretary-general.html

WGH looks forward to work in collaboration with your team to help WHO in achieving its targets on gender equality and UHC.