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**Executive Board  
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## **POLICY ISSUES**

**Agenda item 4**

*For consideration*

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## **WFP POLICY ON STAFF RECRUITMENT AND GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF MEMBER STATES**

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's WEB site (<http://www.wfp.org/eb>).

## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.**

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, Human Resources Division (HR): Ms D. Serrano tel.: 066513-2400

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its Annual Meeting in May 2003, the Board reviewed documents presented for its consideration regarding the methodology used by WFP to establish geographical and gender representation of the international professional staff category. During discussion, the Board indicated a need for further information and requested a study of how other United Nations organizations handled the issue. The Board welcomed the Executive Director's decision to review the issues and looked forward to discussing the matter further in February 2004.

The purposes of this document are (i) to provide the Board with the additional information requested, (ii) to explain further WFP's methods of ensuring geographical and gender balance in its workforce and (iii) to examine WFP's efforts to achieve the set targets.

## DRAFT DECISION\*

The Board takes note of the methodology used by WFP to establish appropriate geographical and gender representation among international professional staff as set out in this Policy Issues paper WFP/EB.1/2004/4-B/Rev.1.

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



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## BACKGROUND

1. The statutes of most United Nations organizations state that the paramount consideration in employing staff shall be to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity; they also require that due regard be given to recruiting on the widest possible geographical basis.
2. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) affirmed that in view of its international character the policies and administrative methods of the secretariat should reflect and profit from the assets of the various cultures and the technical competence of all member nations. Fundamental importance was attached to the universal nature of the United Nations and hence to the widest possible representation of the cultures and diversity of member nations, which was seen as essential to enable the secretariat to operate independently and reflect the richness of the many components of the United Nations and ensure that no one country or group of countries became predominant.
3. In 1996, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit undertook a comparative study of methods of calculating equitable geographical distribution in the United Nations Common System.<sup>1</sup> Its report recognized that United Nations organizations fall into two categories in addressing the issues of geographical representation:
  - organizations funded primarily by assessed contributions, such as the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), where targets or quotas are required as a means of achieving appropriate geographical representation; and
  - organizations funded primarily by voluntary contributions, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP, where targets or quotas are not required but where other methods may be used to achieve this aim.
4. For the organizations that establish quotas, the methodologies adopted have common elements for determining a target level of representation for a nation:
  - establishment of a baseline number of posts to which geographical representation should be applied; this may or may not include language posts for interpreters and translators;
  - use of objective criteria of membership, contribution levels and population levels in formulae for establishing a quota for a member state; the relative importance of each factor is different for each organization; and
  - use of factors such as introducing upper and lower levels of representation to counter wide variations in populations and contributions.
5. The following section provides examples of ways in which United Nations organizations have tackled this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of this document can be made available upon request.



## METHODOLOGIES USED BY OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

### Organizations Funded Primarily by Assessed Contributions

#### ⇒ *The United Nations*

6. In December 1962, UNGA reviewed its methodology for calculating geographical distribution and set out three factors essential to establishing desirable ranges: (i) membership of the organization, (ii) population and (iii) contributions paid by member nations to the organization's budget. After a number of modifications, the present United Nations system for calculating desirable ranges was adopted in 1987 and applied from January 1988, as follows:
  - the base figure for the calculations was established initially as 2,700 posts;
  - 40 percent of posts are allocated on the basis of membership;
  - 5 percent of posts are allocated in relation to population; this is directly related to the total population of all member nations and distributed among member nations in proportion to their populations;
  - the remaining 55 percent are allocated on the basis of contributions; the contribution factor is based on the distribution of the remaining posts among member nations in proportion to the scale of assessments;
  - the upper and lower limits of each range are based on a flexibility of 15 percent from the mid-point of the desirable range, but not less than 4.8 posts up or down; the upper limit is not less than 14 posts; and
  - the base figure is adjusted whenever the actual number of posts subject to geographical distribution increases or decreases by 100, the weights of the three factors being maintained; the current base figure is 2,600 posts.
7. It should be noted that the General Assembly has discussed the issue of geographical representation on various occasions and has requested the Secretary-General to conduct a study that includes a comprehensive assessment of the system of geographical distribution and an assessment of the issues relating to possible changes in the number of posts subject to the system of geographical distribution, bearing in mind Article 101 of the Charter and the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. At the time of writing, the results of the study are not known.

#### ⇒ *UNESCO*

8. In 2003, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the current geographical representation calculation as follows:
  - the base figure for the number of posts not including language posts was maintained at 850 posts;
  - the membership factor was maintained at 65 percent; the contribution factor was reduced from 35 percent to 30 percent; a population factor of 5 percent was introduced; and



- a post-weighting factor is applied in parallel as a complement to the formal methodology; the post-weighting approach is used as an internal monitoring tool to report to member states on geographical distribution by post grade.

⇒ *WHO*

9. The WHO system for establishing desirable ranges originates in resolutions passed by the World Health Assembly; the last of these is WHA56.35, which sets out the present formulation for establishing desirable ranges as follows:
- 45 percent of the total number of posts are assigned to the membership factor and therefore distributed equally among all members;
  - 45 percent of the total number of posts are assigned to the contribution factor and therefore distributed in proportion to the scale of assessments;
  - 10 percent of the total number of posts are assigned to the population factor and distributed to member states in direct proportion to populations;
  - a variable upper limit of the desirable range is based on population;
  - the base figure includes all posts, including those funded by extra-budgetary sources; the current base figure is 1,450.

⇒ *FAO*

10. The formula used by FAO to calculate geographical representation has undergone recent changes as determined by the FAO Conference in its Resolution 15/2003. The new FAO formula, in effect as of 1 January 2004, is based on that of the United Nations:
- the base figure for the calculations is based on all regular programme-funded fixed-term and continuing posts, with the exception of language posts and the post of the Director-General; the formulation specifically excludes weighting by grade;
  - the membership factor is 40 percent of the base figure and is distributed equally among member nations;
  - the population factor is allotted a weighting of 5 percent; it is directly related to the total populations of all member nations and distributed among member nations in proportion to their populations;
  - the contribution factor, accounting for 55 percent of the posts, is distributed among member nations in proportion to the Scale of Assessments;
  - the mid-point of the equitable range for each member nation is calculated by adding the three factors; and
  - the upper and lower limits of the equitable range are based on a flexibility of 15 percent from the mid-point, but not less than 2.03 posts up or down; the upper limit is not less than 7.53 posts.

## **Organizations Primarily Funded Through Voluntary Contributions**

⇒ *UNDP*

11. UNDP does not apply any type of quota in its efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation among its staff. It looks at contributions in relation to staff representation, however, as a framework for discussion with donors.



⇒ *UNHCR*

12. UNHCR does not apply quotas for geographical representation purposes. In its vacancy postings for recruitment, however, it strives to maintain equitable geographical representation in global terms and in individual divisions and operations.

⇒ *UNICEF*

13. UNICEF does not apply quotas for geographical representation purposes. Its recruitment aims primarily to identify candidates with the best relevant professional skills and integrity. It regularly monitors staff distribution by nationality, however, and keeps track of donor country representation.

## WFP POLICY AND METHODOLOGY

14. In common with United Nations agencies whose budgets are derived from voluntary contributions, WFP does not apply quotas to maintain equitable geographical representation among its staff. Organizations such as WFP find it unsuitable to use such factors in a rigid way because of the unpredictability of contribution levels, for example; organizations that derive their budgets from assessed contributions take into account precise population, contribution and membership factors and consequently may develop more flexible alternative methods of monitoring the equitable composition of staff.

### The WFP Informal Formula

15. The need to develop and apply an objective methodology was recognized in response to concerns expressed by members of the Executive Board. The purpose of the WFP methodology is to guide the Executive Director in establishing equitable levels of representation that reflect the contributions made to the Programme and the need for diversity among international professional staff. The formula was devised in 1998 by the then Executive Director and has been consistently used since then. It is tailored to the circumstances of WFP, taking into account the major sources of funding and endeavouring to ensure that all countries receive some level of representation.
16. The methodology is referred to as the “WFP Informal Formula”. It must be stressed that it is used only as guidance on staffing targets rather than to establish quotas to be filled.
17. The Executive Director uses reports based on the methodology to review staffing trends and to make adjustments to maintain equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among international professional staff. The reports are not made public because to do so might imply the imposition of a quota system, which could discourage applications from the best qualified candidates, irrespective of nationality. Representatives of missions are welcome to inquire about the status of their countries in terms of the level of representation, and regularly do so.
18. In summary, the Informal WFP Formula:
- provides for 60 percent of the number of international professional staff to be allocated to major donor countries and the remaining 40 percent to all other countries;
  - of the 60 percent allocated to major donor countries, the target number of staff per country is based on their contribution percentage;
  - there is however a ceiling of 20 percent on the **total** number of international staff for the United States, regardless of its contribution percentage; and



- no targets are set for the remaining countries; a country is considered to be adequately represented if at least three of its nationals are members of the staff; many countries have more than three of their nationals on the staff of WFP.

19. Details of the WFP Informal Formula are contained in Annex I.
20. As at 31 December 2003 application of the WFP Informal Formula yielded the results shown in Table 1.

<b>TABLE 1</b>				
	<b>Average annual contribution, of last four years (2000–2003) (US\$)</b>	<b>Target number of staff using the WFP formula</b>	<b>Actual number of staff as at 31.12.2003</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>Major donors</b>				
USA	1 100 741 567	<b>196</b>	97	Under-represented
Other major donors with average contributions of over US\$2 million	869 023 073	<b>393</b>	512	Over-represented
<b>Other countries</b>				
Countries with average contributions under US\$2 million	27 241 992	<b>n/a</b>	126	
Countries with staff but no contributions	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	244	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 997 006 631</b>		<b>979</b>	

21. In a further effort to ensure appropriate geographical representation, WFP has in the past routinely checked the results obtained from the WFP Informal Formula against those achieved by applying a modified version of the methodology used by FAO until January 2004, which was partly based on the amount of assessed contributions from all its member states and included a method for applying a higher weighting to more senior posts.
22. The FAO Conference has mandated changes to its formula. For WFP, one of the significant changes is removal of the weightings applied to the grades involved. The post-weighting feature is no longer available in FAO's approved formula, so WFP will continue to use only its Informal Formula to monitor progress towards equitable geographical distribution.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Gender Balance

23. The United Nations system has set an objective of 50 percent women in its international professional staff category; all agencies report on progress in that regard. WFP adheres to the policy and continues its efforts to achieve 50 percent women on its staff; it currently has 38.5 percent, one of the highest in the United Nations system. The objective is also





taken into account in determining appropriate levels of staff representation. Table 2 shows WFP's gender percentages as at 31 December 2003.

<b>TABLE 2</b>				
Representation of women among international professional staff and higher categories as at 31 December 2003	<b>Total</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>% of women</b>
		<b>979</b>	604	375

## Geographical Representation of Economically Developing Countries

24. The United Nations system has established recruitment targets of 40 percent nationals from economically developing countries; WFP monitors the level of representation from such countries. Table 3 shows the representation of nationals from developing countries among international professional staff as at 31 December 2003. WFP is close to achieving the 40 percent target set by the United Nations system.

<b>TABLE 3</b>				
Representation of nationals of developing countries among international professional staff and higher categories as at 31 December 2003	<b>Total</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>% of developing</b>
		<b>979</b>	596	383

## MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

25. WFP is committed to the principle that the universal nature of the United Nations system requires the widest possible representation of cultures. WFP's international nature means that its policies and procedures should foster the widest possible diversity. It has accordingly devised strategies for reaching organizational objectives for recruitment of nationals from under-represented donor and developing countries, with emphasis on recruiting suitably qualified women.

### Setting Clear Longer-term Goals

26. The first and most important element in WFP's strategy to improve representation is to establish goals and ensure that managers are aware of them. WFP has established a goal of 50 percent women and 40 percent nationals from under-represented countries. Managers are aware that their efforts should focus on achieving recruitment targets of 75 percent women and 60 percent nationals from under-represented countries in order to reach these goals.

### Establishing Effective Systems for Regular Monitoring of Achievement of the Objectives

27. **Accountability.** WFP holds managers accountable for their efforts to improve the representation of women and individuals from under-represented countries. Introduction of a results-based management approach will require managers to indicate in performance plans their approaches to recruitment issues and goals; they will be evaluated against these in annual performance reviews.



28. **Statistics.** WFP monitors the effectiveness of its recruitment efforts and those of individual organizational units, and reports regularly to managers.

### **Programme-wide Initiatives to Promote Geographical and Gender Balance**

29. **Training.** Gender training has been mainstreamed into WFP's training programmes. The Gender Policy addresses the importance of achieving a balanced workforce as an integral element in effective delivery of programmes.
30. **On-line application.** A web-based application system has been launched that allows candidates to apply for professional profiles and vacancies through the WFP website. Data on gender and nationality are required fields in the electronic application form, which ensures that such data are captured and used in recruitment initiatives.
31. **Web-based recruitment system.** StaffNet, the existing electronic recruitment system, has been enhanced to enable managers to access it through the web; it gives managers up-to-the minute status of applications for vacant positions and access to gender and nationality information. StaffNet includes an on-line search engine to enable managers to identify candidates against the requirements and qualifications for a particular assignment. The search can be filtered to include women only, or candidates from under-represented donor or developing nations, which helps managers to reach recruitment targets.

### **Actions Taken to Address Under-Represented Countries**

32. **Targeted recruitment campaigns.** Targeted recruitment strategies have been developed to attract candidates from under-represented countries, including recruitment missions to interview candidates directly for positions or to supplement the professional rosters. Targeted advertising has been used to limit consideration to individuals from under-represented countries when advertising for positions.
33. **Selection filters.** Limitations have been set such that only candidates from under-represented donor or developing countries can be considered when authorizing managers to recruit externally.



## ANNEX I

### THE WFP INFORMAL FORMULA

1. Sixty percent of international professional staff are allocated to major donor countries, defined as one whose contribution has averaged more than US\$2 million a year over the preceding four years. Of this, a maximum of 20 percent of the total number of international professional staff has been allocated to the United States, regardless of contribution percentage.
2. Forty percent of international professional staff are allocated to other countries.
3. The target number of staff for a major donor country is calculated by:
  - dividing that country's average annual contribution over the preceding four years by the average annual contribution over the preceding four years of all major donor countries except the United States; and
  - multiplying the resulting percentage by the number of international professional staff reserved for major donor countries—60 percent—less the 20 percent allocated to the United States.

#### Example:

##### **A. Calculate the number of international professional staff allocated to major donor countries.**

The number of international professional staff is 900.

60 percent, or 540, are reserved for major donor countries.

Subtract the 20 percent of this allocated to the United States:  $540 - 180 = 360$ .

##### **B. Calculate the percentage of a major donor's contribution.**

The average annual contribution over the preceding four years of all major donor countries except the USA is US\$800 million.

The major donor's average annual contribution over the preceding four years is US\$40 million.

40 million divided by 800 million = 0.05 million, or **5 percent**.

##### **C. Multiply the percentage contribution (B) by the total number of international professional staff allocated to the major donor countries (A).**

5 percent of 360 = 18.

The major donor country's target number of staff is therefore **18**.

4. WFP considers that for economically developing countries the target number of staff is three per country.



## ANNEX II

**TABLE SHOWING THE MAJOR DONOR REPRESENTATION ON THE BASIS OF THE  
TWO FORMULAS APPLIED BY WFP AS REPRESENTATION GUIDELINES  
AS AT 31.12.2003**

Country	STATE MEMBER LISTS FOR THE E.B. ELECTIONS	Donor rank	Country representation status applying the WFP informal formula	Country representation status applying the WFP point formula
USA	D	1	Under represented	Under Represented
Japan	D	2	Under represented	Under represented
UK	D	3	Over represented	Fairly represented
Germany	D	4	Under represented	Fairly represented
Netherlands	D	5	Fairly represented	Fairly represented
Canada	D	6	Over represented	Over represented
Italy	D	7	Over represented	Over represented
France	D	8	Over represented	Over represented
Australia	D	9	Fairly represented	Fairly represented
Denmark	D	10	Fairly represented	Fairly represented
Norway	D	11	Under represented	Under represented
Sweden	D	12	Fairly represented	Fairly represented
Switzerland	D	13	Under represented	Under represented
Finland	D	14	Over represented	Fairly represented
Spain	D	15	Over represented	Fairly represented
Korea, Rep.	B	16	Under represented	Under represented
Belgium	D	17	Over represented	Over represented
Ireland	D	18	Over represented	Over represented
Kenya	A	19	Over represented	Over represented
Austria	D	20	Over represented	Over represented
South Africa*	A	21	Over represented	Over represented
India	B	22	Over represented	Over represented
Saudi Arabia	B	23	Under represented	Under represented
Luxembourg*	D	24	Under represented	Under represented
Russian Federation*	E	25	Fairly represented	Under represented
Greece	D	26	Over represented	Fairly represented
Algeria*	A	27	Over represented	Over represented
Portugal	D	28	Over represented	Over represented
* new major donor				

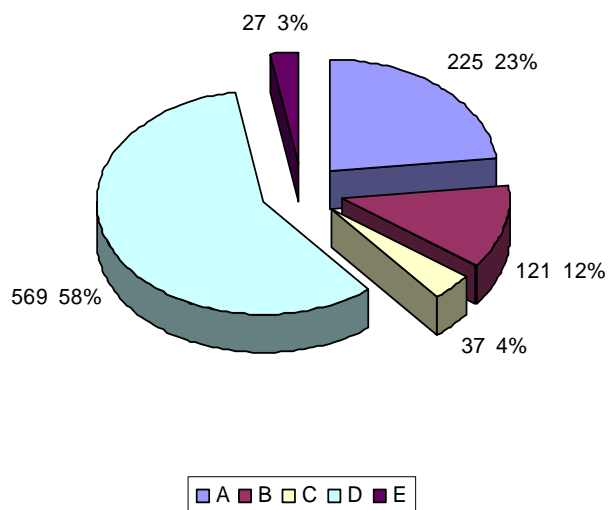


**STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY GRADE (WEIGHTED) AND BY COUNTRY LIST AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003**

	WFP Points									TOTAL STAFF	TOTAL WEIGHTED POINTS	
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	ASG	USG			
	1	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16			
<b>COUNTRY STATUS</b>												
A: AFRICA	1	55	79	50	25	9	5	1		225	1 091	
B: ASIA and MIDDLE EAST		23	56	20	12	3	7			121	600	
C: LATIN AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN		7	12	8	4	3	3			37	208	
D: NORTH AMERICA, WESTERN EUROPE, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND	6	72	168	159	100	42	19	2	1	569	3 268	
E: EASTERN EUROPE		9	13	1	2	2				27	112	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>5 279</b>	

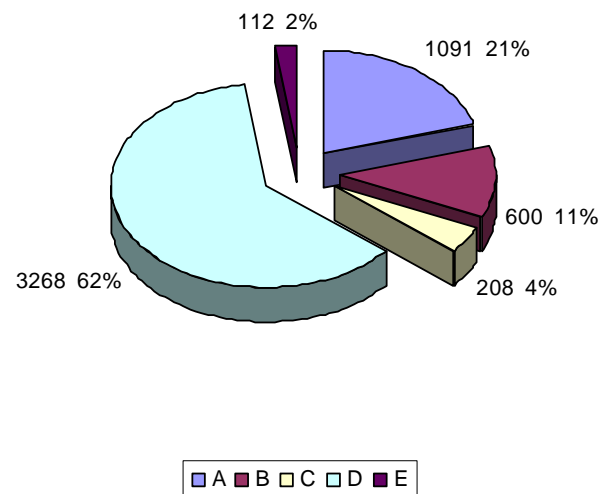
**Figure 1**

**GRAPH OF TOTAL STAFF**



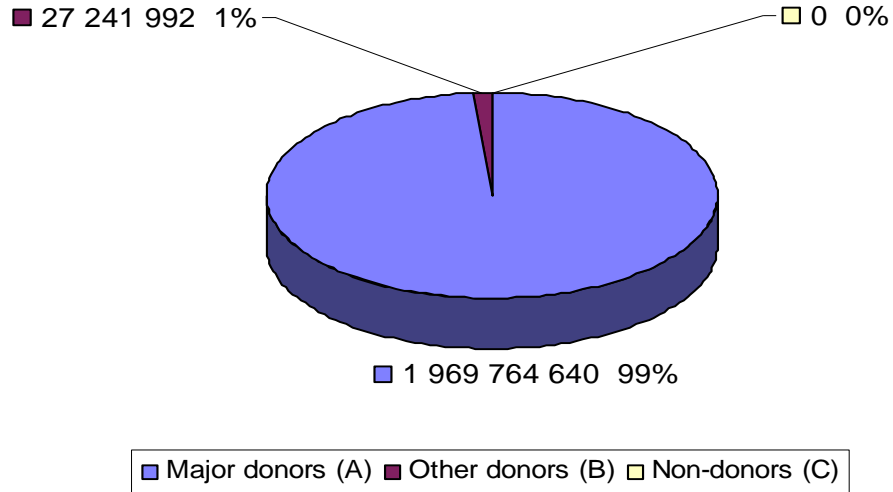
**Figure 2**

**GRAPH OF TOTAL WEIGHTED POINTS**

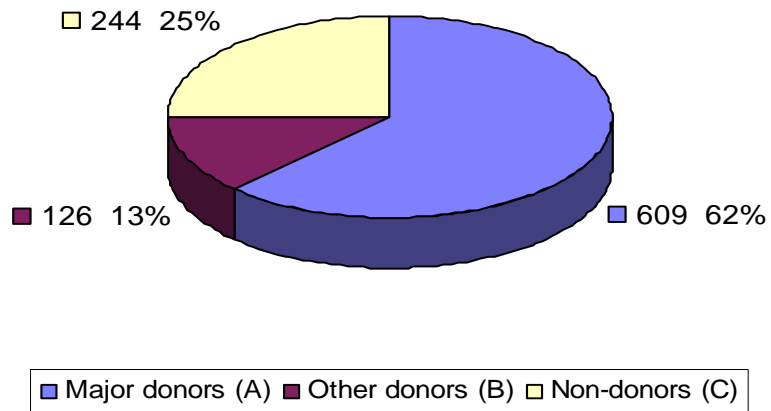


ANNEX IV

**Figure 1—Percentage of contribution by donors**



**Figure 2—Staff distribution by donors**



**ANNEX V****REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE WFP INTERNATIONAL  
PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND HIGHER CATEGORIES****(EXCLUDING JPOs AND SHORT-TERM)****1993–2003**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% of Female</b>
31.12.2003	979	604	375	38.3
31.12.2002	915	555	360	39.3
31.12.2001	858	543	315	36.7
31.12.2000	831	533	298	35.9
31.12.1999	786	518	268	34.1
31.12.1998	703	489	214	30.4
31.12.1997	627	444	183	29.2
31.12.1996	597	439	158	26.5
31.12.1995	553	419	134	24.2
31.12.1994	479	373	106	22.1
31.12.1993	427	331	96	22.5



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

