

Similarly, the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH), which has monitored human rights, has featured a high percentage of Professional women (39.2 per cent), in comparison to the military observer mission (UNMIH), with only 12.9 per cent women. The multi-purpose UN observer mission in El Salvador, with human rights monitoring, military and police mandates, also has had a significant proportion of women (37 per cent) (see table 6, page 8).²²

Clearly, UN peace-keeping missions with multi-purpose mandates attract and allow for a higher proportion of women than do strictly military and/or police peace-keeping missions.

Throughout the history of UN peace-keeping, there have been only two women in top decision-making positions. In February 1992, Margaret Anstee (United Kingdom) was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) to coordinate the activities of the United Nations in conjunction with the Angolan Peace Accords. She served as Chief of Mission until civil war erupted following elections.²³ She was the only woman to serve as Special Representative of the Secretary-General among the 25 appointed since 1948 (4 per cent). The only other woman to serve in a senior position was Angela King (Jamaica), in the all-civilian United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA). Ms. King served initially as Chief of Mission for 16 months and later as Deputy Special Representative.

According to UN data, there were no women in top policy- and decision-making levels (D-2 to USG) in any of the UN missions active in June 1995. Nor were there women in senior management positions above the rank of P-5 in either MICIVIH (Haiti) or ONUSAL (El Salvador), and only one woman at the P-5 level in MINUGUA (Guatemala). At the P-5 level, there was one woman in MINURSO (Western Sahara), one in UNFICYP (Cyprus), one in UNMIH (Haiti) and three in UNOSOM II (Somalia). In terms of the percentages of UN women staff members serving on various mission assignments, there were none of D-2 to USG rank, 14.0 per cent at the P-5/D-1 level, 20.3 per cent at the P-3/P-4 level and 34.5 per cent at the Professional entry level (P-1/P-2) (see table 7, page 9).

Between 1957 and 1970, the percentage of women in General Service posts of UN peace-keeping missions varied from 49 to 86 per cent. Between 1975 and 1991, the percentage decreased, with women comprising only 15 to 30 per cent of the General Service posts in UN peace-keeping operations (see table 5, page 7). Among factors explaining why the administrative support units of UN peace-keeping missions have fewer women, particularly in recent years, is that in the earlier missions the vast majority of General Service staff were part of the international personnel assigned to the missions. In recent missions, however, many General Service staff have been hired locally.

The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), Namibia, 1989-1990

A few case-studies provide insight into the expanded roles and contributions of women in civilian peace and security missions. The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), 1989-1990, provides the most illustrative example of an operation in which women were encouraged to play significant roles. Its multi-purpose mandate included both military and civilian functions, such as the disarmament and repatriation of armed groups, monitoring the repatriation of more than 43,000 refugees, the release of political prisoners, monitoring local police activities, and supervising voter education and elections for a Constituent Assembly responsible for drafting a new Constitution.²⁴ Extensive interviews, training and careful selection of UNTAG staff occurred before the mission began. Selection criteria were based upon staff qualifications, experience and geopolitical balance. Moreover, there was a deliberate policy of recruiting women at all levels.²⁵

Impressions of women in peace-keeping missions: making a difference