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Report to Congressional Requesters

July 2001

UNITED NATIONS

Targeted Strategies Could Help Boost U.S. Representation

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Abbreviations

ADG	Assistant Director-General
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
DDG	Deputy Director-General
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILO	International Labor Organization
UG	Ungraded
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USG	Under Secretary-General
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

July 27, 2001

The Honorable Jesse Helms
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde
Chairman, Committee on International Relations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Benjamin A. Gilman
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia,
Committee on International Relations
House of Representatives

The employment of Americans in international organizations, particularly at senior and policymaking levels, is a high priority for the United States, according to the U.S. Department of State. State believes that placing qualified Americans in these key positions allows U.S. citizens to become "goodwill ambassadors" for U.S. interests and values; brings the organizations a U.S. perspective on global needs; and provides international entities with management, administrative, and technical skills. While State plays a central role in promoting U.S. representation in the United Nations and other international organizations, it acts in collaboration with other federal agencies that have a direct interest in these international entities.

To employ the nationals of U.N. member states in an equitable manner, several U.N. organizations have established employment targets for geographical representation. In 1991, the Congress enacted legislation[1] requiring the Secretary of State to report annually on whether U.N. entities with geographic targets[2] were meeting these targets. The Congress has continued to be concerned about the number of Americans employed by U.N. organizations, particularly in senior-level and policymaking positions,

[1]22 U.S.C. 276c-4.

[2]Geographic employment targets, which are established for each member state, are calculated using a combination of factors, such as population and contribution to the United Nations.

because the United States is the largest contributor to most of these organizations. To address these concerns, you asked us to study whether U.N. organizations have increased the employment of Americans and, specifically, to (1) analyze the overall levels of U.S. representation and Americans in senior and policymaking positions at U.N. organizations, (2) assess U.N. organizations' efforts to employ nationals of countries that are underrepresented or close to becoming underrepresented, (3) examine State's and other U.S. agencies' efforts and resources devoted to assisting the United Nations in meeting their employment targets for Americans, and (4) identify representation levels of selected U.N. member countries and describe their approaches and resources directed toward employing their nationals in the U.N. system. (See apps. I - V.) You also asked us to identify factors related to the difficulty that organizations may have experienced in hiring more Americans. (See app. VI.)

This report analyzes data for the period of 1992 through 2000[3] that were obtained from seven U.N. organizations: the U.N. Secretariat (Secretariat) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in New York; the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva; and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) in Rome. We did not test the accuracy of the data provided by these organizations. These bodies represent about 60 percent of the professional, senior, and policymaking staff in the U.N. system and have about 80 percent of the positions in the U.N. system that are subject to geographic targets.

Results in Brief

Since 1992, some U.N. organizations in our study have made gains in the number of Americans employed, but most of the organizations we reviewed continue to fall short of their own targets. Moreover, compared with relative financial contributions, American representation in senior-level and policymaking positions is below several major contributors in a number of U.N. organizations. Of the six U.N. organizations in our study with either formal or informal geographic targets, only the Secretariat employed Americans in sufficient numbers to consistently satisfy its goal

[3]WFP provided aggregate employment figures for the period of 1996 through 2000; UNDP data covered 1995 through 2000.

for equitable representation of Americans from 1992 through 2000.[4] In addition, of the four organizations we analyzed that had formal geographical targets, only the Secretariat employed Americans in senior and policymaking positions at levels commensurate with those of selected major contributors relative to their contribution levels.

Several U.N. organizations have various human resources management initiatives under way, but none of them has developed a long-range workforce planning strategy or a formal recruiting and hiring action plan for achieving equitable geographical representation within a specified time frame. According to U.N. officials, merit is the overriding criterion used for appointing staff, but U.N. organizations' policies require that priority consideration be given to qualified applicants from unrepresented and underrepresented countries. Nevertheless, recent hiring data show that new hires from equitably represented or overrepresented countries outnumber those from unrepresented and underrepresented countries.

The State Department—which has the lead role for the United States in recruiting Americans for work at U.N. organizations—has identified the participation of Americans on U.N. staff as a "high priority." However, State's efforts to recruit qualified Americans for positions at U.N. organizations do not reflect this stated priority. State has a two-person office that, among other duties, provides employment assistance to Americans, and, in selected cases, high-ranking U.S. officials discuss American candidates for top-level positions with U.N. officials. Despite the minimal progress in improving U.S. representation in U.N. organizations, State has reduced many of its recruitment efforts without assessing how these reductions will affect recruitment. For example, it has reduced activities to support hiring for professional positions, which is the pipeline for the more senior-level positions. While State's policies call for obtaining an "equitable" share of high-level positions for Americans, and much of its recruitment efforts are aimed toward this goal, it has not developed guidelines that define "equitable" nor does it have a mechanism for assessing progress in this area. Moreover, State does not have recruiting and hiring strategies or action plans in place to support U.N. employment of Americans. In addition, while the promotion of Americans for U.N.

[4]The U.N. Secretariat, FAO, ILO, and WHO have formal geographic targets, while UNHCR and WFP have informal geographical representation targets. UNDP does not have geographical representation targets for member states. However, representation of Americans at UNDP is close to the percentage of U.S. contributions; thus, it appears that the United States is equitably represented at UNDP.

employment is a collaborative effort between the State Department and other federal agencies, there has been little interagency coordination in this area.

In contrast to State's U.N. recruiting efforts, several other U.N. members—both those adequately represented, such as Canada, and those who are generally underrepresented, such as Germany—focus their recruiting efforts on all levels of U.N. positions and use a variety of strategies to maintain or improve their countries' representation. For example, Germany has a high-level working group of top officials from several ministries that meets regularly to discuss key positions and German participation in various international organizations, and its federal employment agency provides assistance to candidates for professional positions.

To help increase the level of American employment, we are recommending that the Secretary of State (1) develop, with other U.S. government agencies, a comprehensive U.S. strategy that specifies performance goals and time frames for achieving equitable representation of Americans in the U.N. system and includes efforts to foster interagency coordination; (2) work with U.N. organizations to develop plans and strategies for achieving equitable geographic representation within specified time frames; (3) develop guidelines that define State's goal of obtaining an equitable share of senior-level and policymaking positions for U.S. citizens and use these guidelines to assess whether the United States is equitably represented in high-level positions in U.N. organizations; and (4) provide copies of State's annual report to the Congress on U.N. progress to the heads of U.N. organizations for appropriate attention and action.

The Department of State, in commenting on a draft of this report, generally agreed with our analysis and three of our four recommendations. Although State said that placement of Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions is a high priority for the Department, State has not clearly defined targets for placing Americans in these positions and it disagreed with our recommendation that it should develop such guidelines for obtaining an equitable share of senior-level and policymaking positions at U.N. organizations. State said it should apply the guidelines already being used by the organizations for equitable employment representation at all levels. We believe that because of the importance of senior-level and policymaking positions and the relatively low representation of Americans in them at several organizations, additional emphasis in this area of recruitment is warranted. We further believe that without guidelines defining equitable

share, State lacks a mechanism for assessing progress toward achieving its top recruitment priority.

Background

The United Nations comprises six core bodies: the General Assembly, the U.N. Secretariat, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice. In addition, the U.N. system has 12 funds and programs and 14 specialized agencies. Article 101 of the U.N. Charter calls for staff to be recruited on the basis of "the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity" as well as from "as wide a geographical basis as possible." Thus, to employ the nationals of U.N. members in an equitable manner, the Secretariat and several associated U.N. organizations have quantitative formulas that establish targets for equitable geographical representation.[5]

Geographic representation targets do not apply to all staff positions in the organizations that have established them. These organizations set aside a certain number of positions that are subject to geographic representation from among the professional and high-level positions.[6] There also are some professional positions that are typically exempt from being counted geographically, including linguist and peacekeeper positions and positions of 1 year or less in duration. For example, in 2000, the U.N. Secretariat had a total of 14,312 staff—5,854 of whom were in professional positions. Of those professional positions, 2,389 were subject to geographic representation. Table 1 provides information for 2000 on the total number of staff in the U.N. system compared with the total number of American staff.

[5]These formulas are explained in the "Organizations Vary on Geographic Representation Targets" section of this report.

[6]Professional and high-level positions comprise less than half of the total positions within the U.N. system.

Table 1: United Nations, Subsidiary Bodies, Specialized Agencies, and International Atomic Energy Agency - U.S. Staff Relative to Total U.N. Staff and Total U.N. Professional Staff (2000)

Total U.N. staff	Total/Percentage U.S. staff	Total professional staff	Total/Percentage professional U.S. staff
56,289	4,036 / 7.2%	21,941	2,076 / 9.5%

Source: State Department.

U.N. organizations use a standard pay scale known as the U.N. Common System base salary scale to compensate their staff. (See app. VII for the salary scales for U.N. staff in professional, senior-level, and policymaking positions.) However, each U.N. organization has its own personnel policies, procedures, and staff rules. Table 2 shows the U.N. grade scale and the approximate U.S. government equivalent as determined by the International Civil Service Commission.

Table 2: U.N. Grade Scale and Approximate U.S. Government Equivalent

U.N. grade	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1/D2
U.S. grade	GS-9	GS-11/12	GS-12/13	GS-13/14	GS-15	Senior Executive Service

Note: There are no established equivalencies for policymaking positions (equivalent to the Assistant Secretary-General and the Under Secretary-General).

Source: International Civil Service Commission.

The State Department is the U.S. agency primarily responsible for leading U.S. efforts toward achieving equitable U.S. representation in employment in U.N. organizations. In doing so, State works in cooperation with at least 17 federal agencies[7] that have interests in specific U.N. organizations.[8] A 1970 executive order assigns the U.S. Secretary of State responsibility for

[7]These include, among others, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services, the Interior, Justice, Labor, Transportation, the Treasury, and Veterans Affairs.

[8]For instance, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a direct interest in the international food and agricultural agencies in Rome while the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor have a direct interest in WHO and ILO in Geneva, respectively.

leading and coordinating the federal government's efforts to increase and improve U.S. participation in international organizations through transfers and details of federal employees.[9] The order further calls for each agency in the executive branch to cooperate "to the maximum extent feasible" to promote details and transfers through measures such as (1) notifying well-qualified agency employees of vacancies in international organizations and (2) providing international organizations with detailed assessments of the qualifications of employees being considered for specific positions. In addition, under the 1991 U.S. law,[10] the Secretary of State is required to report to the Congress on whether each international organization with a geographic distribution formula is making "good faith efforts" to increase U.S. staff as well as meeting its own geographic targets. State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs is responsible for implementing these requirements. While State is responsible for promoting and seeking to increase U.S. representation in the U.N. organizations, the U.N. entities themselves are ultimately responsible for achieving equitable representation.

Americans Are Not Equitably Represented in the U.N. System

Since 1992, some of the U.N. organizations in our study have made gains in employing Americans, but most of the organizations we reviewed continue to fall short of their own targets for employing U.S. citizens. Moreover, compared with relative financial contributions, American representation in senior-level and policymaking positions[11] is below several major contributors in a number of U.N. organizations. Of the six U.N. organizations in our study with geographic employment targets, only the U.N. Secretariat employed Americans in sufficient numbers to consistently satisfy its goal of equitable representation of Americans from the period of 1992 to 2000. These targets and the methodology for calculating them are different for each U.N. organization and are based on factors such as the level of the country's U.N. contribution and population. UNDP does not have geographical representation targets for member states; however, representation of Americans at UNDP is close to the percentage of U.S. contributions, and thus it appears that the United States is equitably

[9]E.O. 11552 (1970).

[10]22 U.S.C. 276c-4.

[11]In this report, senior-level posts are D1 and D2 positions and policymaking positions are equivalent to the Assistant Secretary-General and Under Secretary-General levels.

represented at UNDP. Although several U.N. organizations have established overall geographical representation targets, none of the U.N. organizations has developed numerical targets for senior-level and policymaking positions among the nationals of its member states. Furthermore, of the four organizations in our analysis with formal targets for overall geographic representation, only the Secretariat employed Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions at levels commensurate with those of selected major contributors relative to their contribution level.

Organizations Vary on Geographic Representation Targets

The charters and governing documents of most organizations in the U.N. system articulate the principle of equity, which requires that due regard be given to the importance of employing staff members from as wide a geographical basis as possible, and many U.N. organizations have developed formal or informal targets to achieve this objective. In the Secretariat, FAO, ILO, and WHO, where members pay regular assessments and may make additional voluntary contributions, a formal target or range is established to calculate geographic targets for employing the nationals of each member state. These targets are expressed in terms of a range of positions to provide organizations with some flexibility in meeting these targets, but the midpoint of the range is generally viewed as the ideal level of representation. A member country is regarded as "underrepresented" when it falls below the minimum range and "overrepresented" when it exceeds the maximum range.

The remaining three organizations in our study—UNDP, UNHCR, and WFP—generally follow the principle of equitable geographic representation but have not adopted formal targets that are based on nationality because their funding comes from voluntary contributions rather than annual assessments. However, UNHCR and WFP have established informal targets[12] for representation of Americans since the United States is the largest contributor to both organizations. UNDP officials, on the other hand, said that while the program does not have targets for individual countries, it seeks to achieve a "reasonable

[12]These targets have not been adopted by UNHCR's and WFP's governing bodies. However, a "Framework for Cooperation" between UNHCR and the U.S. Department of State approved on January 19, 2001, states that UNHCR will strive to achieve the goal concerning the percentage of U.S. national staffing—now targeted to at least 13 percent of all professional positions—and will report on its effort during biannual consultations with State.

geographic balance" of international staff between donors and program countries as well as "equity within contribution levels."

The organizations in our analysis with formal geographic targets for individual countries have similar approaches to determining which positions are subject to these targets. For example, these organizations exclude general service positions (e.g., clerical positions), appointments of less than a year, and language-related positions (such as translators and interpreters). In addition, all organizations except WHO disregard positions that are financed from voluntary contributions in the formula for calculating equitable geographic distribution targets. Unlike the Secretariat and the specialized agencies, UNHCR and WFP do not set aside positions subject to geographic distribution and apply their informal targets to all professional positions. Figure 1 provides a summary of the targets for equitable U.S. representation established by the U.N. organizations that we covered in our study, expressed both in numerical and in percentage terms. The figure also lists the factors used by these organizations to determine their geographical representation targets.

Figure 1: U.N. Organizations' Targets for Equitable U.S. Representation and Factors Used to Determine These Targets (2000)

U.N. organization	U.S. target range of positions	U.S. target percentage of total[a]	Basis for range or target
U.N. Secretariat	314 - 424	12 to 16[b]	Contribution, membership status, population size
Specialized agencies:			
FAO	186 - 248[c]	18.75 to 25	Contribution (position-weighting system used)[d]
ILO	101 - 135	15 to 20[b]	Contribution, membership status
WHO	174 - 237	12 to 16[b]	Contribution, membership status, population size
Funds and programs:			
UNDP	No target	No formal geographic distribution targets	Not applicable
UNHCR	150[b]	Informal target of 13%	Informal target agreed upon by UNHCR and U.S. Department of State
WFP	166[b]	Informal target of 20%	Informal target based on about half of U.S. voluntary contribution

[a]For the U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies, the percentage relates to the total number of positions subject to geographic distribution. For the funds and programs, the percentage relates to the total number of professional positions.

[b]GAO estimate.

[c]Department of State estimate.

[d]FAO uses a position-weighting system in which points are attributed to a position's grade level, with a country's target expressed as a number of points rather than a number of positions.

Source: GAO and State Department analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

Member contributions,[13] population size,[14] and membership status[15] are three factors that are used to determine equitable representation targets for U.N. organizations' member states. However, not all of these factors are used by each of the organizations in our analysis. For example, ILO uses the contribution and membership factors to calculate its geographic targets, while FAO uses only the contribution factor. FAO also differs from the other organizations in that the level of position that a country's citizens hold, in addition to the number of positions, is considered in determining that country's representation status. FAO operates on the principle that a position low on the hierarchical scale ought not to count as much as one at the top of the scale. Thus, FAO uses a position-weighting system in which points are attributed to a position's grade level, with a country's quota expressed as a number of points, not positions. Appendix I provides more detailed information on the different methods used by the Secretariat and the three specialized agencies to calculate their formal targets for the equitable representation of member countries.

Overall, Americans Are Not Equitably Represented

Although some of the U.N. organizations have made gains toward employing Americans, most of the U.N. organizations in our study continue to fall short of their own targets for employing Americans. Almost a decade after the Congress first required the State Department to report on American representation in the U.N. system, the United States was equitably represented in only one of the six U.N. organizations in our study with either formal or informal targets—the U.N. Secretariat. Americans were underrepresented in the three specialized agencies—FAO, ILO, and WHO—and in two of the U.N. funds and programs—UNHCR and WFP.

[13]Member state contributions are the common factor used by U.N. organizations to determine targets or ranges because the level of budgetary contribution is an inherent factor in a state's membership in the organization. It is estimated that roughly two-thirds of the money spent by international organizations goes to pay staff members' salaries, according to a U.N. Joint Inspection Unit study.

[14]Population size is used to ensure that member states are represented in keeping with their respective demographic profiles and range of cultural diversity.

[15]Membership status refers to the right of each member state to a number of positions. For example, in the U.N. Secretariat, a minimum of about 1 to 14 positions are assigned to each member state. This provision is especially important for countries with a relatively small population and small U.N. assessment, which could get only one position if a minimum number of positions were not set.

While UNDP does not have a target for U.S. representation, the level of Americans in UNDP is close to the percentage level of U.S. contributions. The summary in table 3 provides the overall representation status of Americans in the U.N. organizations in our study for 2000. Appendix II provides more detailed information on the trends in U.S. representation for each of the organizations in our study since 1992.

Table 3: Overall Representation of Americans Compared With U.N. Organizations' Geographic Targets (2000)

U.N. organization	U.S. assessed or voluntary contribution percentage	Percentage of total geographic positions targeted for Americans	Percentage of geographic positions filled by Americans	Geographic target met?
U.N. Secretariat[a] [b]	25%	12 - 16%	12.5%[c]	Yes
FAO	25	18.75 - 25	12.5[d]	No
ILO[b]	25	15 - 20	13.2	No
WHO[a]	25	12 -16	10.5	No
UNDP	11	No target	12.4	--
UNHCR	35	13	9.7	No
WFP	47	20	10.3	No

[a]The U.N. Secretariat and WHO use a base number rather than the number of filled positions to calculate geographic targets for equitable representation. Therefore, the percentages for the Secretariat and WHO that are presented in this table are based on these organizations' base numbers and not their filled numbers of positions.

[b]The Secretariat, ILO, and WHO use geographic targets for member states' equitable representation that are expressed as numbers rather than percentages. For purposes of consistency, we converted these numbers and the numbers of U.S. staff to percentages. The numbered U.S. geographic targets for these countries are presented in table 1.

[c]The Secretariat reports each year's staffing data as of June 30, rather than December 31, of the calendar year. The figure in this table is the percentage of U.S. staff as of June 30, 2000.

[d]FAO uses a position-weighting system to assess the representation status of member countries. Therefore, the U.S. representation percentage shown here is the percentage using FAO's weighting system rather than the actual percentage of staff.

Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

Representation in Senior-Level and Policymaking Positions

We compared the relative financial contributions of the United States and the representation levels of Americans in senior and policymaking positions with those of four major contributors in the four U.N.

organizations with geographic targets.[16] We found that only the U.N. Secretariat employed Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions at levels commensurate with the average of selected major contributors relative to their contribution level.[17] (See table 4.) While some U.N. organizations have created overall targets for equitable representation of member countries, they do not set quantitative targets for distributing positions by grade level—including senior-level and policymaking positions—among member states. Both U.S. and U.N. officials indicated that determining equitable distribution among member states for these high-level[18] positions can be very subjective. There are no standard recruitment procedures for these positions nor is there a formal policy for rotating policymaking positions among member states. Traditionally, these policymaking appointments are made by the Secretary-General or the respective U.N. agency heads. The U.N. General Assembly in several resolutions has emphasized that "no post shall be considered the exclusive preserve of any member state or group of states."[19]

The summary in table 4 shows the 3-year average (1998-2000) for the U.S. assessment to the four U.N. organizations and the representation of Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions, and a calculated comparative representation level if U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions were proportionate to the average for major contributors given their level of contributions.[20] In table 4, we multiplied the four-country average representation by the U.S. assessment to derive a hypothetical comparative representation level, under the assumption that U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions was proportionate to the average of these four major contributors. (This analysis is not meant to suggest criteria or a methodology for determining

[16]We did not include in this analysis the three funds and programs, UNHCR, UNDP, and WFP, that receive voluntary contributions from donor countries, which tend to fluctuate, and have not established formal geographic targets for these donors.

[17]The organizations in our analysis include the Secretariat, ILO, FAO, and WHO, and the selected major contributors are Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

[18]In this report, high-level posts refer to senior-level (D1-D2) positions and policymaking positions (equivalent to Assistant Secretary-General and Under Secretary-General).

[19]For example, see the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly A/RES/53/221 (Apr. 23, 1999).

[20]See appendix VIII for a description of the methodology used to compute the comparative representation level.

equitable representation in these positions. It is for comparison purposes only, to show U.S. representation in senior and policymaking positions relative to the average of four major contributors.) For example, if the United States, given its 25-percent assessment at FAO, were to have representation proportionate to the 0.76 average ratio for the four selected countries, then its representation would be 19.1 percent. For details on the average ratio of the four contributors for each U.N. organization, refer to appendix II. As shown in table 4, only the U.N. Secretariat employs Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions commensurate to the average representation levels for the four major U.N. contributors we included in this study.

Table 4: U.S. Representation in Senior and Policymaking Levels, 3-Year Average (1998-2000)

U.N. organization	Percentage of U.S. assessment	Percentage of high-level positions filled by Americans	Percentage of high-level positions if U.S. representation were commensurate to selected major contributors
U.N. Secretariat	25%	13.6%	13.4%
FAO	25	9.4	19.1
ILO	25	9.7	25.8
WHO	25	8.0	11.0

Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

While acknowledging that U.S. representation may appear to be less than ideal, several U.S. officials told us that U.S. influence in certain organizations is not lacking given its voice and leadership in the governing bodies and the size of U.S. contributions. Nonetheless, these officials recognize the importance of placing highly qualified Americans in high-level positions, particularly in areas considered critical to U.S. interests.

U.N. Organizations Lack Long-Range Workforce Planning Strategies

While several U.N. organizations in our study are undertaking various human resource management initiatives, none of them has a long-range workforce planning strategy nor a formal recruiting and hiring action plan for achieving equitable representation within a specified time frame. However, several U.N. organizations did tailor some approaches to address underrepresentation of member countries, such as targeting entry-level

programs to nationals from underrepresented countries. U.N. officials and documents emphasized that the most important criterion for appointing staff is merit in order to ensure the highest standards of efficiency and competence—with due consideration to recruiting staff from as wide a geographical basis as possible. But in selecting staff, nationality is weighed against other competing factors because U.N. officials are also asked to give priority consideration to gender. Although some organizations have specific guidelines that provide a preference for hiring qualified nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, our analysis of actual hiring statistics shows that several U.N. agencies hired more nationals from equitably represented and overrepresented countries than those from unrepresented and underrepresented countries.

Various Human Resource Management Initiatives Are Under Way

As part of U.N.-wide reform, several U.N. organizations have a number of human resource management initiatives under way—including measures that begin to address some workforce planning issues, hold managers accountable for staff selection decisions, and provide placement and promotion opportunities for staff that are merit-based—and give due regard to geographical representation and gender balance considerations.[21] For example, in 1997, the U.N. Secretary-General proposed a reform program that included, as one of its core elements, developing a performance-based human capital system. In May 2000, we testified that the United Nations had made some progress in such areas as implementing a merit-based appraisal system, although overall reform objectives had not yet been achieved.[22] According to human resources directors with whom we met, addressing these broad human capital issues—including competitive compensation packages, aging of the workforce, spousal employment, and work-life balance—could in the long run help to attract and retain Americans for U.N. employment in greater numbers. (For a discussion of some of these human capital issues and related factors that may affect recruiting Americans for U.N. organizations, see app. VI.)

[21]The U.N. agencies that provided information about their human resource management initiatives are the Secretariat, FAO, and UNHCR.

[22]*United Nations: Reforms Are Progressing, but Overall Objectives Have Not Yet Been Achieved* (GAO/T-NSIAD-00-169, May 10, 2000).

Recruiting and Hiring Efforts Are Not Linked to Long-Range Workforce Planning

Although some human resource management initiatives are under way, U.N. organizations have not yet developed long-range workforce planning strategies to guide recruitment and hiring efforts, nor have U.N. organizations formulated specific action plans and time frames for achieving equitable representation for underrepresented countries, including in some cases the United States. A hallmark of high-performing organizations is that human resource policies, procedures, and programs should be directly linked to achieving organizational objectives.[23] Specifically, it is important that such organizations have a formal recruiting and hiring action plan targeted to fill short- and long-term human capital needs identified through workforce planning efforts.

The U.N. organizations we examined had not systematically collected essential human capital data that could help identify factors contributing to difficulties in achieving equitable representation. For example, we asked U.N. officials about exit interviews of and feedback from American staff leaving the U.N. system as well as reasons why Americans had declined offers of U.N. employment. However, we were told that these organizations do not collect such information, which could help tailor appropriate strategies for recruiting and retaining Americans. The Secretariat and WFP recently have begun collecting this information but have not yet reported their findings.

Some Recruitment Programs for Entry-Level Positions Target Underrepresented Member Countries

Each U.N. organization has its own processes and procedures for recruiting, assessing, and selecting candidates for employment, and many of their efforts focus on entry-level recruitment. In addition, these entry-level recruiting programs—including the U.N. Secretariat's national competitive recruitment examinations and the other U.N. entities' young professional programs—specifically target underrepresented member countries. Another program for junior professional officers is funded by donor countries and used as a recruitment strategy, but this program does not focus specifically on nationals from underrepresented member states.

[23] *Human Capital: A Self-Assessment Checklist for Agency Leaders* (GAO/OCG-00-14G, September 2000).

Recent U.N. National Competitive Recruitment Examination Was Not Widely Promoted

To address concerns that the United States was nearing underrepresentation in the Secretariat due to anticipated retirements, the national competitive recruitment exam, which is a prerequisite for P1 and P2 positions, was held in New York in February 2001. However, the State Department and the U.S. mission to the United Nations in New York did not widely publicize this examination. Only 40 American applicants took the examination—according to U.N. officials, this turnout was disappointingly low compared with the last examination in 1992 when 333 American applicants took the test in 3 major U.S. cities. Twenty-one of these applicants from the 1992 examination were eventually employed. A U.N. official told us that the U.N. Secretariat relies on the member states to publicize the exam, which, with the exception of the February exam, is usually conducted in capital cities. According to the U.N. official, it was not feasible to conduct the most recent exam at more U.S. sites because of resource constraints. Notice of the 2001 examination was posted on the U.N. Web site and advertised in an August 2000 issue of *The Economist* and in two September 2000 issues of the *International Career Employment Weekly*, which is a publication offering free advertising that was used by the State Department. According to a U.S. mission officer in New York, another examination will be scheduled for the United States in early 2002.

Programs Offer Opportunities for Young Professionals

Over the past few years, several U.N. organizations have developed entry-level programs and have used these programs to hire citizens from underrepresented countries. In 2000, WFP initiated a New Graduates Program to give young graduates an opportunity to join the U.N. system. Exclusively targeted at underrepresented countries, 3 of the 10 graduates selected in 2000 were from the United States. Similarly, ILO launched a Young Professionals Career Entrance Program in January 2001 to identify and hire young, highly qualified persons with the potential to become future managers within the organization. Although these positions are open to nationals of all member states, the program offers a vehicle for hiring citizens from underrepresented countries, who we were told were given preference. Three of the 10 positions filled earlier this year went to Americans. In addition, in March 2001, the first 20 recruits started training under UNDP's Leadership Development Program, which, UNDP officials told us, takes demographic balance as well as technical competence into account in screening applicants. With assistance from their liaison offices in Washington, D.C., these organizations have organized some recruitment missions on U.S. college and university campuses. ILO, in particular, made a concerted effort to recruit new graduates, conducting five recruiting missions during the past year to visit several American colleges and

universities, including Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell, Tufts, Columbia, and Stanford, among others.

For many years, U.N. organizations have operated junior professional officers programs[24] that were funded by donor countries for training young professionals who serve, usually for 2 or 3 years, in various areas. Countries that sponsor these junior professional officers pay their full costs, which range from $70,000 to $150,000 per year depending on an officer's grade level, duty station, and marital status. At the end of their terms, these officers are often recruited as regular international staff, and donor countries have used the program as a way to promote their nationals for entry-level positions, although officers who complete the program are not guaranteed U.N. employment. As shown in table 5, the U.S. government sponsors a small number of junior professional officers. Since 1984, State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has sponsored 49 junior officers at UNHCR at an average cost of $110,000 per officer annually. In supporting the junior professional officers program at UNHCR, State seeks to assist U.N. organizations in implementing programs of priority interest to the United States while increasing the pool of American candidates for recruitment in U.N. organizations. According to State officials, about half of the junior officers that State has sponsored have been hired by UNHCR. Of the current American employees at UNHCR, 17 are former U.S. junior professional officers. Over the years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has also supported a limited number of junior professional officers in the Rome-based international food and agricultural agencies at an average cost of $90,000 to $100,000 per year. [25]

[24]Comparable programs in selected agencies may be called differently—for example, the Associate Professional Officers program at FAO and the Associate Experts program at ILO.

[25]Since 1987, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has funded 17 Associate Professional Officers—sponsoring 1 or 2 officers each year—and has jointly funded 2 other officers along with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Table 5: Number of Junior Professional Officers by Organization (2000-2001)

Organization	Total number of junior officers	Number of American junior officers	Number of participating donors
U.N. Secretariat	130	0	16
FAO	146	2	19
ILO	87	0	16
WHO	38	0	9
UNDP	340[a]	0	19
UNHCR	80	7	18
WFP	77	1	15

[a]Includes 100 officers administered by UNDP on behalf of 3 other U.N. funds and programs.

Source: U.N. organizations listed above.

Merit Is the Overriding Criterion; Nationality Is Weighed Against Other Competing Factors

While U.N. officials and documents emphasize that the most important criterion for filling positions is merit, U.N. organizations' policies generally call for giving additional consideration to hiring qualified nationals from unrepresented or underrepresented member states. A resolution on human resources management adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 requests the Secretary-General to ensure that "among equally qualified candidates, preference is given to candidates from underrepresented member states."[26] Nevertheless, U.N. organizations generally weigh nationality against other competing factors in appointing staff in accordance with policies that aim to achieve gender balance and to recruit from qualified staff already within the U.N. system. Following the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, the U.N. General Assembly requested a 50/50 gender balance by the year 2000, a target date the United Nations now says will not be met until 2012. (Specific gender balance goals adopted by various U.N. entities are discussed in app. VI.) Although the principle of merit as the overriding criterion is clearly established, the priority placed on secondary factors, such as nationality and gender, is not as clear. For instance, while the Secretariat's hierarchy places nationality second and gender third, ILO gives nationality and gender equal consideration, while FAO has no established hierarchy after merit. A 1998 report of the International Civil

[26]U.N. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/221 (Apr. 23, 1999).

Service Commission acknowledged that, in some cases, U.N. organizations have to balance the priorities of gender and geography. [27]

Table 6 shows that several U.N. agencies in our study continue to hire more nationals from equitably represented and overrepresented countries than from unrepresented and underrepresented countries. Although U.N. organizations "encourage" hiring managers to recruit candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, they do not generally restrict eligibility of candidates on the basis of nationality. A major variation is ILO's practice—that is, competitions are usually open only to nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented countries, which are listed in each vacancy announcement. Even so, according to an ILO official, when it is difficult to find suitable candidates from one of the unrepresented or underrepresented countries, applications from nationals of equitably represented or overrepresented countries may be considered. In the case of WHO, its executive board adopted a resolution in 1997 to maintain a recruitment target of 60 percent for nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented countries and those that are considered equitably represented but fall below the midpoint of the range while limiting recruitment from overrepresented countries to 20 percent of all new appointments. Nonetheless, WHO officials told us that the organization does not restrict eligibility of applicants on the basis of nationality.

[27] *Gender Balance in the United Nations Common System*, International Civil Service Commission (December 1998).

Table 6: Number of External Appointments for Geographic Positions and the Percentages of Applicants Hired From Underrepresented, Equitably Represented, and Overrepresented Countries for Selected Organizations (1998-2000)

Organization	Number of external appointments	Percentage hired from underrepresented countries	Percentage hired from equitably represented countries	Percentage hired from overrepresented countries
U.N. Secretariat[a]	368	24%	72%	3%
FAO	255	30	44	26
ILO	134	26	39	35
WHO[b]	--	--	--	--

[a]The period covered for U.N. Secretariat data was July 1, 1997, to June 30, 2000.

[b]WHO did not provide data on external appointments broken out for positions subject to geographic distribution.

Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

Although human resources directors indicated that they give priority consideration to hiring qualified nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, our analysis of the statistics they provided showed that the number of nationals hired from overrepresented countries remains relatively high. As of 2000, FAO had 85 overrepresented countries, up from 72 in 1998; ILO had 45 overrepresented countries, down from 49 in 1998; and WHO had 22 overrepresented countries, compared with 12 in 1998. For a list of the top five countries whose nationals are most overrepresented at these U.N. entities, see appendix III.

We asked human resources directors whether U.N. organizations face a shortage of qualified American applicants interested in U.N. employment. On the basis of the data they provided, in general this does not appear to be the case. For instance, at the U.N. Secretariat, nearly 30,000 applications were received for 649 positions that were announced in 2000. Of those applications, more than 2,000 were Americans—of whom 410 were listed among the best qualified candidates. Six Americans were eventually hired. FAO reported receiving 11,670 applications for 130 vacancy announcements for professional positions it issued in 2000. More than 8,000 of the applications had been evaluated as of March 2001, of which 1,279 were deemed qualified—115 of them Americans. Of these, seven Americans were hired. However, FAO officials noted, recent statistics show that while the number of applications from Americans steadily

increased between 1997 and 1999, there was a significant decline in 2000. FAO has not yet conducted a study examining the reasons for this decline.[28]

State's Efforts Do Not Reflect Equitable U.S. Representation As a High Priority

The State Department has written policies stating that equitable representation of Americans employed by U.N. organizations is a "high priority" and has mechanisms in place to support American employment in these bodies. Nevertheless, State's level of effort in achieving this objective does not reflect the stated priority. Despite only minimal progress in improving representation of Americans in the U.N. system, State has reduced resources aimed at recruitment of qualified professionals and has curtailed other related activities without assessing how these reductions will affect recruitment. State's reduction in resources resulted in its scaling back activities to support recruitment for professional positions—the pipeline for senior-level positions. Although State's policies seek an equitable share of high-level positions for Americans, and much of the Department's recruitment efforts are aimed toward this goal, State has not developed guidelines that define "equitable" or a mechanism for assessing progress in this area. Moreover, State also has not developed recruiting and hiring strategies or action plans to support U.N. employment of Americans. In addition, while State and other U.S. government officials with whom we spoke view promotion of Americans for U.N. employment as a collaborative effort between the State Department and other federal agencies, there has been little interagency coordination in this area. Efforts by other U.S. government agencies—such as providing federal employees with opportunities for international assignment—are not systematically organized or coordinated with State to provide assurances that the United States employs the best strategies to place Americans in the U.N. system.

Written Policies Identify U.S. Representation as High Priority

In a July 1999 cable to the U.S. missions to U.N. agencies, the State Department articulated the U.S. government's goal to achieve equitable representation of Americans in all international organizations, stating that participation of Americans on the staffs of these organizations is a "high priority." The cable established specific guidelines for supporting individuals and promoting the hiring of American citizens for senior-level

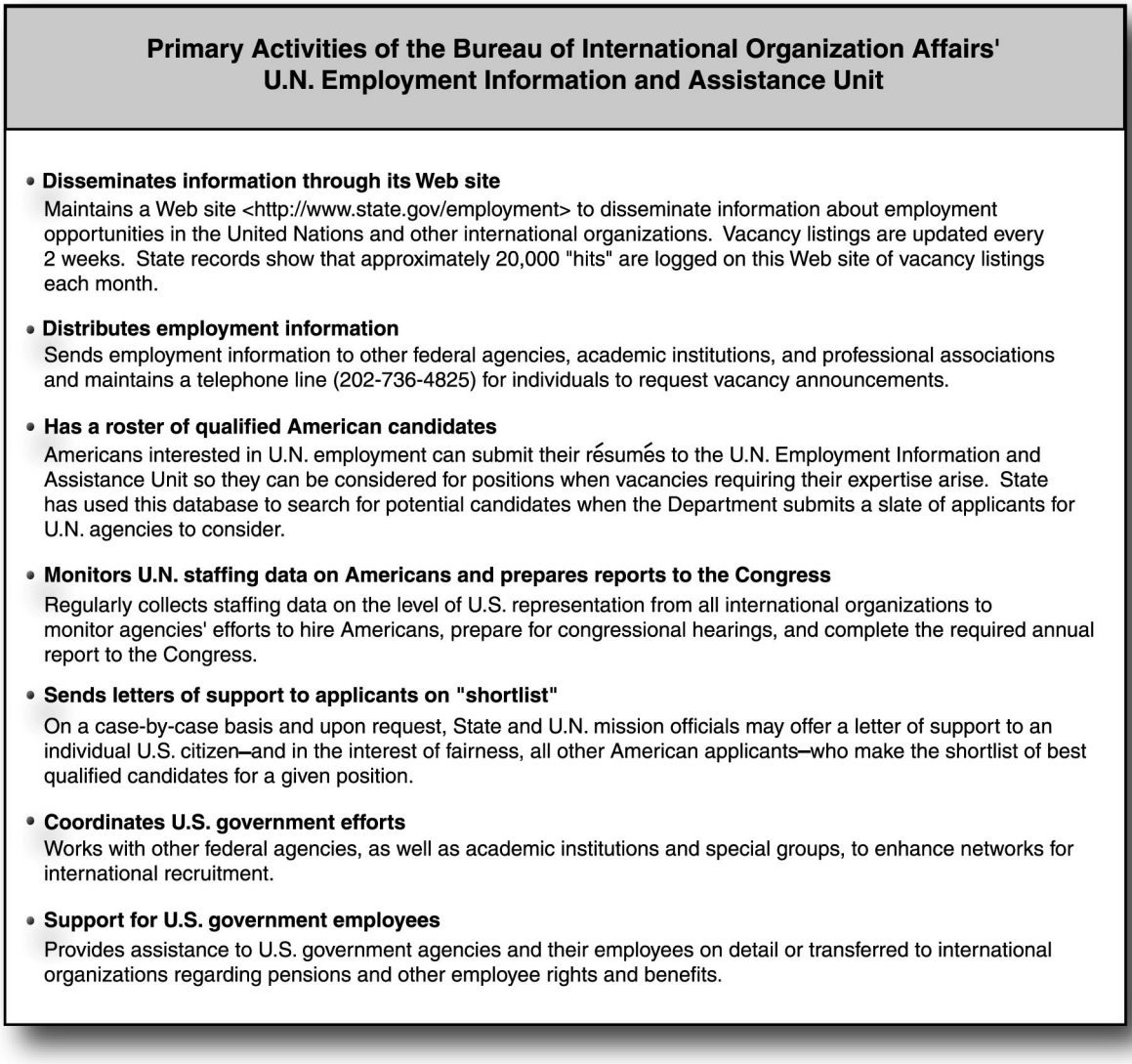
[28]Although a study has not yet been conducted, FAO officials suggested that the decline in American applicants may be due to the reduction in the post adjustment allowance to zero in 2000, which they think may have the effect of reducing FAO's salary competitiveness in the U.S. labor market.

and professional positions. This issue was again addressed in the October 2000 Government Performance and Results Act performance plan for State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs. The plan states that the Bureau will seek to increase the number/percentage of Americans employed in international organizations, especially those in which the United States is underrepresented, including FAO, ILO, UNHCR, WFP, and WHO.

Measures Are in Place to Support U.N. Employment

The State Department has a variety of mechanisms in place to carry out its objectives of recruiting Americans for positions in the U.N. system. The primary mechanism is the Bureau of International Organization Affairs' U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit, which helps qualified candidates from both the private and public sectors find employment in the U.N. system. In addition, high-ranking U.S. officials (such as the Secretary of State, ambassadors, and assistant secretaries) and U.N. officials have discussed American candidates for key U.N. positions and U.S. underrepresentation. The U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit relies on wide-ranging as well as targeted distribution of employment information as the primary vehicle for increasing recruitment. Figure 2 lists the main activities that the unit conducts to promote Americans for positions in the U.N. system.

Figure 2: State Department's Support Services for U.N. Employment



Source: State Department.

Lists of Key Senior-Level and Policymaking Positions Are Not Widely Known

Once a year, State's U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit, in collaboration with other federal agencies and the U.S. missions, compiles lists of key senior-level and policymaking U.N. positions targeted for recruitment. However, several State and other U.S. officials whose duties include recruiting American citizens for U.N. employment told us that they were not aware that such lists existed. Initiated in 1998, the lists identify

positions by three rankings: (1) top priority for recruitment because they are critical to U.S. interests, (2) important because the functions of the position could impact U.S. interests, and (3) less significant. The lists include, where applicable, the expiration date of the incumbent's position so that U.S. agencies can be notified when positions are expected to become vacant in order to find the most qualified candidates.

U.S. Missions Maintain Liaison With U.N. Agencies, Provide Additional Support

U.S. missions to U.N. agencies, such as those we visited in Geneva, Rome, and New York, have a designated officer as the focal point for U.N. personnel and other management issues. These mission officials are the U.S. representatives on the ground with day-to-day contact with U.N. officials. According to these designated mission officers, they spend about 10 percent of their time on U.N. employment matters, including responding to inquiries and requests for support from American citizens applying for U.N. employment. They also help identify positions that are vacant or are expected to become vacant, which could be of particular interest to the United States.

Although State's guidelines urge U.S. missions to maintain active communications with U.S. citizens employed by international organizations, American citizens at every U.N. agency we visited expressed a desire to have more interaction with State staff at the U.S. missions in New York, Geneva, and Rome. Without compromising their status as international civil servants,[29] American employees believe that they can provide U.S. officials with information and insights on substantive policy and management issues of interest to the United States. For instance, in Geneva, American employees at ILO cited a meeting held last year with a visiting high-level official from the U.S. Department of Labor that provided a forum for exchanging views on policy matters and issues of common concern, such as U.S. government and American employees' views on various management reforms. Many of the American employees in the U.N. agencies we visited also expressed uncertainty about the type of support they can expect from the U.S. mission.

[29]Article 100 of the U.N. Charter directs staff not to "seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization [and to] refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization."

Resources Were Reduced and Activities Were Curtailed Without Assessing Impact

Even though Americans remain underrepresented in many U.N. organizations, State has reduced its level of effort overall to recruit Americans in the U.N. system without analyzing and assessing the potential impact these curtailed and/or reduced functions could have had on recruitment. These changes included, among other things, (1) decreasing the number of staff resources assigned to carry out recruitment efforts, which required State to focus resources to support primarily senior-level and policymaking positions rather than all positions; (2) reducing the frequency of scheduled visits with U.N. human resources directors; and (3) not updating an electronic roster from which candidates are recommended to U.N. organizations for employment.

Decline in Staff Resources

In 1992, the State Department had five professionals assigned to the U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit, which is the unit responsible for recruitment and monitoring of American employment in numerous international organizations. Since then, State has reduced the number of staff assigned to this unit. In 1993, staff were reduced to four professionals, and 2 years later staff were further reduced to three professionals. Since 2000, two staff have been carrying out the functions assigned to the unit.[30]

State's Recruiting Efforts Focus on Senior-Level Positions

In 1995, State ended its practice of supporting Americans for U.N. employment at professional levels and instead focused on senior-level and policymaking positions, which include D1 and above positions. While State's policies call for obtaining an equitable share of high-level positions for Americans, and much of its recruitment efforts are aimed toward this goal, the Department has not developed guidelines that define "equitable" nor does it have a mechanism for assessing progress in this area. The redirection of State's efforts to focus only on high-level positions may have the effect of reducing the pipeline of Americans in the lower ranks who could advance to high-level positions through internal promotions, which our analysis showed was the primary source for senior-level positions at U.N. organizations. For example, at WFP, out of 37 senior positions filled from 1998 to 2000, 31 (83 percent) were internal promotions, while only 6 were recruited externally. Seven of the internal promotions and two of the external hires were Americans. This demonstrates the importance of maintaining an adequate "pipeline" of qualified entry- and mid-level

[30]The unit was established as the Office of International Recruitment and was subsequently renamed the U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit.

Americans to be considered for senior positions. Agriculture officials said that a long-term 10- to 15-year strategy aimed at entry-level recruitment to create a pool of qualified American candidates within the international organizations may be necessary in order to improve representation levels.

State's Liaison With U.N. Agencies on Workforce Matters Has Declined

With support from the U.S. missions, the U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit is State's primary liaison with the human resources offices of the different U.N. organizations. But due to funding constraints, the director of the unit had not met with the human resources directors of U.N. organizations in the last 3 years.[31] Human resources directors at the U.N. agencies told us that a planning session once a year with a U.S. government representative would be very useful, especially with the large number of retirements expected in the next several years. Several human resources directors told us that due to the age profiles of their staffs, they need to formulate and implement plans to address this and other workforce planning issues. For example, the U.N. Secretariat projects that up to one-fourth of the 400 staff retiring each year for the next 5 years are in positions subject to geographic distribution. Moreover, the number of Americans who left the Secretariat from 1997 to 2000 exceeded the number of Americans hired, resulting in a net loss of 50 American staff over the last 4 years. In its strategic framework for 2000 to 2015, FAO projected a staff turnover of 70 percent in the next 15 years. In light of this expected turnover, FAO's medium-term plan for 2002 to 2007 called for effective workforce planning and recruitment efforts to ensure that skills and competencies of staff who are retiring are not lost.

Roster of Qualified American Candidates Is Not Being Updated

The U.N. Employment Information and Assistance Unit has maintained a roster of highly qualified American citizens who wish to be considered for senior positions but, according to State officials, updating the roster was put on hold earlier this year due to resource constraints. More than 2,000 names were on the roster before 1995 when State fielded candidates for both professional and senior-level positions. In 1991, when the roster was actively used, State submitted approximately 600 applications for 293 professional positions throughout the United Nations. However, in 1995 State decided to stop maintaining a central roster of candidates for most professional or technical positions and to stop screening, nominating, and offering support to American candidates for these positions. About 300 names for senior positions are currently registered on the roster. Over the

[31]Travel meetings with human resources directors in Rome and Geneva were conducted in June 2001, after the completion of our study.

past 3 years, State has used the roster to submit slates of 3 or 4 candidates for about 40 senior positions.

State Lacks Recruiting Strategy and Action Plan

The State Department has no recruiting strategy or action plan to guide its efforts to support Americans for employment in the United Nations and against which to measure its performance. The Bureau of International Organization Affairs' performance plan includes the employment of American citizens in U.N. organizations as an important objective, but this objective is not included in State's overall annual performance report prepared in response to the Government Performance and Results Act. The act requires agencies to pursue performance-based management, including strategic planning and goal-setting, that is results-oriented and measures performance. State does report annually to the Congress on efforts by international organizations to improve U.S. representation levels, but the report is limited to actions taken by the U.N. organizations and does not include the Department's own efforts. The annual report includes information on those agencies that have established geographic distribution formulas, as well as a few other organizations that are of particular interest to the United States due to the size of U.S. contributions and level of representation. State does not officially provide the report to the heads of U.N. agencies to press those organizations with persistent U.S. underrepresentation to respond with appropriate targeted strategies to improve levels of U.S. representation. A State official told us that while some State and U.S. mission officials use the Department's annual report to the Congress in discussions with U.N. agencies about underrepresentation, this practice does not occur consistently.

Interagency Coordination Is Largely Ad Hoc

Although State officials acknowledge that promoting U.S. representation at U.N. and other international organizations must be a collaborative effort between State and other federal agencies, coordination of U.S. governmentwide efforts over the last several years has largely been done on an informal, ad hoc basis. In a special report to State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs in August 1992, State's Office of Inspector General found a lack of understanding among U.S. agencies on what they can do to help with the recruitment effort. Accordingly, the Inspector General recommended that the Bureau develop memorandums of understanding between State and other U.S. government agencies to facilitate better cooperation, support, and effectiveness in recruitment. In its November 1994 response to the Inspector General's recommendations, the Bureau stated that this was an excellent recommendation and began to work with the various federal agencies to develop memorandums of

understanding with at least 13 of them. The memorandums were to have been completed by the end of 1994. However, when we asked State officials about them, they could not provide evidence that any memorandums were in place.

We found that U.S. governmentwide efforts to recruit and place Americans in specific areas within the U.N. system that are of particular importance to U.S. interests are done primarily on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis, such as when a key post critical to the United States needs to be filled. It appears that formal mechanisms to organize and coordinate U.S. government activities in the past have not worked without consistent high-level management attention and support. For instance, an Inter-agency Contact Group of working-level agency staff has not been active for many years. Instead, various U.S. government agencies, particularly those that deal regularly with international organizations, have staff assigned to serve as the liaison for international recruitment activities. These include, among others, staff from the Foreign Agricultural Service within Agriculture; the Bureau of International Labor Affairs within Labor; and the Office of International and Refugee Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). However, related activities within each of the U.S. agencies are often decentralized to several offices and units that work with international organizations on specific areas. Furthermore, staff assigned as liaisons typically have other duties and responsibilities, and they told us that they are unable to devote the attention necessary to address U.N. employment matters in a comprehensive, systematic way because of resource constraints and other limitations within their own departments. Nonetheless, on a specific area—in this case, food and agricultural issues—Agriculture has recently taken the initiative to reconstitute an informal, interagency international recruitment network, primarily for information-sharing purposes and to help identify qualified candidates for key vacancies.

U.S. Agencies Can Do More to Promote Details and Transfers of Federal Employees

Executive Order 11552 of August 24, 1970, calls on executive branch agencies to assist in and encourage details and transfers of federal employees to international organizations to the maximum extent possible and with due regard to the agencies' manpower requirements. According to U.S. agency officials, placing federal employees on details and transfers to international organizations can be an effective way to provide significant input on policy and technical issues of interest to the United States. In fiscal year 2000, 17 federal agencies had 165 employees on detail or transferred to the United Nations and other international organizations, according to State Department records. Of this total, the agencies with the

largest number of federal employees assigned to international organizations were: HHS, 59 employees; the State Department, 20; the Departments of Transportation and the Treasury, 18 each; Agriculture, 15; the Department of Energy, 6; and Labor, 4. An official from HHS attributed that Department's level of participation to the fact that the agency considers its contributions to international organizations an integral part of the Department's mission to combat diseases such as polio and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. According to this official, public health specialists in HHS vigorously vie for opportunities to gain international work experience, which they view to be not only meaningful and important but also career-building. However, several Americans we interviewed, particularly those from other federal agencies, suggested that executive agencies can do more to promote opportunities and provide incentives for work in international organizations and to help employees apply for these jobs.

Other Major Contributors Actively Promote U.N. Employment for Their Citizens

In 2000, the representation levels of other major contributors to the United Nations varied in the four organizations in our study that had formal geographic targets—the Secretariat, FAO, ILO, and WHO. The five countries for which we identified representation levels were Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Japan, which is the second largest contributor to the United Nations, was significantly underrepresented in each of the four organizations. Germany, the third largest contributor, was underrepresented in three organizations and equitably represented in one organization. Canada, France, and the United Kingdom were either equitably represented or overrepresented in the four organizations. For more information on the representation trends for these selected countries, see appendix IV.

Japan and Germany, which have higher representation targets because of their higher contributions, devote more resources toward achieving equitable representation than France, the United Kingdom, and Canada, which are within equitable levels or are overrepresented. For example, Germany has established formal mechanisms, including a high-level Office of the Coordinator for International Personnel, to organize and coordinate efforts to place its nationals in key positions within the U.N. system and other international organizations. Japan—which has historically been significantly underrepresented—has full-time staff at its mission in Geneva dedicated to promoting U.N. employment of Japanese nationals. The United States, like Japan and Germany, is generally underrepresented but is not as active as these two countries in promoting its citizens for U.N.

employment. As the largest contributor to the United Nations, the United States has higher representation targets to fill than Japan or Germany, but it takes a less active approach in assisting its citizens to gain U.N. employment. Ultimately, responsibility for hiring decisions and achieving equitable representation rests with U.N. officials. However, it does not appear that given the slow progress in improving U.S. representation over nearly 10 years, U.S. representation levels will significantly improve without changes in the United Nations' and United States' actions. For a more detailed presentation of selected member states' efforts to promote U.N. employment for their nationals, see appendix V.

Conclusions

The United Nations and its affiliated entities face the dual challenge of attracting and retaining staff who meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity while maintaining the international character of the organizations by ensuring equitable geographic balance in the workforce. Nevertheless, U.N. organizations have made slow progress in addressing U.S. concerns about underrepresentation, and except for the U.N. Secretariat in New York, the organizations with representation targets that we studied have not achieved equitable employment of Americans since 1992. Although the U.N. organizations are ultimately responsible for achieving fair geographic balance among its member countries, the State Department, in coordination with other U.S. agencies, plays a role in ensuring that the United States is equitably represented. U.N. organizations have not fully developed long-range workforce planning strategies, and neither State nor the U.N. agencies have formal recruiting and hiring action plans to improve U.S. representation in the U.N. system. Without these measures, the United States' ability to even maintain the number of Americans employed in the United Nations could be hampered. Regular planning sessions with human resources directors could help State identify areas in which to focus its recruitment of American candidates and ensure that U.S. levels of representation do not decline as a result of American retirements without corresponding increases in new hires. High-level State Department attention and intervention is needed to elevate the importance of this matter to the United States and to reemphasize the seriousness of this concern to State, U.S., and U.N. officials. Finally, sustained efforts and actions by State to facilitate employment of Americans for professional-level positions, as well as senior-level and policymaking positions, will be required to ensure progress toward the goal of equitable U.S. representation.

Recommendations

Because equitable representation of Americans employed at the U.N. organizations has been determined to be important to U.S. interests, we recommend that the Secretary of State:

- develop, with other U.S. government agencies, a comprehensive U.S. strategy for achieving equitable representation of Americans in U.N. employment that includes efforts to improve interagency coordination and specifies performance goals, time frames, and resource requirements, and incorporate these goals and progress achieving them into State's Annual Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report, respectively;
- work with human resources directors of U.N. organizations in which Americans are underrepresented or are close to being underrepresented, particularly in light of anticipated retirements in the next several years, to help ensure that long-range workforce planning efforts include measures targeted to achieve equitable U.S. representation within a specified time frame;
- develop guidelines that define State's goal of securing an equitable share of senior-level and policymaking posts, and use these guidelines to assess whether the United States is equitably represented in high-ranking positions in U.N. organizations; and
- provide heads of U.N. agencies, for their appropriate attention and action, with copies of State's annual report to the Congress on efforts by the United Nations and other international organizations to employ Americans.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of this report, State generally agreed with our findings and conclusions, and agreed with most of our recommendations. However, State disagreed that it should develop guidelines that define its goal for obtaining an equitable share of high-level positions for Americans and use these guidelines to help assess whether the United States is equitably represented. State said it should not develop separate guidelines for defining its goal of obtaining an equitable share of Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions but rather that it should focus on equitable representation at all levels. While we agree that State should be concerned about achieving equitable employment for Americans at all levels in U.N. organizations, we believe it is important to emphasize achieving an equitable share of senior-level and policymaking positions. We further believe that without guidelines defining equitable share, State lacks a mechanism for assessing whether its top recruitment priority—

equitable representation of Americans in high-level positions—is being achieved.

In addition, the Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs and officials from the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Labor who deal with international recruitment provided technical comments on this report, which we incorporated as appropriate. U.N. human resources offices also reviewed a draft of this report for technical accuracy. (State's written comments, along with our evaluation of them, are in app. IX.)

Scope and Methodology

To analyze trends in the overall representation levels of Americans and nationals of other selected countries and Americans in senior-level and policymaking U.N. positions, we performed various statistical analyses of personnel data provided by the State Department and the U.N. entities that fully cooperated with our review—the U.N. Secretariat and UNDP in New York; ILO, UNHCR, and WHO in Geneva; and FAO and WFP in Rome. These organizations represent about 60 percent of the professional staff in the U.N. system and have about 80 percent of the positions in the U.N. system that are subject to geographic distribution. We did not independently verify the accuracy of the data provided to us. In some cases, the data in the State Department's annual report to the Congress were not the same as data that the U.N. organizations provided to us. (For a detailed discussion of the statistical methods we used, see app. VIII.)

To assess U.N. efforts to employ nationals of countries that are underrepresented or close to becoming underrepresented, we reviewed various U.N. documents and met with the human resources directors at the headquarters of the U.N. entities we reviewed. In addition, we met with officials from the U.N. Joint Inspection Unit, the International Civil Service Commission, the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services, and the U.N. Board of Auditors. We also met with representatives of the Washington, D.C., liaison offices of FAO, ILO, UNHCR, WFP, and WHO.

To examine State's and other U.S. agencies' efforts and resources devoted to assisting the United Nations in achieving equitable U.S. representation, we met with State Department officials from the Bureau of International Organization Affairs and the U.S. missions in New York, Geneva, and Rome. We also spoke with officials from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture,

Labor, and Health and Human Services who deal with international recruitment.

To describe other member countries' activities to assist employing their nationals in the U.N. system, we met with representatives of the British, Canadian, French, German, and Japanese missions to the United Nations in New York, Geneva, and Rome.

In addition, we met with several American citizens employed in each of the U.N. organizations in our study to obtain their views about U.N. and U.S. efforts to recruit Americans.

We conducted our review from December 2000 to June 2001 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary, Senate Committee on Appropriations; the Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on International Relations; the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Asia, House Committee on International Relations; and the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations. We are also sending copies of this report to the Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State. Copies will be made available to others upon request.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me on (202) 512-4128. Other GAO contacts and staff acknowledgments are listed in appendix X.

Harold J. Johnson
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Methods Used by U.N. Organizations to Determine Representation Status of Member Countries

This appendix provides information on the methods that the U.N. Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labor Organization (ILO), and World Health Organization (WHO) used to calculate equitable representation targets for member countries and thus determine the representation status of each organization's member countries. The other organizations in our study—the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and World Food Program (WFP)—do not calculate or use equitable representation ranges to determine a country's representation status.

U.N. Secretariat

The Secretariat takes into consideration three factors—assessed contribution, membership, and population—in calculating the equitable representation targets for member countries. In determining the number of positions attributed to each of these factors, the Secretariat uses a base number as the total number of positions, rather than the actual number of filled positions. In 2000, the base number used was 2,600, while the number of filled positions subject to geographic distribution was 2,389. Table 7 shows the weight assigned to each of the three factors and the number of positions assigned to each factor when multiplied by the base number.

Table 7: Factors Used by the U.N. Secretariat in Calculating Geographic Targets

Factors used	Percentage of positions applied to each factor	(x) Base number	(=) Number of positions assigned to each factor
Assessed contribution	55%	2,600	1,430
Membership	40	2,600	1,040
Population	5	2,600	130

Source: U.N. Secretariat.

For each member country:

- The number of positions allocated for the assessed contribution factor (1,430) is multiplied by the member country's percentage assessment to the Secretariat.
- The number of positions allocated for the membership factor (1,040) is divided by the number of member states (189).

- The number of positions allocated for the population factor (130) is divided by the world population and multiplied by the member country's population.

For each country, the resulting numbers of positions attributed to each factor are added together to produce the midpoint of that country's equitable representation range. The upper and lower limits of each range are 15 percentage points above and below the midpoint, respectively, or a minimum of 4.8 positions from the midpoint. The minimum range for member countries is 1 to 14.

In 2000, the midpoint for the United States was 369, and the upper and lower limits of the U.S. range were 424 and 314, respectively. In 2000, there were 325 Americans in positions subject to geographic representation.

FAO

FAO determines each member country's representation status using a system that weighs the level of positions, rather than focusing on the number of positions targeted for each country. In this system, point values are assigned to grade levels, with the higher grades being worth more points. This system, therefore, attempts to measure a country's level of influence rather than just the number of positions it holds. Table 8 shows the point values that FAO assigns to each grade level.

Table 8: FAO Position-Weighting System

Grade	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1/D2	DDG/ADG[a]
Points	1	2	4	6	8	10	15

[a]Deputy Director-General and Assistant Director-General.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization.

A country's representation status is determined by dividing the number of points from the positions held by that country's nationals by the total number of points of all filled regular budget positions.[1] The resulting

[1]FAO uses the number of filled positions, rather than a base number, in determining the total number of points for the organization.

percentage then is compared with the country's equitable representation range, which is also expressed as a percentage.

In calculating the equitable representation targets for member countries, FAO takes into consideration only one factor—contribution. The contribution factor is used as follows:

- If a country contributes 10 percent or less of the budget, it is considered equitably represented if its representation ranges from 25 percent below to 50 percent above its contribution percentage.
- If a country contributes between 10 percent and 20 percent of the budget, it is considered equitably represented if its representation ranges from 25 percent below to 25 percent above its contribution percentage.
- If a country contributes more than 20 percent of the budget, it is considered equitably represented if its representation ranges from 25 percent below to 0 percent above its contribution percentage.

In 2000, the United States was in the third category, with a target representation range of 18.75 percent to 25 percent. The actual U.S. representation level was 12.5 percent.

ILO

ILO takes two factors into consideration—contribution and membership—in determining the equitable representation targets for member countries. For the membership factor, ILO uses an equitable range of one to two positions for countries that contribute 0.2 percent or less of the ILO budget. In 2000, 142 of ILO's member countries contributed 0.2 percent or less of the budget, and their total budget contribution was 4.03 percent. The number of positions set aside for these minimum contribution countries can vary from year to year, depending on the number of countries that fit the criteria.

For countries that contribute more than 0.2 percent of the budget, equitable geographic targets are determined by the contribution factor. For these countries there is one further differentiation:

- In 2000, for countries that contributed between 0.2 percent and 10 percent of the budget, a midpoint was calculated using the following formula:

Figure 3: ILO Formula for Determining a Country's Geographic Target

$$\frac{X}{99.95 - 4.03} \times (659 - 142)$$

X = the member country's assessed contribution

4.03 is the total contribution of the minimum-level contributors

659 is the total number of filled positions subject to geographic representation

142 is the number of minimum contributors

Source: International Labor Organization.

After the midpoint is calculated, the equitable range is obtained by adding and subtracting 25 percent from the midpoint.

- The formula presented above is also used for countries that contribute 10 percent or more of the budget. However, the number that is calculated using the formula becomes the maximum of the country's range. The minimum of the range is obtained by subtracting 25 percent from the maximum number.

Because the United States contributed 25 percent of the ILO budget in 2000, its geographic range was calculated using the latter method. The equitable range for the United States in 2000 was 101 to 135, and there were 87 American staff in geographically counted positions during that year.

WHO

WHO's method for determining member countries' representation status is based on the system used by the U.N. Secretariat, although there are some differences. As with the Secretariat, WHO uses three factors (contribution, membership, and population), with 55 percent of the positions being tied to the contribution factor, 40 percent tied to the membership factor, and 5 percent tied to the population factor. The midpoint for each country is obtained by adding the number of positions attributed to each of these factors. The minimum and maximum of the range are set by subtracting

and adding 15 percent to the midpoint.[2] Like the Secretariat, WHO also uses a base number for the total number of positions subject to geographic distribution rather than using the number of filled positions. In 2000, WHO used a base number of 1,450, while there were 1,138 filled positions subject to geographic distribution.

A major difference between the systems used by the Secretariat and WHO is that WHO includes positions financed by extrabudgetary resources as geographically counted positions. However, the contribution factor includes only contributions made to the regular budget, not extrabudgetary contributions.

The number of positions assigned to each factor was as follows:

- 580 positions were set aside for the membership factor (3.02) per country;
- 797.5 positions were set aside for the contribution factor (7.975 positions for each 1 percent contributed); and
- 72.5 positions were set aside for the population factor (0.012 positions for each 1 million of population).

The United States' equitable range was 174 to 237, and there were 152 American staff in positions subject to geographic distribution.

[2]WHO also stipulates that a country's range must be 0.1778 of the total number of positions more or less than the midpoint. In addition, the maximum of the range must be 0.51852 percent of the total number of positions.

U.S. Staffing Trends and Levels of Representation

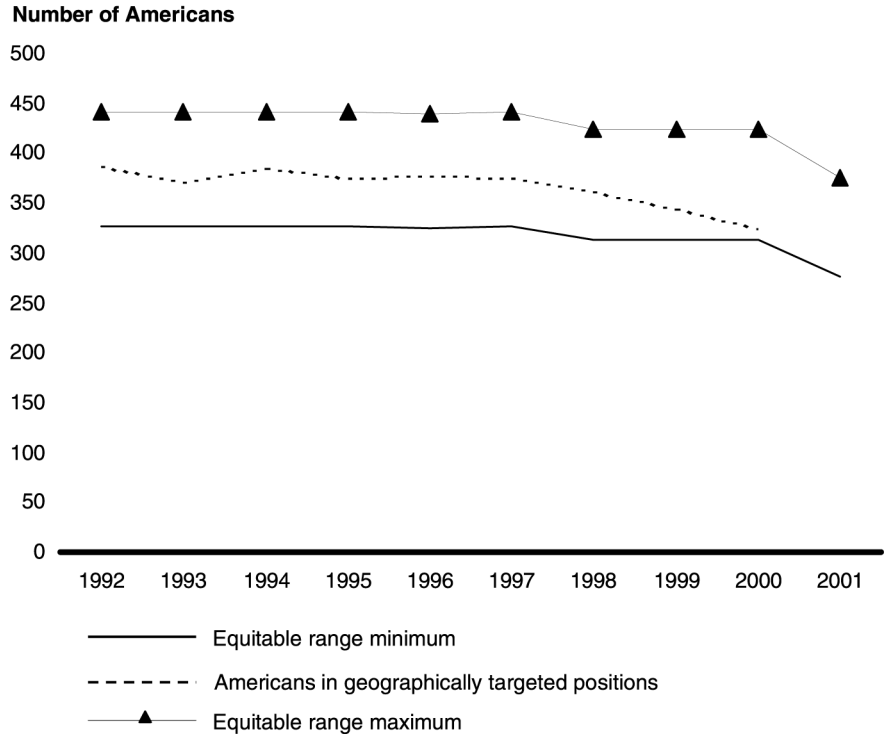
This appendix details the U.S. staffing situation at each of the seven U.N. organizations we examined—the U.N. Secretariat, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, and WFP.

U.N. Secretariat

Representation of Americans Within the Geographic Range

The Secretariat, located in New York, has met its targets for employing Americans each year from 1992 to 2000, and Americans are represented in senior-level and policymaking positions at a level commensurate with the average of selected major contributors relative to their contributions to the Secretariat. From 1992 through 1997, the number of Americans in geographically targeted positions was near the midpoint of the range, which the Secretariat describes as the desirable representation, until about 3 years ago when the number of Americans declined to the minimum portion of the range (see fig. 4). During this period, hiring rates did not compensate for the number of separations of Americans in the Secretariat. From 1992 through 2000, the total number of geographically targeted positions in the Secretariat decreased by more than 200 positions to about 2,400, representing about an 8.4 percent decline. The United States' assessed contribution to the Secretariat from 1998 through 2000 averaged 25 percent of total contributions. In 2001, the range for the United States was lowered as a result of the decrease in the U.S. assessment to 22 percent. Because of the lowered range, it is expected that in 2001 Americans will remain represented in the lower portion of the geographic range.

Figure 4: Trends in Overall U.S. Representation (1992-2000)[a] Compared With the Secretariat's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



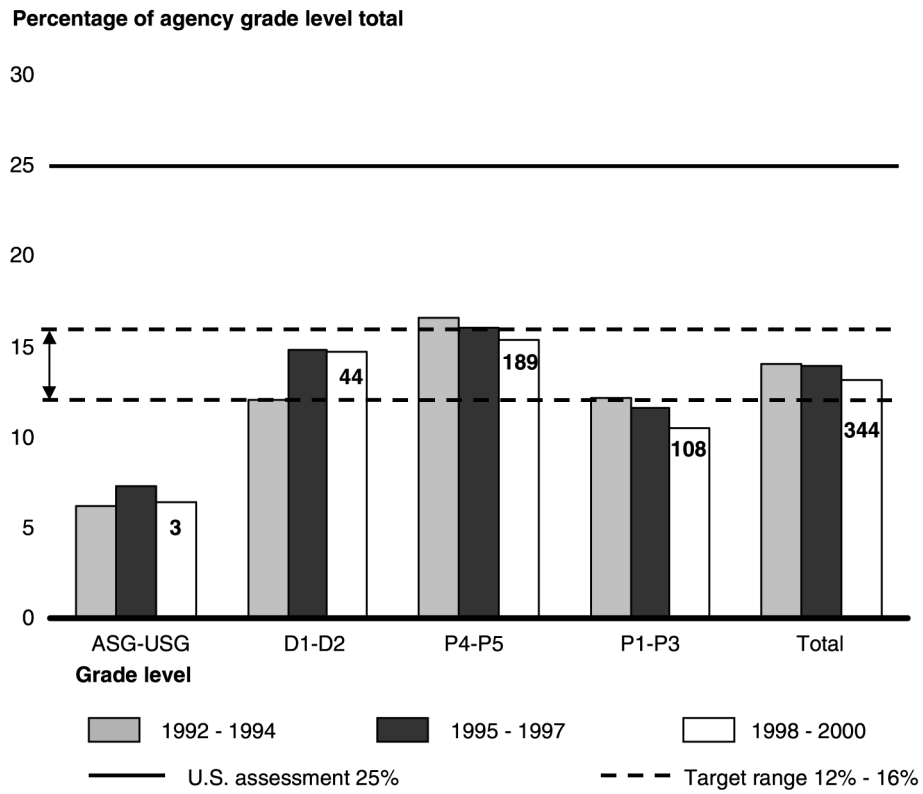
[a]The U.S. equitable range for 2001 was included to show the reduction of the range that resulted from the reduction in the U.S. assessment.

Source: GAO analysis of U.N. Secretariat data.

Americans are represented in senior-level and policymaking positions at a level commensurate with the average for selected major contributors relative to their contributions to the Secretariat. Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking (Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and Under Secretary-General (USG)) positions and senior-level (D1-D2) positions for the periods ending 1994, 1997, and 2000 shows Americans holding 11.5 percent, 14 percent, and 13.6 percent of these positions, respectively. (Fig. 5 provides information, by grade category, on the percentage of the total number of positions held by Americans. The period covered is from 1992 to 2000, with each bar representing staffing grade information as an average over a separate 3-year period between 1992 and 2000. The number in the 1998 to 2000 bar is the average annual number of staff positions during 1998 to 2000 for each grade level.) For the period of

1998 to 2000, the United States had its highest representation at grade levels equivalent to middle management positions (P4-P5 equivalencies).

Figure 5: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1992-2000) Compared With the Secretariat's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



Source: GAO analysis of U.N. Secretariat data.

Table 9 shows the financial contributions and senior-level and policymaking representation of the United States and four other selected countries with regard to the Secretariat. This table also shows the ratio of each country's representation to its assessment, and the average ratio for the four other selected countries. As shown in table 9, the U.S. representation-to-assessment ratio is approximate to the average ratio for the four selected countries.

Table 9: U.N. Secretariat - Representation in Senior and Policymaking Levels and Financial Assessments for Selected Major Contributors (1998-2000)

Country	Assessment (percent)	Percentage of representation in high-level positions	Ratio of high-level positions to assessments
United States	25.0%	13.6%	0.55
Average for four countries			0.54
Japan	19.5	2.0	0.10
Germany	9.8	3.7	0.38
France	6.5	4.5	0.69
United Kingdom	5.1	4.9	0.97

Source: GAO analysis of U.N. Secretariat data.

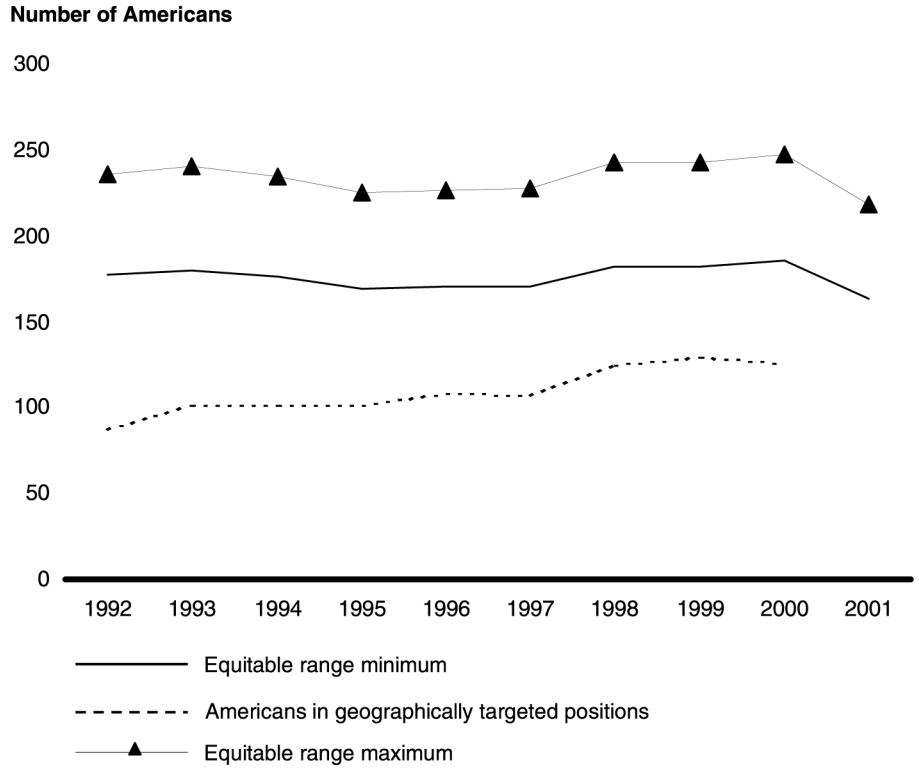
FAO

Some Gains Made, but Americans Are Still Significantly Underrepresented Overall

Although modest progress in employing Americans has been made in recent years at FAO, headquartered in Rome, Americans continue to be significantly underrepresented overall and are represented in senior and policymaking positions at levels that are below the average for four major contributors, given their contribution to FAO. (Fig. 6 provides information on the trends in overall U.S. representation compared with FAO's geographic representation range for the United States.) Since 1992, FAO has increased its staff by 42 to 992, which is equivalent to an annual average growth rate of 0.5 percent compared with an annual average growth rate of 4.5 percent for the United States. During this period, the number of Americans in geographically targeted positions increased by 38 to 126. Because FAO uses a position-weighting system to calculate each member country's representation percentage, the equitable ranges were derived using this weighting system. The United States' assessed contribution to FAO from 1998 through 2000 averaged 25 percent of total contributions. Although the minimum range for the United States decreased in 2001 as a result in the decrease in the U.S. assessment,[1] the United States is still expected to remain significantly below the minimum range. In contrast to the high level of underrepresentation of Americans, about 80 countries were overrepresented in FAO over the last 3 years. (Refer to app. III for a list of the top five overrepresented countries.)

[1]FAO adopted the United Nations' changes to its assessment rates for member countries, which took effect on January 1, 2001.

Figure 6: Trends in Overall U.S. Representation (1992-2000)[a] Compared With FAO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



[a]The U.S. equitable range for 2001 was included to show the reduction of the range that resulted from the reduction in the U.S. assessment.

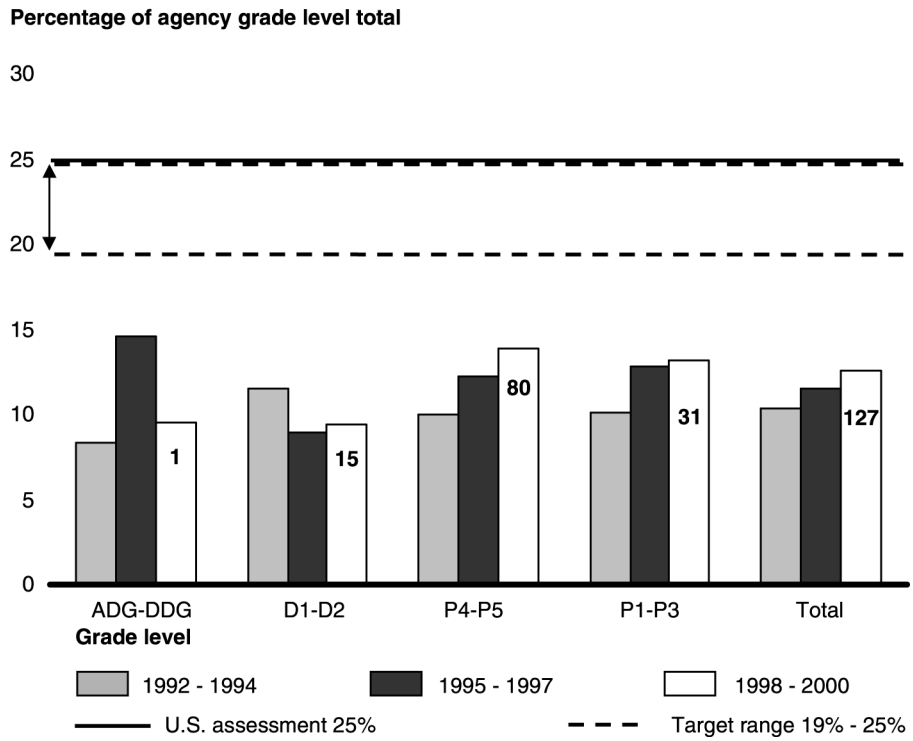
Source: GAO analysis of FAO data.

Americans are represented in senior and policymaking positions at levels that are below the average of four major contributors, given their contribution to FAO. (Fig. 7 provides information, by grade category, on the percentage of the total number of positions held by Americans.[2] The number in the 1998 through 2000 bar is the average annual number of staff positions during 1998 through 2000 for each grade level.) Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking positions—the Assistant Director-General (ADG) and the Deputy Director-General (DDG)—and

[2]The period covered in figure 6 is from 1992 to 2000, with each bar representing staffing grade information as an average over a separate 3-year period between 1992 and 2000.

senior-level positions for the periods ending 1994, 1997, and 2000 shows that Americans held 11.1 percent, 9.5 percent, and 9.4 percent of these positions, respectively.

Figure 7: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1992–2000) Compared With FAO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



Source: GAO analysis of FAO data.

Table 10 shows the financial contributions and senior-level and policymaking representation of the United States and four other selected countries with regard to FAO. This table also shows the ratio of each country's representation to its assessment and the average ratio for the four other selected countries. As shown in table 10, the U.S. representation-to-assessment ratio is below the average ratio for the four selected countries.

Table 10: FAO - Representation in Senior and Policymaking Levels and Financial Assessments for Selected Major Contributors (1998-2000)

Country	Assessment (percent)	Percentage of representation in high-level positions	Ratio of high-level positions to assessments
United States	25.0%	9.4%	0.38
Average for four countries			0.76
Japan	19.2	2.8	0.14
Germany	9.8	5.2	0.53
France	6.7	9.9	1.48
United Kingdom	5.3	4.8	0.90

Source: GAO analysis of FAO data.

ILO

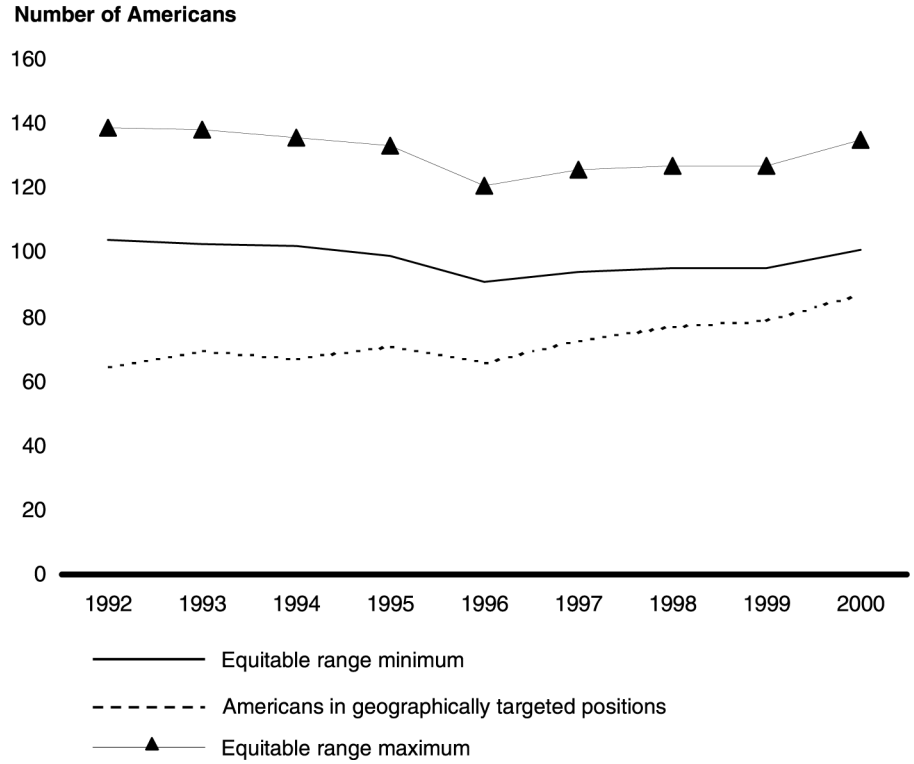
Overall Progress Made, but Senior-Level and Policymaking Positions Have Declined

Progress toward achieving equitable representation of Americans has been made at ILO, located in Geneva, where the United States has been underrepresented during the period under review, 1992 to 2000. Nonetheless, U.S. representation in high-ranking positions has declined. Americans continue to be underrepresented overall and are represented in senior-level and policymaking positions at levels that are below the average of four major contributors given their contribution. (Fig. 8 provides information on the trends in overall U.S. representation from 1992 to 2000, compared with ILO's geographic representation range for the United States.) Overall, since 1992, geographic positions in ILO have increased by 5 to 659. With the average annual growth rate for the United States (about 3 percent) exceeding the ILO's (about -0.3 percent),[3] the number of Americans in geographic positions has increased and accordingly brought the United States closer to its minimum geographic range in 2000. By contrast with historical U.S. underrepresentation, 45 member states are overrepresented. (Refer to app. III for a list of the top five overrepresented countries.) The United States' assessed contribution to ILO from 1998 to

[3]Annual average growth rates are calculated using ordinary least square regressions.

2000 averaged 25 percent of total contributions. Beginning in January 2002, the geographic representation range for the United States is expected to be lowered, from 101 through 135 to 89 through 119 positions, as a result of the decrease in the U.S. assessment to 22 percent effective in the next biennium.

Figure 8: Trends in Overall U.S. Representation (1992-2000) Compared With ILO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target

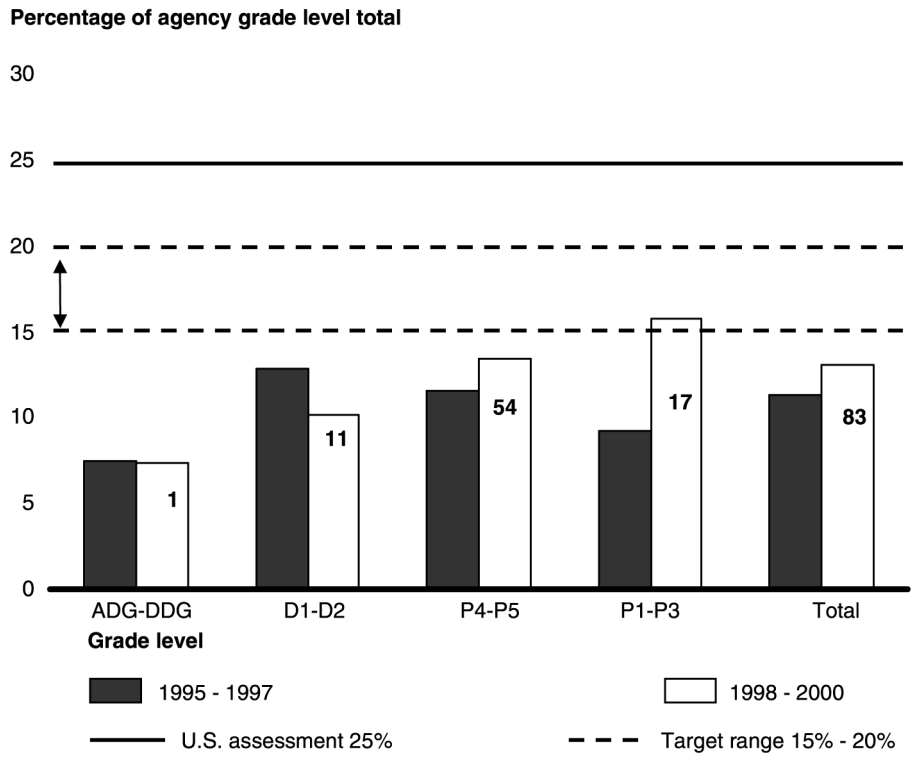


Source: GAO analysis of ILO data.

U.S. representation in senior levels (D1-D2) has declined and U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions (ADG-DDG) is below that of the average of four major contributors given their contribution. (Fig. 9 provides information, by grade category, on the percentages of the total number of positions held by Americans. The period covered is from 1995 to 2000, with each bar representing staffing grade information as an average over a 3-year period.) Combining the

percentages of Americans in policymaking positions and senior-level positions for the periods ending 1997 and 2000 shows Americans holding 12.1 percent and 9.7 percent of these positions, respectively.

Figure 9: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1995-2000) Compared With ILO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



Source: GAO analysis of ILO data.

Table 11 shows the financial contributions and senior-level and policymaking representation of the United States and four other selected countries with regard to ILO. This table also shows the ratio of each country's representation to its assessment and the average ratio for the four other selected countries. As shown in this table, the U.S. representation-to-assessment ratio is below the average ratio for the four selected countries.

Table 11: ILO - Representation in Senior and Policymaking Levels and Financial Assessments for Selected Major Contributors (1998-2000)

Country	Assessment (percent)	Percentage of representation in high-level positions	Ratio of high-level positions to assessments
United States	25.0%	9.7%	0.39
Average for four countries			1.03
Japan	18.5	4.7	0.26
Germany	9.4	8.4	0.89
France	6.4	10.0	1.57
United Kingdom	5.1	7.2	1.42

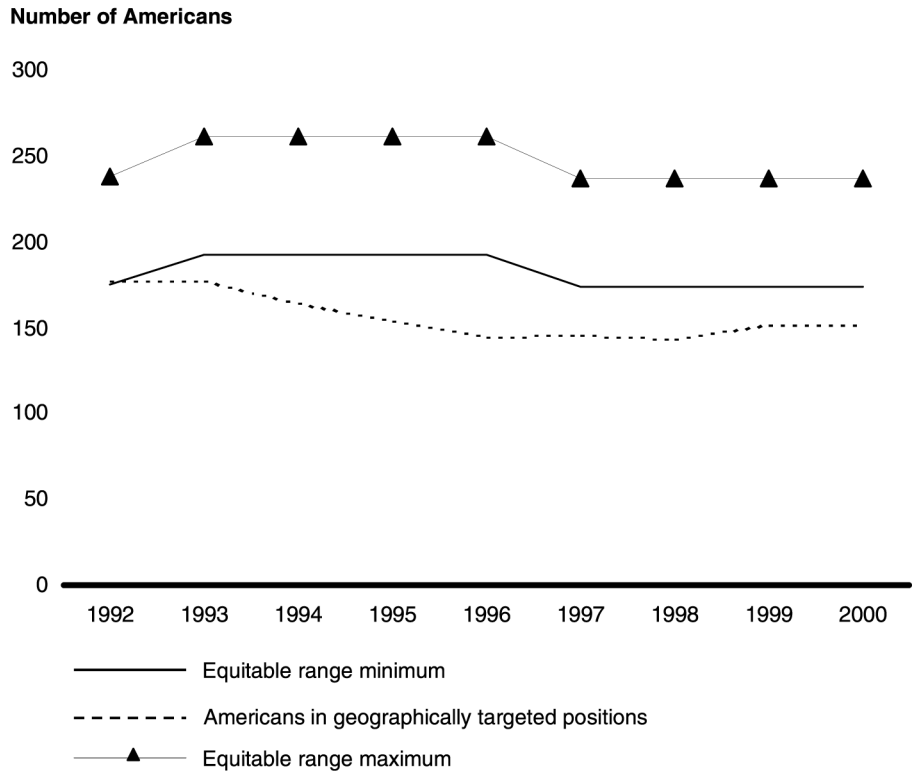
Source: GAO analysis of ILO data.

WHO

Americans Remain Underrepresented; Top-Level Positions Have Declined

WHO, based in Geneva, continues to have Americans represented below the equitable geographic targets for the United States, which has been underrepresented there since 1993. In addition, there has been a decline in policymaking positions, and combined U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions is below the average of the four major contributors, given their contributions. (Fig. 10 provides information on the trends in overall U.S. representation levels from 1992 to 2000 compared with WHO's geographic representation range for the United States.) In 1992, U.S. representation was at the minimum level of the equitable range. However, since that time, there have been declines in the level of U.S. representation; in 2000, the United States was underrepresented. In contrast to U.S. underrepresentation at WHO, 22 countries were overrepresented in 2000. (Refer to app. III for a list of the top five overrepresented countries.) By and large, from 1992 to 2000, the total number of geographic positions decreased by 174, or 13 percent, to 1,138, for WHO, and similarly the number of geographic positions filled by Americans declined by 14 percent. In 2001, the U.S. assessment decreased from 25 percent to 22 percent, and accordingly, the geographic target for the United States will be reduced for 2002.

Figure 10: Trends in Overall U.S. Representation (1992-2000) Compared With WHO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target

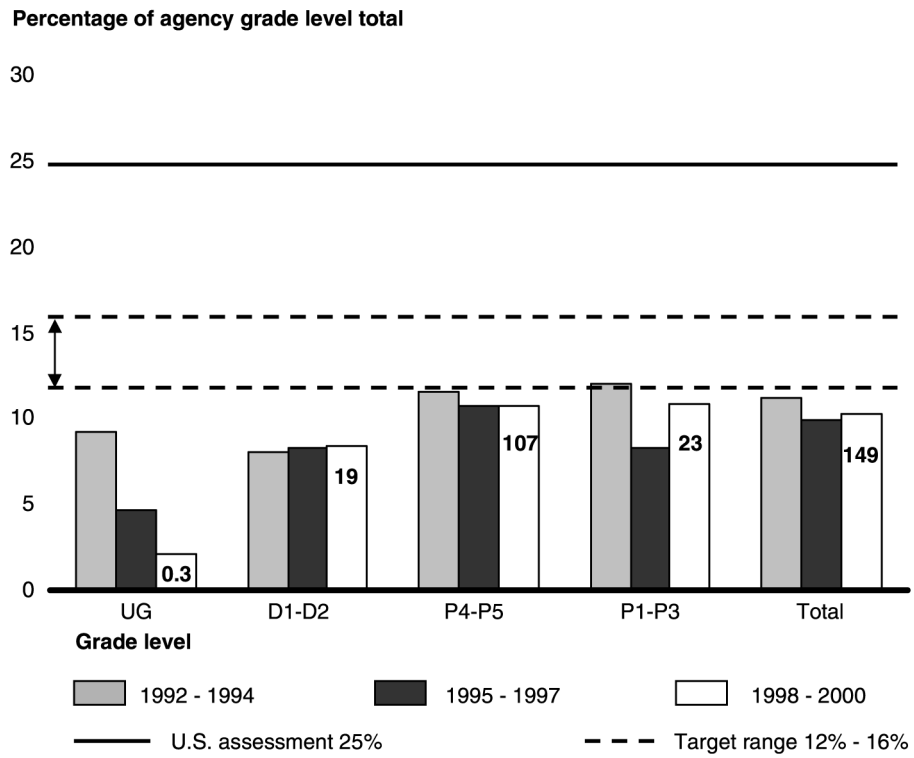


Source: GAO analysis of WHO data.

There has been a decrease in U.S. representation at the top policymaking positions (Ungraded (UG) is equivalent to the ASG and USG positions) and U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions is below the average for four of WHO's major contributors, given their contribution level. (Fig. 11 provides information, by grade category, on trends in U.S. representation by grade, compared with WHO's U.S. geographic representation target. The time period covered is from 1992 through 2000, with each bar representing staffing grade information as an average over a 3-year period.) While the percentage of Americans in D1 to D2 positions has been relatively constant from 1992 through 2000, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of Americans in policymaking positions. The most recent year that an American held a top-ranking position in WHO was in 1998. Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking and senior-level positions for the periods ending 1994, 1997,

and 2000 shows Americans holding 8.1 percent, 8.0 percent, and 8.0 percent of these positions, respectively.

Figure 11: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1992-2000) Compared With WHO's U.S. Geographic Representation Target



Source: GAO analysis of WHO data.

Table 12 shows the financial contributions and senior-level and policymaking representation of the United States and four other selected countries with regard to WHO. This table also shows the ratio of each country's representation to its assessment, and the average ratio for the four selected countries. As shown in table 12, the U.S. representation-to-assessment ratio is below the average ratio of the four selected countries.

Table 12: WHO - Representation in Senior and Policymaking Levels and Financial Assessments for Selected Major Contributors (1998-2000)

Country	Assessment (percent)	Percentage of representation in high-level positions	Ratio of high-level positions to assessments
United States	25.0%	8.0%	0.32
Average for four countries			0.44
Japan	18.6	1.9	0.10
Germany	9.5	3.3	0.35
France	6.5	3.4	0.53
United Kingdom	5.1	4.0	0.78

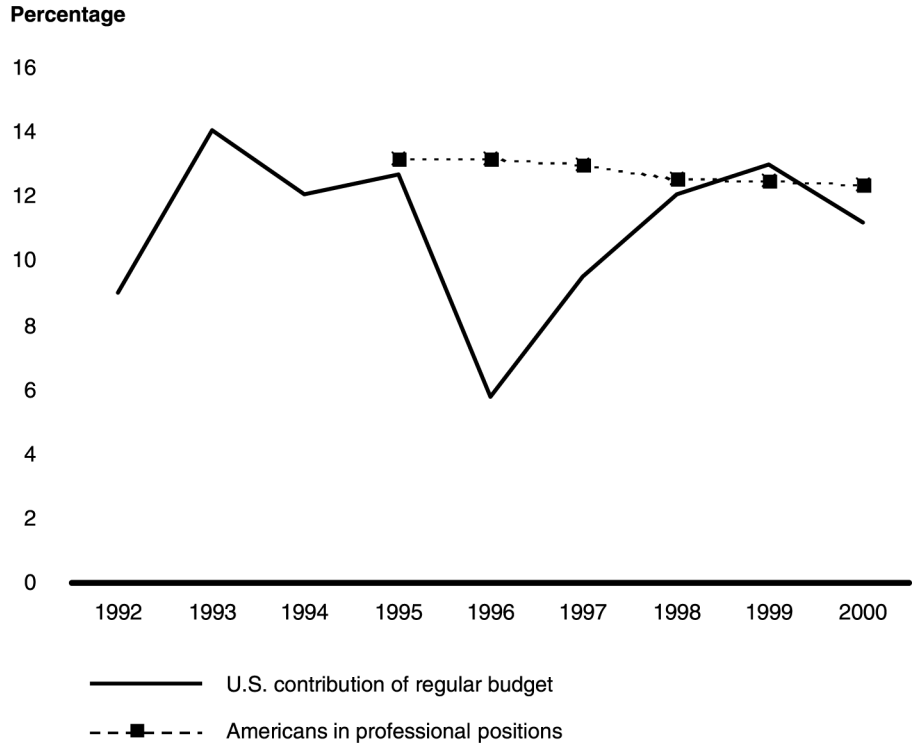
Source: GAO analysis of WHO data.

UNDP

Americans Appear to Be Equitably Represented Overall

The United States appears to be equitably represented at UNDP. Because UNDP, headquartered in New York, does not have a geographic representation target for the United States, we did not have an established criterion with which to assess U.S. representation there. However, when comparing U.S. representation with U.S. contributions to UNDP, from 1995 to 2000, the U.S. representation percentage at UNDP was higher than the U.S. contribution percentage for most of these years. As shown in figure 12, from 1995 to 2000, the percentage of Americans in professional positions remained relatively constant, declining slightly. Over the broader 9-year period, the U.S. contribution to UNDP varied, ranging from a high of 14 percent of the budget in 1993 to a low of 6 percent in 1996.

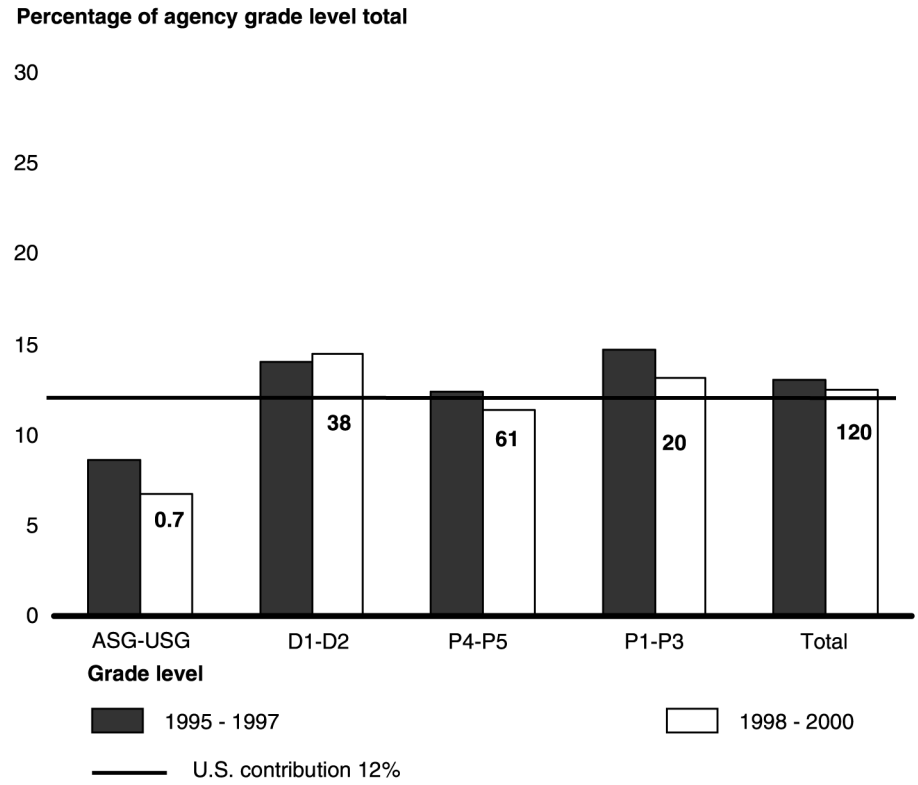
Figure 12: Trends in U.S. Contributions and Percentage of American Professional Staff at UNDP (1992-2000)



Source: GAO analysis of UNDP data.

Figure 13 provides information, by grade category, on the percentage of the total number of positions held by Americans and presents this information as a 3-year average. The percentage of Americans in senior-level positions (D1-D2) and lower level professional positions (P1-P3) remained close to 14 percent throughout the period we covered.

Figure 13: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1995-2000) Compared With UNDP's U.S. Contribution



Source: GAO analysis of UNDP data.

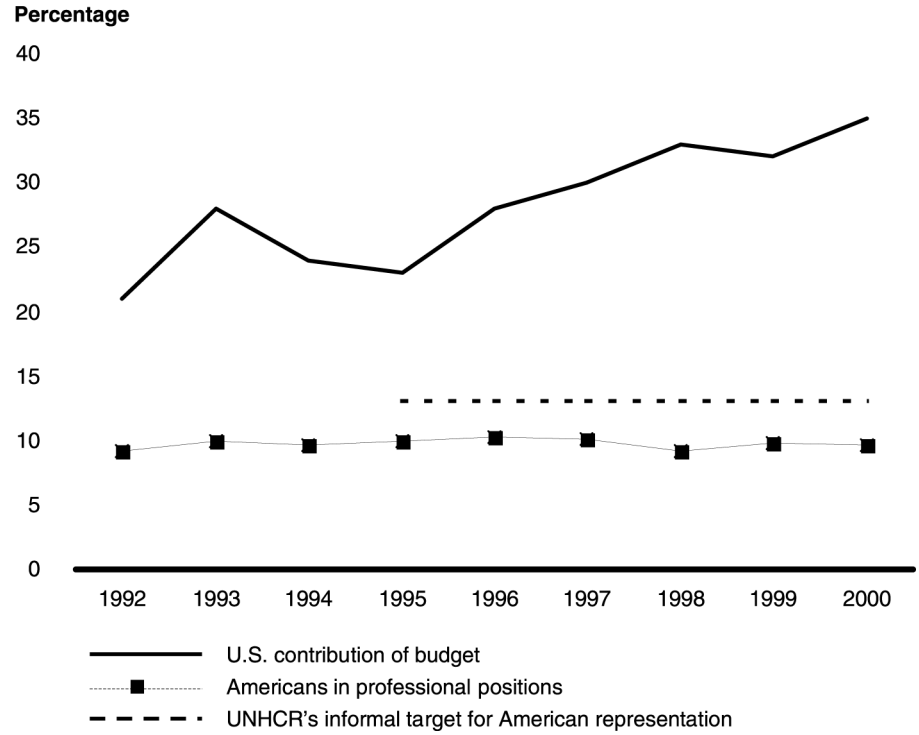
Although an American held the top position at UNDP from 1993 through 1999, beginning in 2000, no Americans were represented in policymaking positions (equivalent to ASG and USG). Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking and senior-level positions for the periods ending 1997 and 2000 shows Americans holding 13.9 percent and 14.2 percent of these positions, respectively.

UNHCR

Americans Continue to Be Underrepresented

Overall, Americans have been underrepresented at UNHCR. Moreover, little progress has been made in hiring Americans. Because voluntary contributions by member states provide the funding for UNHCR, it does not have formal targets for achieving equitable geographic representation of the nationals of its member states. However, since 1995, UNHCR has had an informal target of 13 percent of its international professional positions for the United States, from which it received about one-third of its resources over the last 3 years. (Refer to fig. 14 for the trend in the level of representation of Americans.) Despite the existence of this informal target, UNHCR has not come close to meeting it, and, for almost a decade, the percentage of Americans employed by UNHCR compared with the total of its international professional positions has not improved. During 1992 through 2000, UNHCR staffing levels have grown by 380 to 1,159, an annual growth rate of 4.1 percent. The annual average growth rate for the United States has been virtually the same at 4.3 percent.

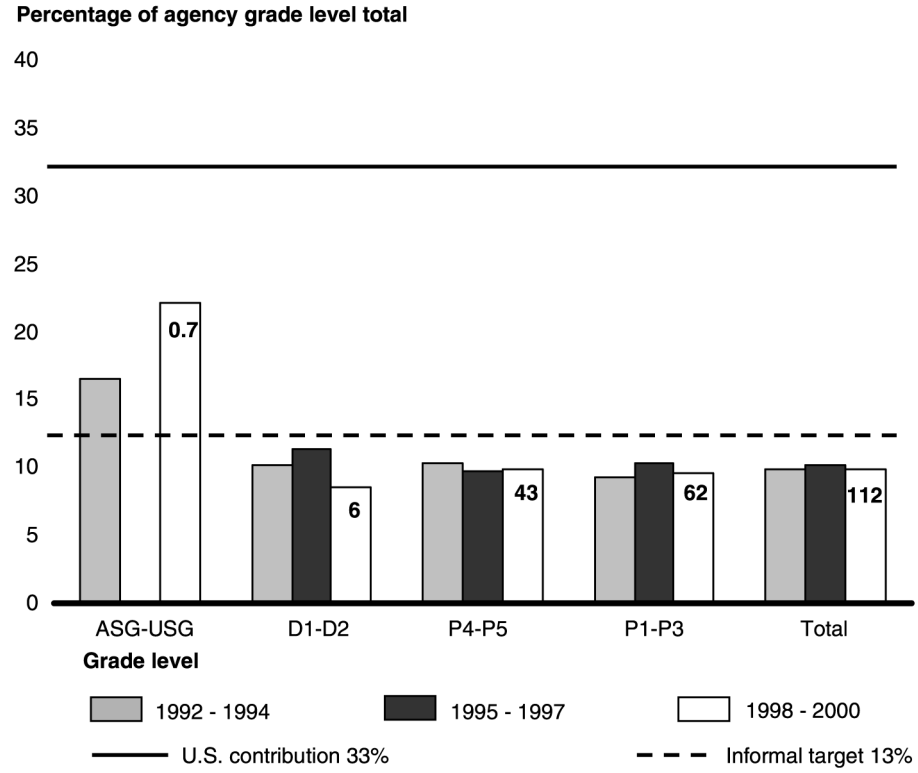
Figure 14: Trends in U.S. Contributions and Informal Targets for Americans and Percentage of U.S. Professional Staff at UNHCR (1992-2000)



Source: GAO analysis of UNHCR data.

For the period 1993 to 1998, not one American was at the policymaking level, although subsequently, an American was hired for one of these three high-ranking positions at UNHCR. (Refer to fig. 15, which provides information, by grade category, for the percentage of the total number of positions held by Americans and presents this information as a 3-year average.) Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking positions (High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, and Assistant High Commissioner) and senior-level positions for the periods ending 1994, 1997, and 2000 shows Americans holding 10.6 percent, 10.8 percent, and 9.2 percent of these positions, respectively.

Figure 15: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1992-2000) Compared With U.S. Contributions and UNHCR's Informal Geographic Target for the United States



Source: GAO analysis of UNHCR data.

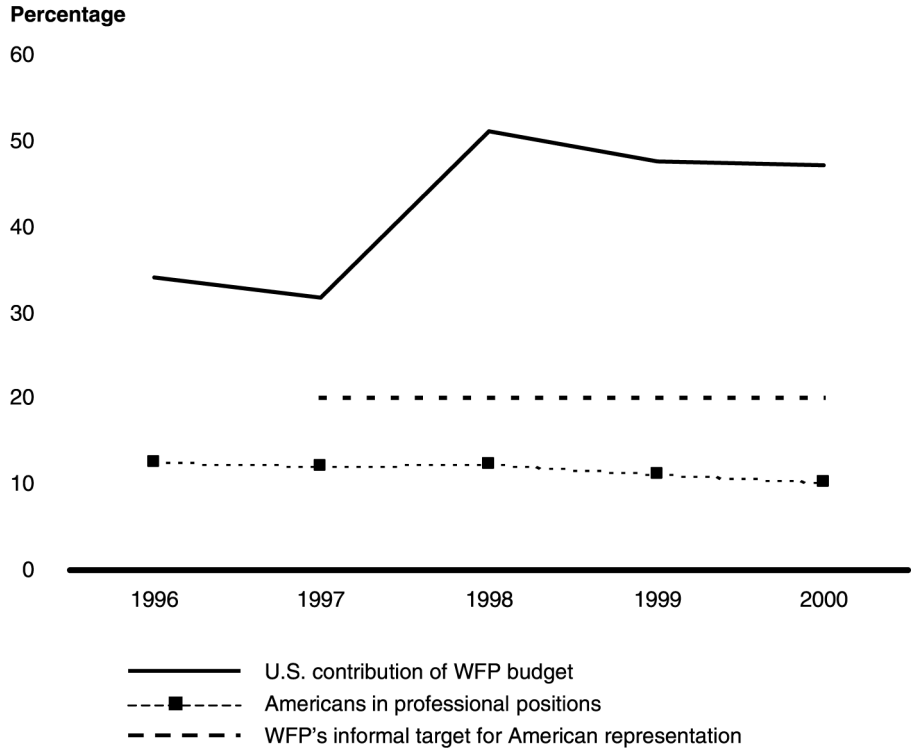
WFP

American Representation Is Below Informal Target

Americans have been underrepresented at WFP, located in Rome, but gains have been made in hiring more Americans in senior-level and policymaking positions. Because voluntary contributions by member states provide the funding for WFP, it does not have formal targets for achieving equitable geographic representation of its member states. However, in 1997, WFP established informal targets for donor countries in order to address an imbalance in the representation levels between donor countries and program countries. Accordingly, WFP set an informal target of 20 percent of its international professional positions for the United States from which it received almost one-half of its resources over the last 3 years.[4] Despite establishing an informal target in 1997, the percentage of Americans employed as international professional staff has not improved. (Refer to fig. 16, which presents data on U.S. contributions, percentage of Americans, and the informal target for the United States.) From 1996 through 2000, annual employment growth rates for WFP and the United States were 10.5 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively, with the size of WFP's international staff increasing by 255 positions to 831.

[4]U.S. contributions to WFP in 2000 included food totaling $796 million. In addition, under its full cost recovery system, WFP requires each donor to cover direct and indirect costs such as shipping and distribution. U.S. contributions for WFP's costs come from various sources, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of State.

Figure 16: Trends in U.S. Contributions and Informal Targets for Americans and Percentage of U.S. Professional Staff at WFP (1996-2000)

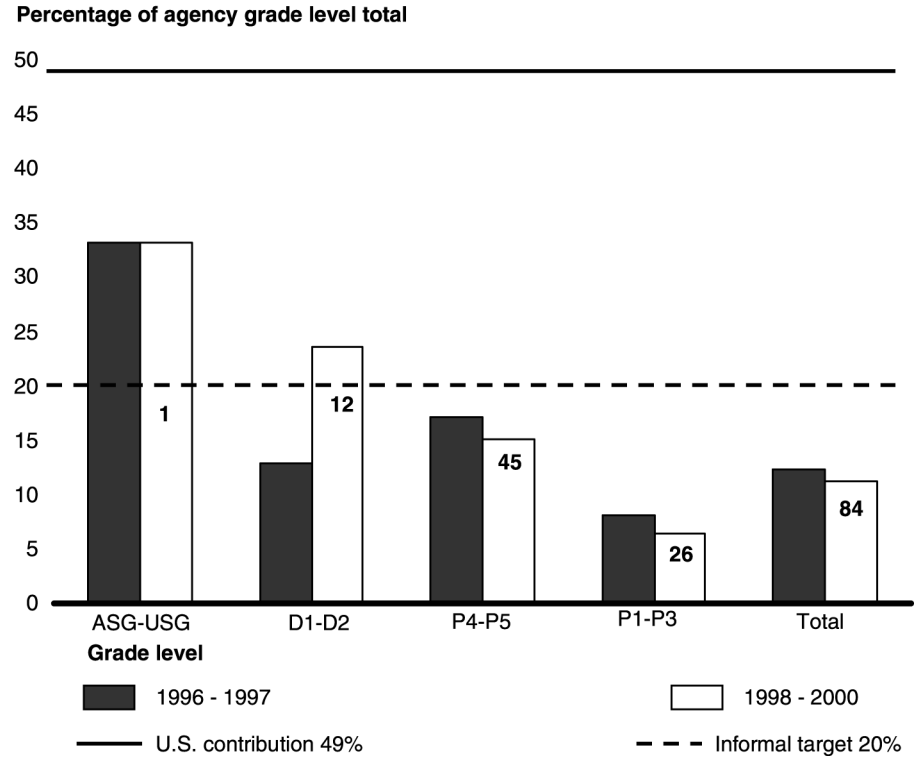


Source: GAO analysis of WFP data.

WFP has made progress in hiring Americans in senior-level (D1-D2) positions since 1996. (Fig. 17 provides information, by grade category, on the percentage of the total number of positions held by Americans.)[5] Combining the percentages of Americans in policymaking positions (equivalent to ASG and USG) and senior-level positions for the periods ending 1997 and 2000 shows Americans holding 14.1 percent and 24.1 percent of these positions, respectively.

[5]The period covered is from 1996 to 2000, with the first bar representing an average for 1996 and 1997 and the second bar representing an average for the 3 years 1998 through 2000.

Figure 17: Trends in U.S. Representation by Grade (1996-2000) Compared With U.S. Contributions and WFP's Informal Geographic Target for the United States



Source: GAO analysis of WFP data

Countries That Are Overrepresented in the U.N. Secretariat, FAO, ILO, and WHO

For each organization, the top five overrepresented countries for 1998 to 2000 are listed on the basis of the number of staff exceeding the maximum of the country's equitable range.[1] The total numbers of overrepresented countries at each organization are also listed for the years 1998 to 2000. (See tables 13-20.)

The use of a base number, rather than actual employment figures, to calculate target ranges may tend to reduce the number of countries that are classified as underrepresented. The larger upper targets for the Secretariat and WHO may partially explain why they have fewer overrepresented countries than FAO and ILO (see app. VIII).

[1]Because FAO uses percentages rather than numbers to present each country's range and representation status, the top five overrepresented countries at FAO are calculated in terms of the percentage above the country's maximum percentage.

Table 13: U.N. Secretariat - Top Five Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year/Ranking	Country	Staff	Equitable range	Number of staff exceeding range maximum
2000				
1	Russia	119	19 - 29	90
2	Philippines	56	4 - 14	42
3	Chile	31	3 - 14	17
4	Thailand	27	5 - 14	13
5	Pakistan	20	5 - 14	6
1999				
1	Russia	122	25 - 35	87
2	Philippines	61	4 - 14	47
3	Chile	32	3 - 14	18
4	Thailand	27	5 - 14	13
5	Ethiopia	21	2 - 14	7
1998				
1	Russia	128	43 - 58	70
2	Philippines	66	4 - 14	52
3	Chile	29	3 - 14	15
4	Thailand	27	4 - 14	13
5	Ethiopia	23	2 - 14	9

Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. data.

Table 14: U.N. Secretariat - Number of Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year	Number of overrepresented countries
2000	14
1999	13
1998	13

Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. data.

Table 15: FAO - Top Five Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year/Ranking	Country	Staff representation percentage[a]	Equitable range[a]	Staff percentage exceeding range maximum[a]
2000				
1	Morocco	1.23	.03-.06	1.17
2	Senegal	.781	0-.01	.771
3	India	1.216	.23-.45	.766
4	Cameroon	.721	.01-.02	.701
5	Tunisia	.721	.02-.04	.681
1999				
1	India	1.451	.23-.45	1.001
2	Morocco	.978	.03-.06	.918
3	Cameroon	.886	.01-.02	.866
4	Belgium	2.52	.84-1.68	.84
5	Tunisia	.825	.02-.04	.785
1998				
1	India	1.68	.25-.5	1.18
2	Belgium	2.769	.81-1.62	1.149
3	Senegal	.969	.01-.02	.949
4	Tunisia	.969	.02-.05	.919
5	Cameroon	.878	.01-.02	.858

[a]In view of FAO's position-weighting formula, the top five overrepresented countries are expressed in terms of the percentage, rather than the number of positions, above the country's maximum equitable representation range.

Source: GAO analysis based on FAO data.

Table 16: FAO – Number of Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year	Number of overrepresented countries
2000	85
1999	82
1998	72

Source: GAO analysis based on FAO data.

Table 17: ILO - Top Five Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year/Ranking	Country	Staff	Equitable range	Number of staff exceeding range maximum
2000				
1	Russia	23	4-7	16
2	India	11	1-2	9
3	Australia	18	6-10	8
4	Chile	8	1-2	6
4	Malaysia	8	1-2	6
1999				
1	Russia	23	6-9	14
2	India	10	1-2	8
3	Netherlands	16	6-10	6
3	Australia	15	6-9	6
3	Chile	8	1-2	6
1998				
1	India	9	1-2	7
2	Netherlands	16	6-10	6
2	Australia	15	6-9	6
3	Belgium	11	4-6	5
3	Malaysia	7	1-2	5
3	Ghana	7	1-2	5

Source: GAO analysis based on ILO data.

Table 18: ILO - Number of Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year	Number of overrepresented countries
2000	45
1999	48
1998	49

Source: GAO analysis based on ILO data.

Table 19: WHO - Top Five Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year/Ranking	Country	Staff	Equitable range	Number of staff exceeding range maximum
2000				
1	Canada	40	21 - 29	11
2	Russia	26	10 - 16	10
3	Netherlands	28	13 - 19	9
4	United Kingdom	58	37 - 51	7
4	Brazil	27	14 - 20	7
4	Philippines	15	1 - 8	7
4	Ghana	15	1 - 8	7
1999				
1	Philippines	16	1 - 8	8
2	Canada	39	23 - 32	7
2	Brazil	28	15 - 21	7
3	Belgium	19	8 - 14	5
3	Ghana	13	1- 8	5
1998				
1	Philippines	13	1 - 8	5
2	Canada	36	23 - 32	4
2	Brazil	25	15 - 21	4
2	Netherlands	23	13 -19	4
2	Ghana	12	1 - 8	4
2	Congo	12	1 - 8	4

Source: GAO analysis based on WHO data.

Table 20: WHO - Number of Overrepresented Countries (1998-2000)

Year	Number of overrepresented countries
2000	22
1999	14
1998	12

Source: GAO analysis based on WHO data.

Staffing Trends for Selected Other Countries in Specific U.N. Organizations

Figures 17 to 22 provide information on trends in staffing levels for selected countries at the seven U.N. organizations we studied—the U.N. Secretariat, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, and WFP. The selected countries are Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Canada, which are all major contributors. We also present combined staffing data for the European Union countries. The figures provide information on the trends in each country's total staff compared with its geographic target and contribution to the U.N. organization, as well as the trends in that country's representation at different grade levels. The grade level groupings used in the figures are P1 to P3 (entry-level and mid-level professionals, equivalent to GS-9 to GS-13); P4 to P5 (mid-level professionals, equivalent to GS-13 to GS-15); D1 to D2 (equivalent to Senior Executive Service positions); and Assistant Secretary-General to Under Secretary-General (ASG-USG) (policymaking positions).[1]

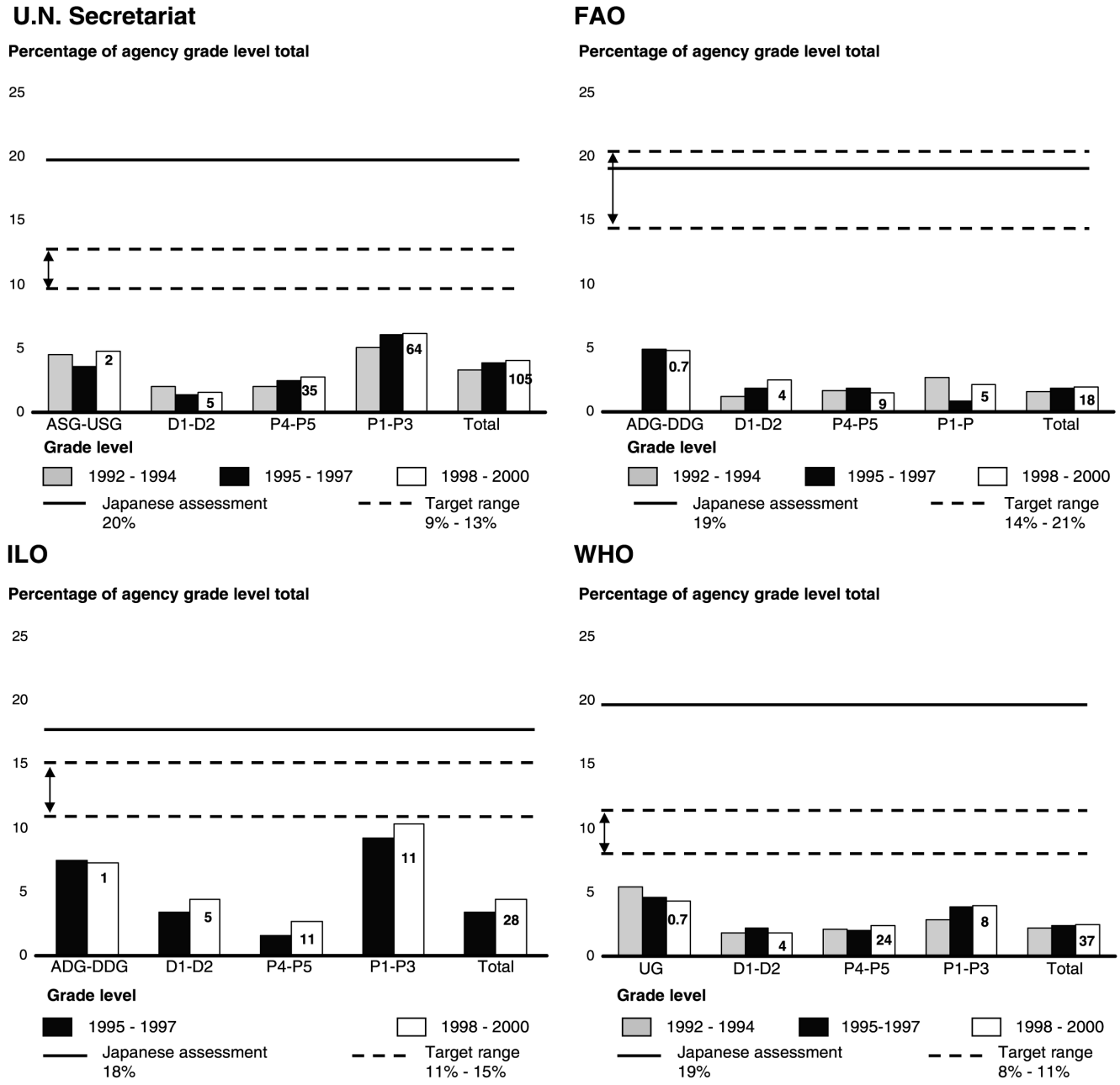
In the figures, grade level employment percentages are presented as 3-year averages for the non-overlapping periods 1992 to 1994, 1995 to 1997, and 1998 to 2000.[2] The numbers in the 1998 to 2000 bars are the 3-year average of the number of nationals employed at the respective U.N. organization for the designated grade levels. The line that represents a country's financial assessment or contribution percentage share is a 3-year average for 1998 to 2000.[3] Similarly, the target range is a 3-year average for 1998 to 2000.

[1]FAO and ILO use the titles Assistant Director-General and Deputy Director-General (ADG-DDG), which are equivalent to the ASG-USG positions. Staffing data provided by WHO labeled these positions as Ungraded (UG), which are also equivalent to ASG-USG positions.

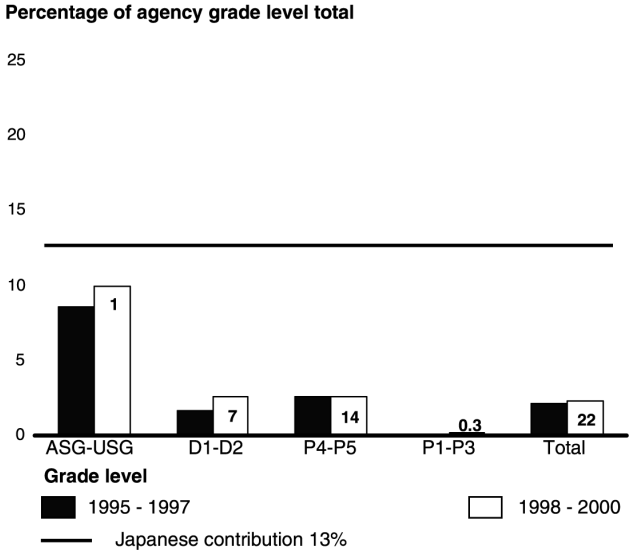
[2]Only 5 years of grade level data are available for WFP, 1996 to 2000. For this organization, the black bar in the figures describing country representation is a 2-year average, 1996 to 1997.

[3]In figure 23, the contributions of the European Union member countries to UNHCR and WFP include a contribution of the European Commission, which is separate from the individual country's contribution.

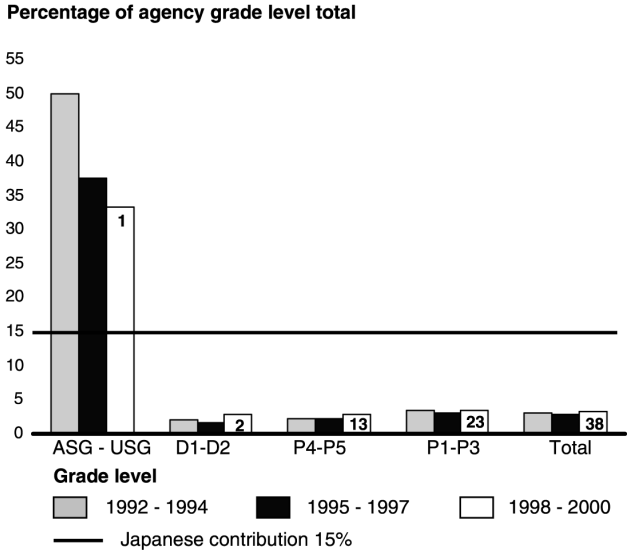
Figure 18: Trends in Japanese Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With Japanese Contributions and Representation Targets



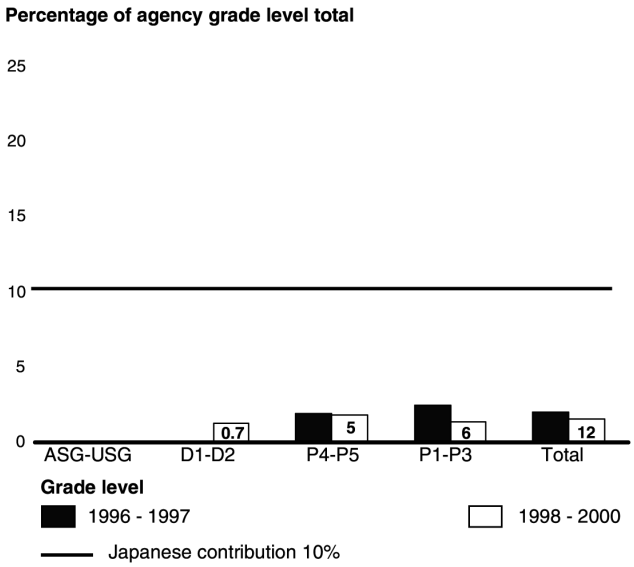
UNDP



UNHCR

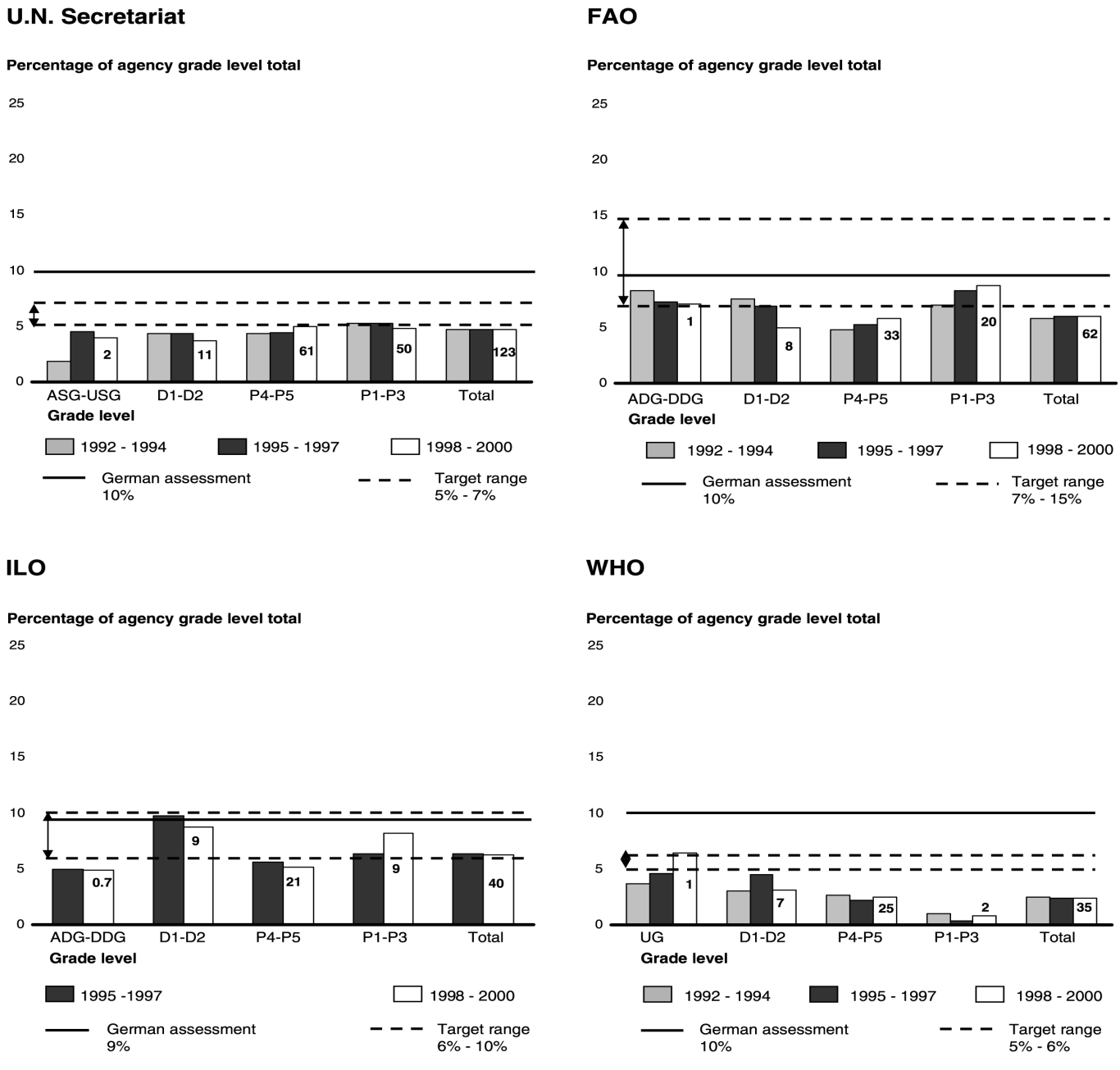


WFP

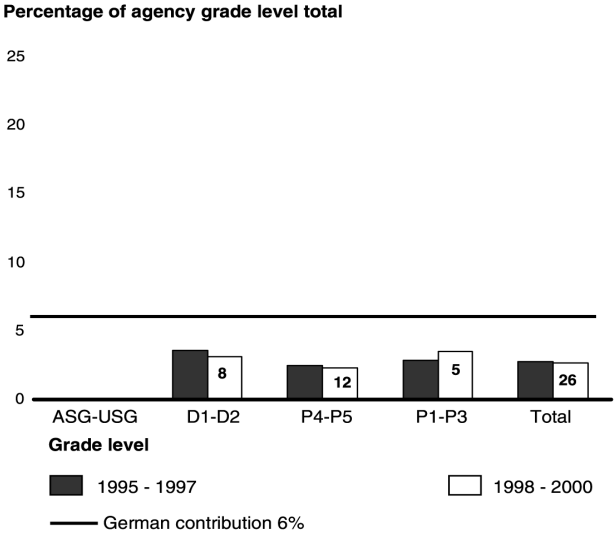


Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

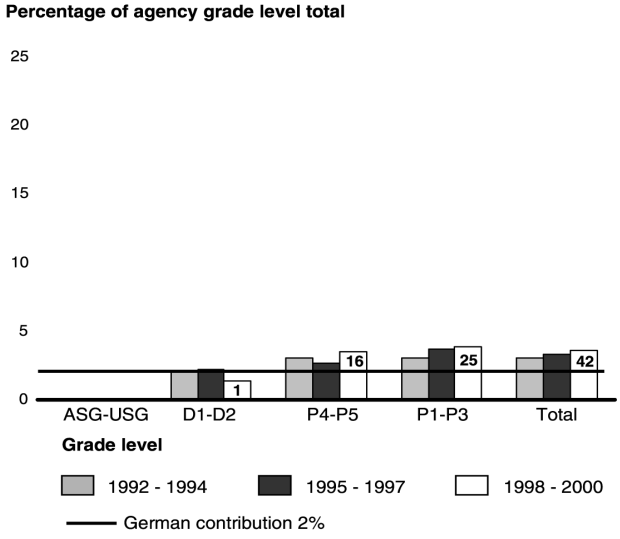
Figure 19: Trends in German Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With German Contributions and Representation Targets



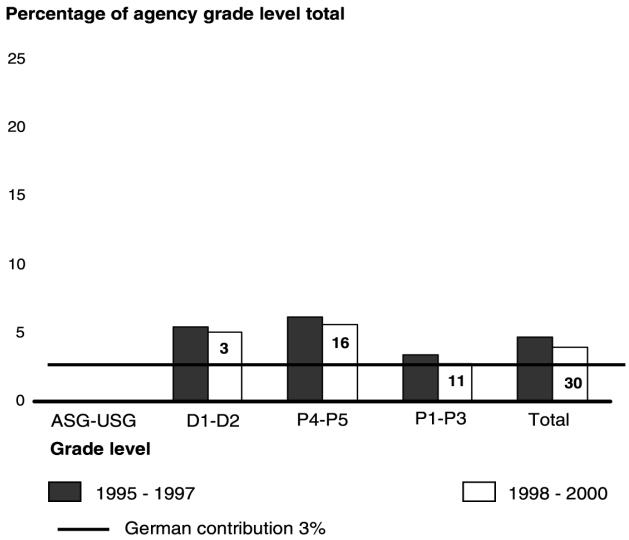
UNDP



UNHCR

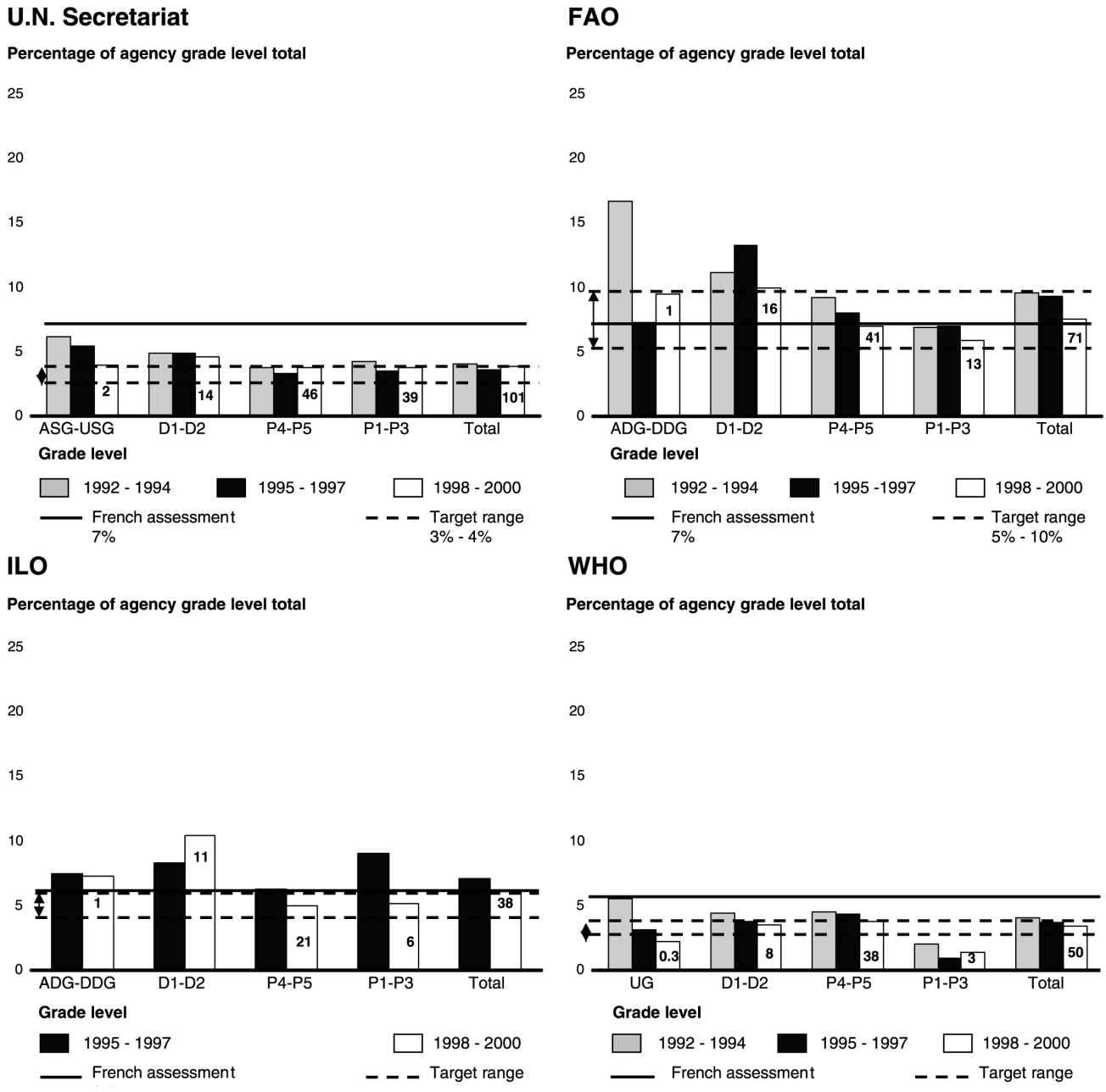


WFP



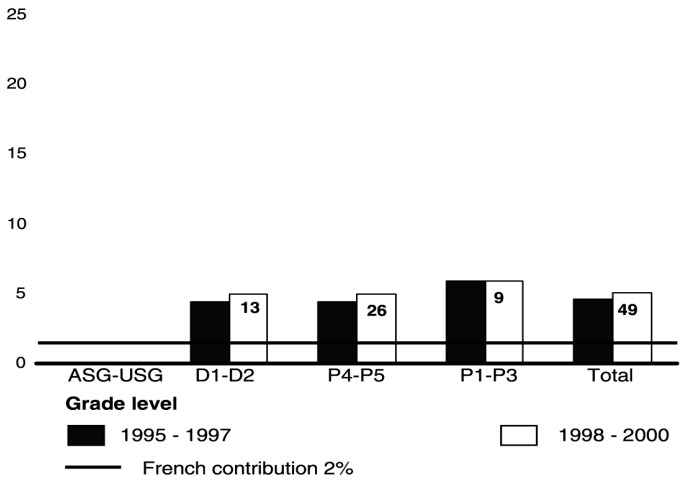
Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

Figure 20: Trends in French Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With French Contributions and Representation Targets



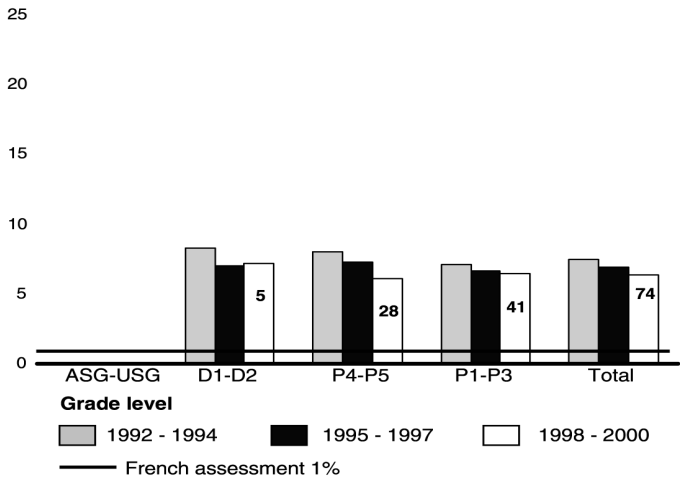
UNDP

Percentage of agency grade level total



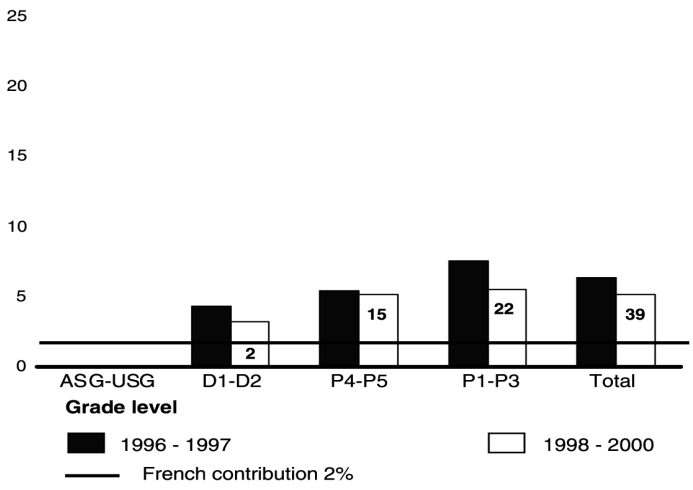
UNHCR

Percentage of agency grade level total



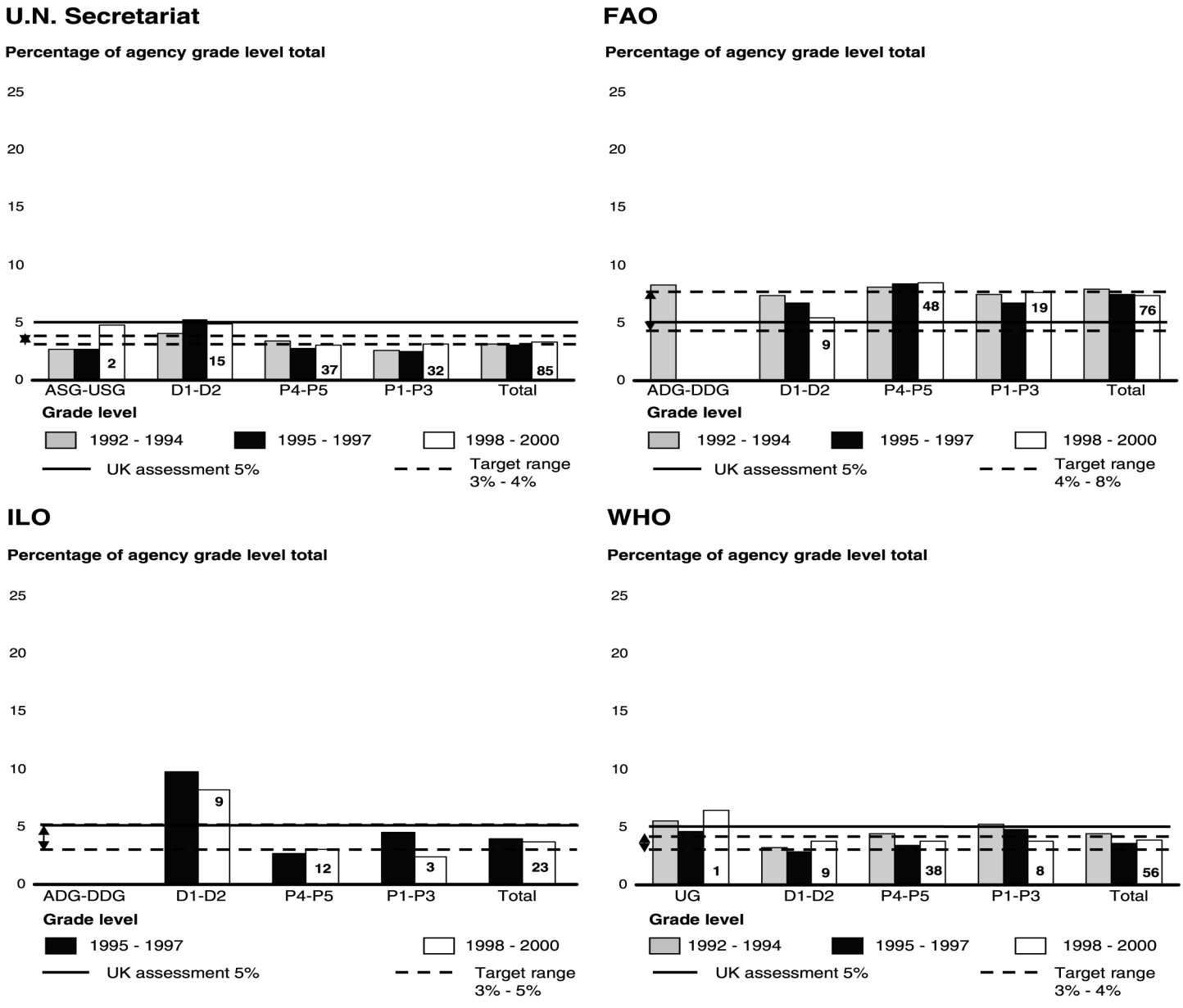
WFP

Percentage of agency grade level total

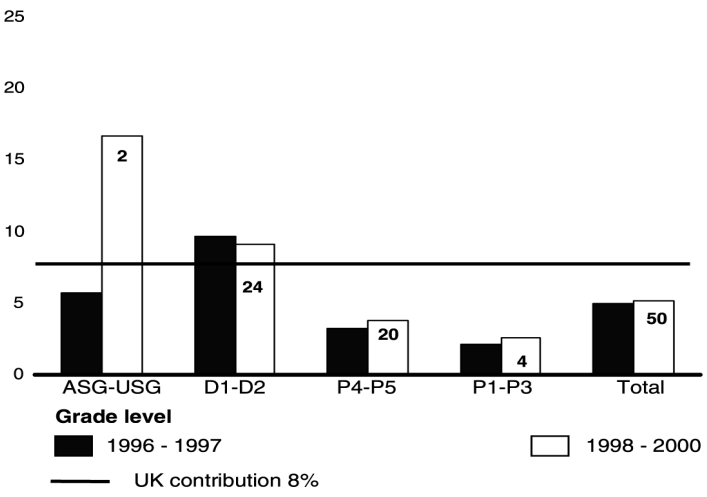


Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

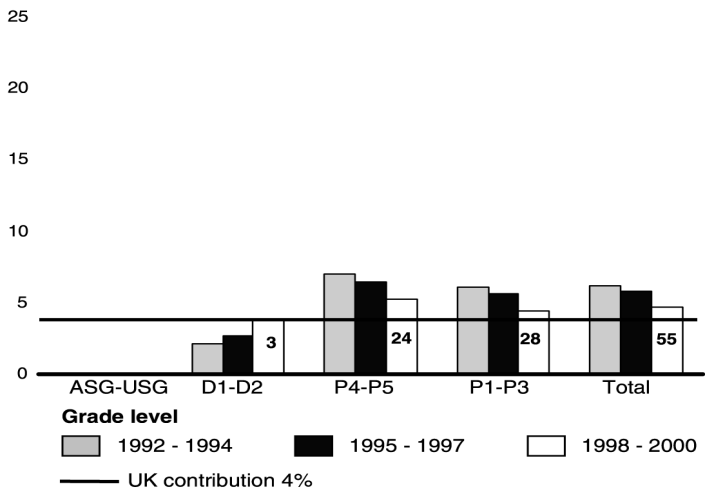
Figure 21: Trends in British Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With British Contributions and Representation Targets



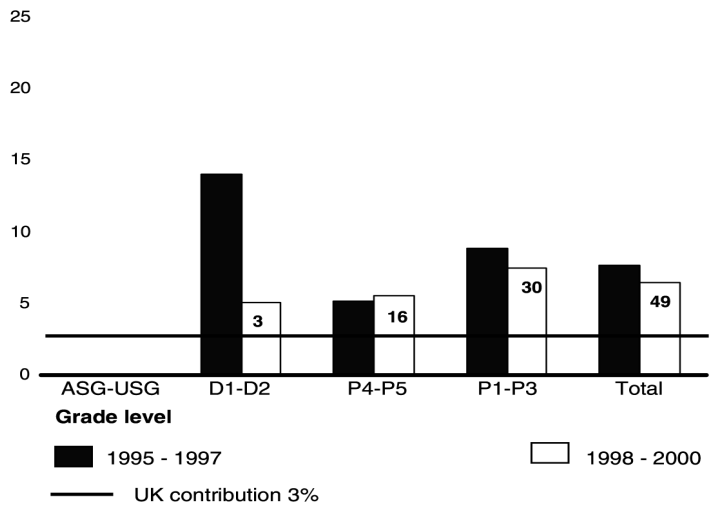
UNDP



UNHCR

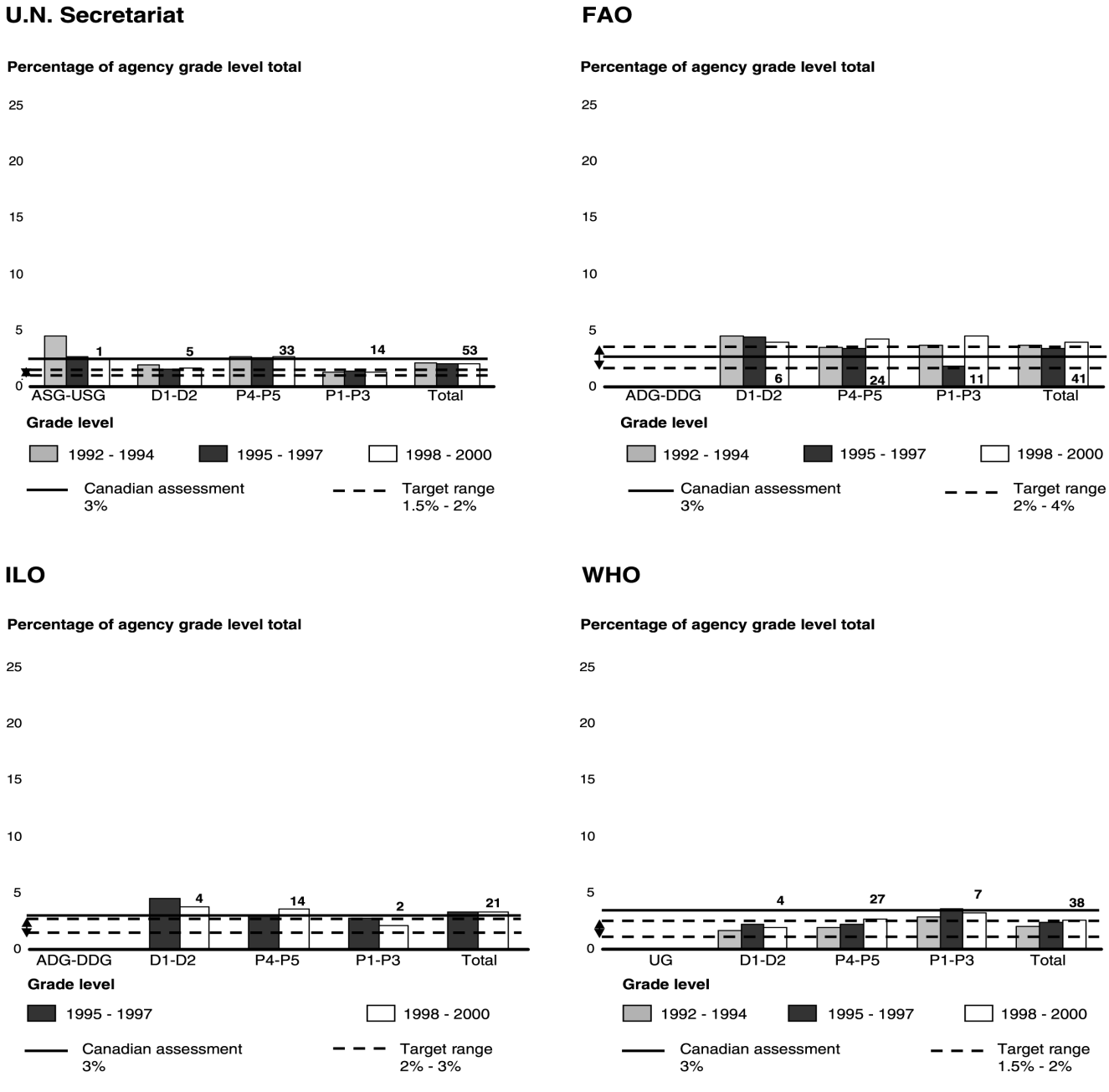


WFP

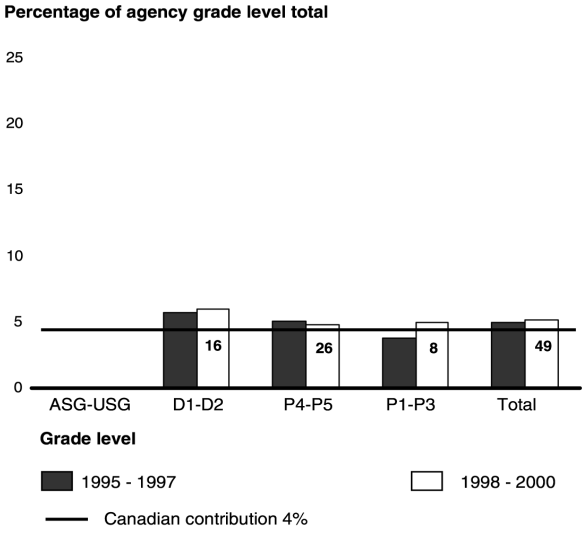


Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

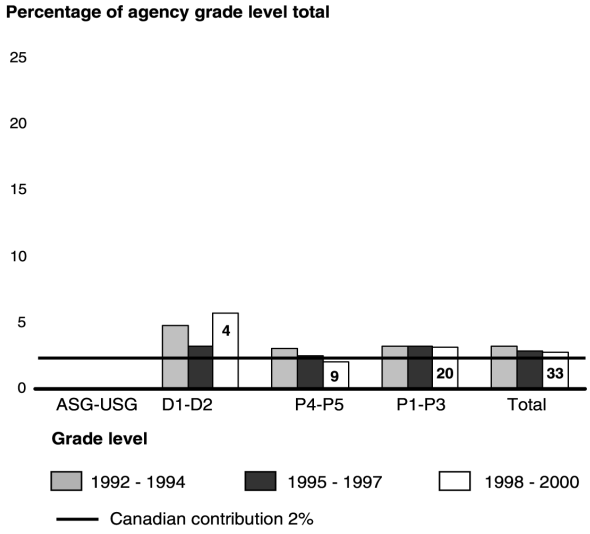
Figure 22: Trends in Canadian Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With Canadian Contributions and Representation Targets



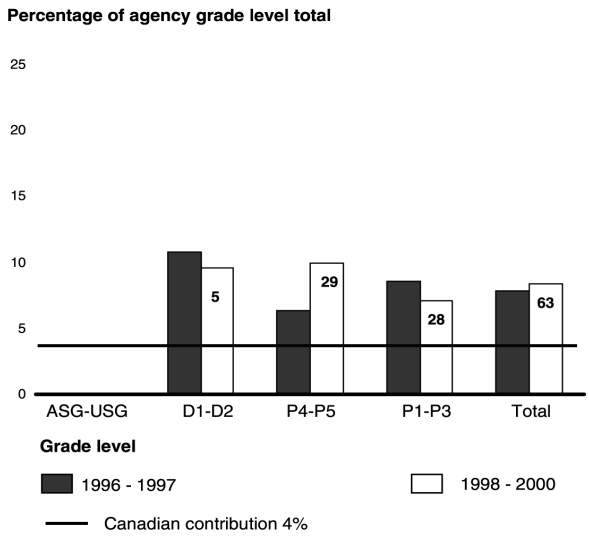
UNDP



UNHCR

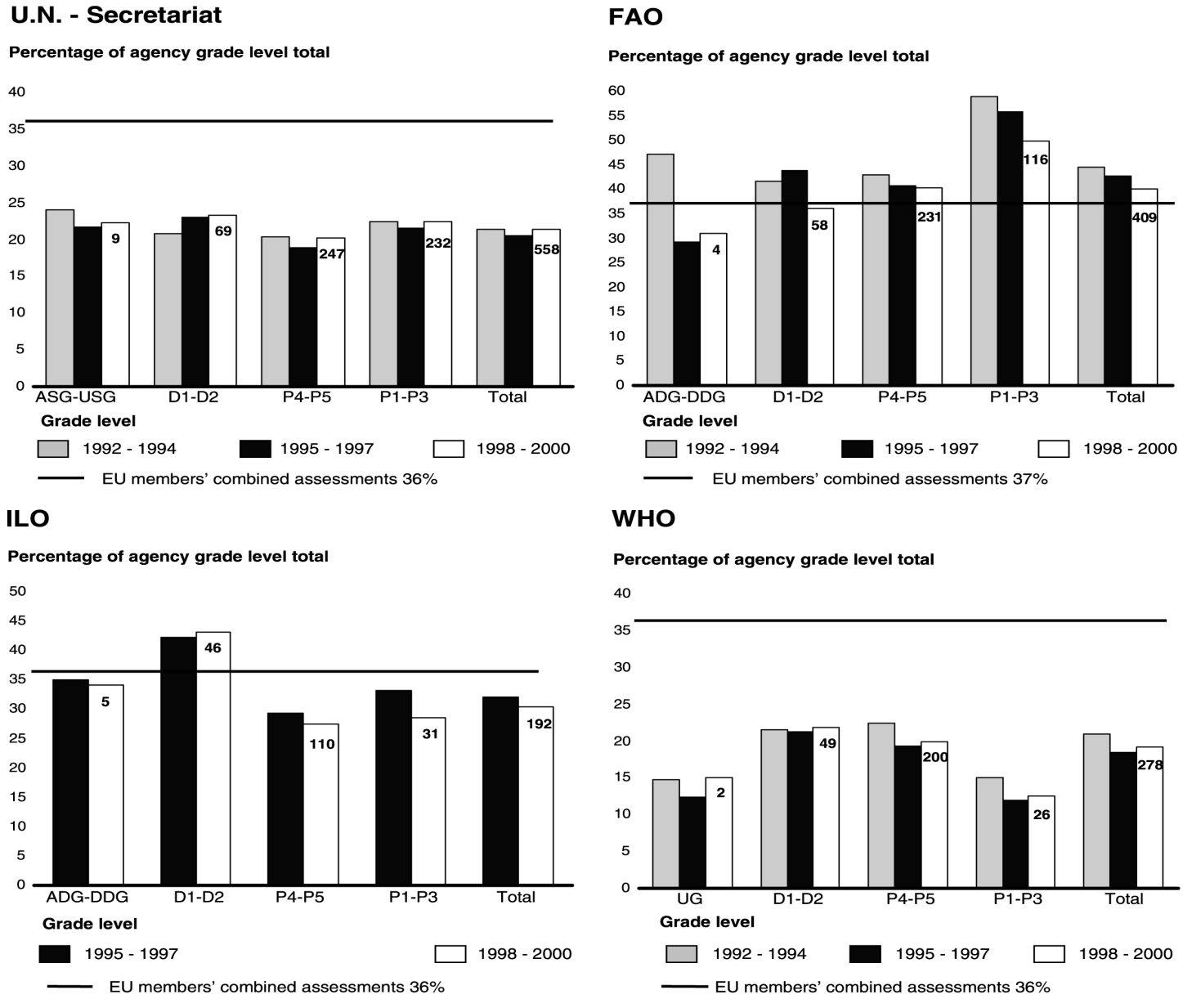


WFP

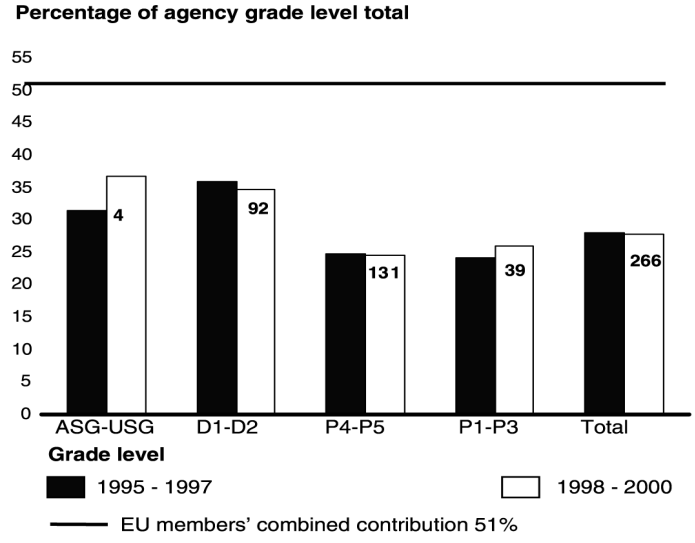


Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

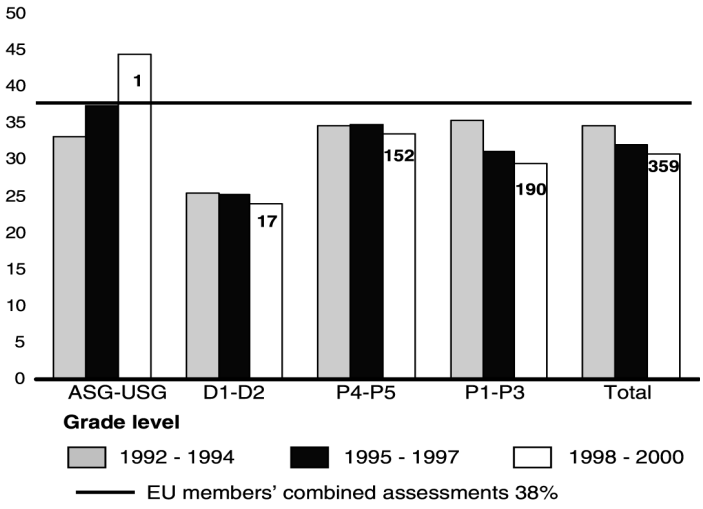
Figure 23: Trends in Combined European Union (EU) Representation in U.N. Organizations, by Grade, Compared With EU Member Countries' Combined Contributions



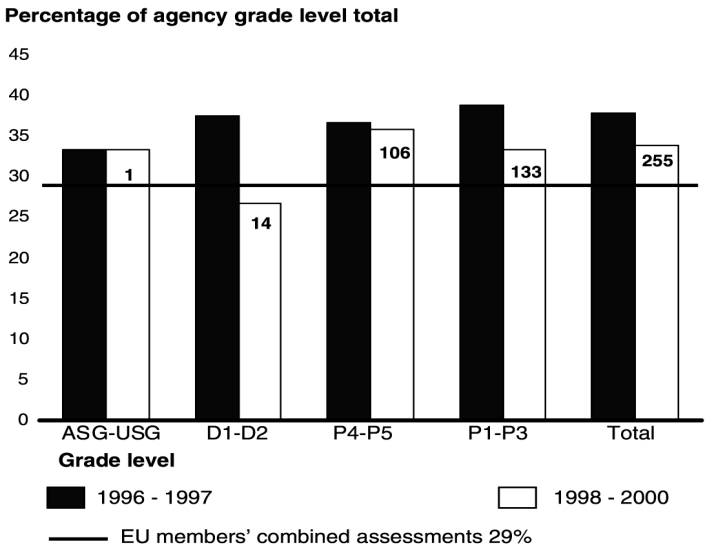
UNDP



UNHCR



WFP



Source: GAO analysis based on U.N. organizations' data.

Overall Representation Status of Selected Other Countries and Their Efforts to Promote U.N. Employment for Their Citizens

This appendix describes the overall representation status of selected major contributors in the U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies in our study[1] and discusses some of the approaches they employ to support their citizens seeking U.N. employment. In this study, we included Japan, which was admitted to the United Nations in 1956; Germany, which became a member in 1973; and France, the United Kingdom, and Canada, all original members of the United Nations.

Japan

Japan is the second largest contributor to the U.N. secretariat and the specialized agencies in our study but is significantly underrepresented in each of these U.N. organizations. (See table 21.)

Table 21: Representation Status of Japan (2000)

U.N. organization	Assessment	Equitable range	Number of staff	Representation status
U.N. Secretariat	20.6%	257 - 348	106	Underrepresented
FAO[a]	20.7	15.5% - 20.67%	2.21%	Underrepresented
ILO	20.3	82 - 109	32	Underrepresented
WHO	20.2	141-191	38	Underrepresented

[a]FAO uses a percentage to assess a member country's representation status.

Sources: U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies listed above.

According to a Japanese mission representative, the government of Japan seeks to achieve representation levels that reflect its financial contributions to these organizations, which are about 20 percent, second only to the United States. Japanese officials with whom we met noted that although seriously underrepresented in U.N. organizations, Japan has made slow progress in improving its representation. Within its foreign ministry in Tokyo, Japan has a recruitment center for international organizations with about a half dozen staff. In addition, in Geneva there is an officer in the Japanese mission who works full time on personnel management issues, including promoting the employment of Japanese citizens in U.N. organizations. This officer and her counterparts in Japan's missions in

[1]We do not include the countries' representation status at UNDP, UNHCR, and WFP since these funds and programs do not have formal geographic targets.

Rome and New York spend a substantial amount of their time prescreening résumés of Japanese citizens interested in U.N. employment, providing interested parties with information and advice about employment in international organizations, and following up with U.N. officials on behalf of individual applicants. The Japanese government uses the junior professional officers program systematically because it is viewed to be an effective recruitment tool for entry-level positions. Japan sponsors about 50 to 60 junior professional officers annually for 2- to 3-year terms; therefore, there are about 160 junior officers working in various U.N. organizations at any given time.

Germany

Germany, which is the third largest contributor in these organizations, generally falls short of its representation targets in most of the U.N. entities we reviewed. (See table 22.)

Table 22: Representation Status of Germany (2000)

U.N. organization	Assessment	Equitable range	Number of staff	Representation status
U.N. Secretariat	9.9%	126 - 171	123	Underrepresented
FAO[a]	9.9	7.4% - 14.85%	5.9%	Underrepresented
ILO	9.7	39 - 65	40	Equitably represented
WHO	9.7	69 - 94	37	Underrepresented

[a]FAO uses a percentage to assess a member country's representation status.

Sources: U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies listed above.

Concerned about its overall representation status in international organizations, the German government addresses the issue on various levels, starting with a high-level working group of top officials from several ministries, which meets regularly at the Chancellor's Office to discuss German participation in international organizations. In light of continuing concerns, Germany has in the past year established a new office within the foreign ministry—the Office of the Coordinator for International Personnel—to organize its recruitment efforts. The new office focuses its efforts on junior and senior-level positions alike. The Coordinator for

International Personnel is ranked at the ambassador level. In addition, Germany's Federal Employment Agency has an office that deals with promoting the employment of German citizens in international organizations, mostly for professional and technical positions. The German government also provides support for junior professional officers programs, annually funding anywhere from 25 to 30 new officers, who serve for 2 to 3 years.

France

As shown in table 23, France, the fourth largest contributor, is equitably represented across all of the U.N. organizations we examined.

Table 23: Representation Status of France (2000)

U.N. organization	Assessment	Equitable range	Number of staff	Representation status
U.N. Secretariat	6.6%	85 - 115	102	Equitably represented
FAO[a]	6.6	4.93% - 9.86%	7.3%	Equitably represented
ILO	6.5	26 - 43	41	Equitably represented
WHO	6.4	46 - 64	7	Equitably represented

[a]FAO uses a percentage to assess a member country's representation status.

Sources: U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies listed above.

The French foreign ministry has an office in Paris that promotes employment in international organizations. This office prescreens candidates and forwards applicants' files to the French missions that have responsibility for U.N. organizations. In some cases, Mission officials may support French applicants by sending a letter in support of the candidate to, or meeting in person with, the relevant U.N. hiring official. In addition to funding about 40 junior professional officers per year, mostly in field locations, the French government has also agreed to sponsor a limited number of junior officers from developing countries.

United Kingdom

As shown in table 24, the United Kingdom is generally well-represented, falling within or exceeding its desirable levels of representation in major U.N. agencies.

Table 24: Representation Status of the United Kingdom (2000)

U.N. organization	Assessment	Equitable range	Number of staff	Representation status
U.N. Secretariat	5.1%	68-92	90	Equitably represented
FAO[a]	5.1	3.84%-7.67%	7.7%	Overrepresented
ILO	5.0	20 - 34	27	Equitably represented
WHO	5.0	37 - 51	58	Overrepresented

[a]FAO uses a percentage to assess a member country's representation status.

Sources: U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies listed above.

According to representatives of the British missions with whom we met, geographic representation is not a particularly important concern to their government, especially in light of U.K. representation levels. These officials told us they are primarily concerned about efficient management of the United Nations and a competent workforce and do not consider geographic representation a key issue. For this reason, the United Kingdom generally makes no special effort to promote the employment of its citizens.

Canada

Canada, as shown in table 25, is generally well-represented in the United Nations.

Table 25: Representation Status of Canada (2000)

U.N. organization	Assessment	Equitable range	Number of staff	Representation status
U.N. Secretariat	2.7%	38 - 52	52	Equitably represented
FAO[a]	2.7	2.06% - 4.12%	3.98%	Equitably represented
ILO	2.7	11- 18	16	Equitably represented
WHO	2.7	21 - 29	40	Overrepresented

[a]FAO uses a percentage to assess a member country's representation status.

Source: U.N. Secretariat and the specialized agencies listed above.

The Public Service Commission of Canada is responsible for coordinating the Canadian government's efforts to identify professional Canadians for jobs in international organizations. The Commission's international programs office works in concert with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in targeting key positions considered attainable and of strategic interest to Canada and identifying Canadian candidates for them. According to Canadian mission representatives, the Director of International Programs visits the human resources directors of U.N. organizations about once a year to establish contacts, verify information, and plan to search for suitable candidates. Although Canada provides only limited support for junior professional officers programs, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has a Youth International Internship Program that provides young people, ages 18 to 29, with an opportunity for international work experience for a period of 6 to 8 months.

Human Capital Issues and Other Factors That May Affect Recruiting Americans for U.N. Organizations

Several U.N. organizations have recently developed human resource management strategies to address a broad range of human capital issues they face, some of which affect their efforts to achieve equitable geographic balance. The following section discusses selected human capital issues that provide insight into some factors that may affect recruiting qualified Americans in greater numbers for U.N. employment. Many of the American citizens with whom we met cited these among the contributing factors to difficulties recruiting and retaining Americans in the U.N. system.

Gender Balance

Following the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, the U.N. Secretary-General established a goal that the United Nations will strive to achieve 50-percent representation of women in its workforce by 2000. The United Nations has since determined that this target will not be met until 2012. In accordance with this goal, some U.N. organizations have similarly adopted policies to reach specific gender balance targets. For example, in 1997, WHO established a target of 50-percent employment of women on its staff. UNDP expects that by the end of this year, the gender ratio for senior management positions at headquarters will be at least 4 women to 6 men, and that 38 percent of resident representative positions and 40 percent of the deputy resident representative positions will be occupied by women. In its written personnel policies, UNHCR aims to ensure that women constitute two-thirds of recruits until equal representation of women is achieved. Several U.N. officials with whom we met noted that the United States may have an advantage in recruiting qualified women candidates. State officials acknowledged that, to the extent possible, the State Department tries to make qualified American women aware of U.N. vacancies and assists in forwarding their applications.

Compensation

All of the U.N. entities we examined follow the U.N. Common System of Salaries, Allowances, and Benefits established by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).[1] Salaries and benefits are based on the

[1]Created by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1974, the International Civil Service Commission is responsible for regulating and coordinating the conditions of service of the United Nations Common System, which applies to the U.N. Secretariat and its funds and programs and specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and a number of other international organizations.

application of the Noblemaire principle, which states that compensation be set on the basis of the highest paid civil service—historically, the United States. The Commission is currently undertaking a major review of the pay and benefits system and is expected to propose recommendations to the General Assembly in 2002. According to ICSC documents and Commission officials with whom we met, the objective of the review is to devise a compensation system, more flexible than the current one, that will, among others, (1) enable U.N. organizations to attract and retain highly qualified staff, including senior management personnel and professional and technical staff that are in short supply, and (2) provide staff with career progression opportunities.

U.N. officials and many of the American citizens with whom we met suggested that certain studies have shown that the United States civil service may no longer be the highest paid civil service. A 1995 study of the ICSC reported that the compensation package for the German civil service was 15.2 percent higher than the U.S. civil service—primarily because, although U.S. salaries were generally higher, German compensation was superior in terms of retirement and health insurance, leave, and other benefits. However, ICSC officials told us that Germany's standing has since slipped due to significant budgetary obligations facing the government, and the Commission will be scheduling the next Noblemaire study shortly.

Although noncompetitive compensation was a common concern among American employees, there were other compensation issues raised by certain groups. For example, Americans who were transferred or detailed to U.N. agencies expressed concerns about pension and related benefits. They believed that the U.S. government could be more supportive of those who accept a detail or transfer to an international organization by allowing them to continue as active members of the Thrift Savings Plan for U.S. federal employees, thereby allowing them to continue making regular payments and choosing their own investment options. American employees in New York called for extending education grant benefits to U.S. professional staff at U.N. headquarters and proposed several methods to do so without costing the organization more money.[2] These employees argued that the system—originally designed to provide equality for staff serving at foreign duty stations away from their home countries—has

[2]At a meeting of the Fifth Committee in October 1999, the U.S. representative indicated that the United States did not favor extending the education grant to staff living in their country or whose children lived in their home country.

evolved into one that discriminates against professional staff at headquarters by virtue of their nationality.

Spousal Employment

Because of the rise in dual income families and dual career couples, employment opportunities for spouses are an important factor in recruiting and retaining staff, according to U.N. documents and many people with whom we met. In the last several years, a number of organizations, including ILO, UNDP, and WFP, have taken steps to address the issue of spousal employment, including adopting policies and programs to facilitate employment of spouses. This issue appeared to be of particular concern to American citizens employed at FAO in Rome because, unlike the other U.N. organizations we examined—including WFP, which also is in Rome—FAO still prohibits spouses from employment within the organization. According to American staff with whom we met, while the association of professional staff at FAO favors spousal employment, the issue has been extremely contentious because the union for the general services staff strongly opposes allowing spousal employment. General service staff are concerned that their positions, which include secretaries and file clerks, would be taken by spouses. Thus, FAO management has not made the policy changes for spousal employment that other U.N. organizations have.

Other Related Issues

Language Skills

To ensure the international character of U.N. organizations, fluency in a second U.N.-designated language is typically a requirement for employment. Many view this requirement as an obstacle for Americans and certain other nationals who are less likely than the French, Canadians, and others to be multilingual. However, human resources directors told us that waivers may be granted for candidates viewed to be best qualified in all areas except for the second language requirement. American citizens employed in the United Nations had mixed reactions regarding the need for a second language. Along with some U.N. officials, many of the American citizens with whom we spoke told us that English is the language commonly used within agencies and that at certain locations, such as Geneva, one can get by without fluency in a second language such as French. Although the requirement for a second language may be waived, this practice is not widely known; therefore, it is unclear how many

Americans interested in U.N. employment choose not to even apply because they do not meet the requirement.

Organizational Culture and Management Processes

Many of the American citizens with whom we spoke expressed the need to advance reforms that promote greater transparency and accountability in the human resource management practices of U.N. agencies. While citing some progress in recent years, American staff characterized the organizational culture within several of the agencies to be "very bureaucratic," "highly centralized," and "authoritarian." According to these staff, this organizational attitude can lead to a high level of frustration among Americans, who are accustomed to greater organizational efficiency and more participatory management styles.

A particular problem mentioned by some Americans we interviewed was the need to expedite the lengthy recruitment and selection process, which can take as long as 1 year. Recognizing this impediment, several human resources directors told us they are taking steps to streamline the recruitment process. For example, at FAO and WFP, officials claimed they cut the recruitment time for professional positions by half in the last few years—reducing it from 1 year to 6 months for FAO and from 8 to 10 months to 4 to 5 months for WFP.

U.N. Salary Scales

Table 26 shows annual gross salaries and net msp equivalents after applications of staff assessment:

Table 26: Salary Scales for U.N. Professional and Senior Employees (Effective Mar. 1, 2001)

							Steps
Grade	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**	**VI**	**VII**
USG GROSS	$167,035						
NET D	113,762						
NET S	102,379						
ASG GROSS	151,840						
NET D	104,341						
NET S	94,484						
D2 GROSS	124,384	$127,132	$129,877	$132,623	$135,369	$138,115	
NET D	87,318	89,022	90,724	92,426	94,129	95,831	
NET S	80,218	81,645	83,072	84,498	85,925	87,352	
D1 GROSS	109,894	112,245	114,598	116,944	119,297	121,648	$124,002
NET D	78,334	79,792	81,251	82,705	84,164	85,622	87,081
NET S	72,407	73,687	74,967	76,245	77,525	78,796	80,018
P5 GROSS	96,705	98,832	100,961	103,089	105,216	107,342	109,471
NET D	70,157	71,476	72,796	74,115	75,434	76,752	78,072
NET S	65,176	66,385	67,745	68,703	69,862	71,018	72,177
P4 GROSS	79,780	81,733	83,680	85,627	87,579	89,527	91,571
NET D	59,255	60,544	61,829	63,114	64,402	65,688	66,974
NET S	55,180	56,364	57,543	58,722	59,902	61,080	62,259
P3 GROSS	65,388	67,220	69,053	70,880	72,714	74,544	76,373
NET D	49,756	50,965	52,175	53,381	54,591	55,799	57,006
NET S	46,445	47,556	48,669	49,780	50,892	52,002	53,113
P2 GROSS	53,129	54,632	56,132	57,633	59,135	60,692	62,332
NET D	41,253	42,335	43,415	44,496	45,577	46,657	47,739
NET S	38,694	39,675	40,653	41,633	42,611	43,592	44,587
P1 GROSS	41,189	42,633	44,075	45,519	46,960	48,403	49,847
NET D	32,656	33,696	34,734	35,774	36,811	37,850	38,890
NET S	30,805	31,763	32,720	33,677	34,633	35,590	36,584

VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
$126,352	$128,702						
88,538	89,995						
81,240	82,460						
111,598	113,724	$115,853	$117,982	$120,106	$122,234		
79,391	80,709	82,029	83,349	84,666	85,985		
73,335	74,493	75,651	76,809	77,966	79,101		
93,645	95,723	97,795	99,869	101,947	104,019	$106,095	$108,171
68,260	69,548	70,833	72,119	73,407	74,692	75,979	77,266
63,439	64,617	65,796	66,949	68,082	69,210	70,340	71,470
78,206	80,038	81,868	83,700	85,529	87,361	89,191	91,089
58,216	59,425	60,633	61,842	63,049	64,258	65,466	66,675
54,225	55,335	56,447	57,555	58,663	59,770	60,877	61,985
63,967	65,606	67,244	68,879	70,520			
48,818	49,900	50,981	52,060	53,143			
45,580	46,577	47,571	48,564	49,561			
51,290	52,731	54,174					
39,929	40,966	42,005					
37,493	38,434	39,375					

Legend

D = Applicable to staff with a dependent spouse or child.

S = Applicable to staff with no dependent spouse or child.

Note: U.N. employees do not receive the gross salary amounts shown in the table. Their net renumeration is the appropriate net figure (with or without dependents) plus or minus a post adjustment allowance that varies by grade and also by duty station.

Source: International Civil Service Commission.

Methodology

The methodology section describes the data used in our analysis and highlights some of the methodological issues and approaches that we use. It also includes a discussion of the use of a base number by some U.N. organizations to calculate a country's representation target range and possible implications.

Most U.N. organizations included in our study provided the annual total number of geographic staff positions filled for the organization and for selected countries for 1992 to 2000.[1] Annual financial country assessments or contributions and the organization's regular budget were also supplied. Information was provided for the United States, Canada, Japan, and each of the 15 member countries of the European Union. The four organizations that have formal geographic equitable staff representation targets–the U.N. Secretariat, FAO, ILO, and WHO–provided these annual targets. Employment data generally refer to the end of the calendar year, except for the Secretariat, which was for June 30. Four organizations provided annual data on the number of geographic staff employed by grade level for the organization as a whole and for the selected nationalities for the 9-year period. ILO and UNDP provided these data for 1995 to 2000 and WFP for 1996 to 2000.

To facilitate comparisons across time and across countries, financial assessments/contributions, equitable representation targets, and grade level staff are expressed as percentages. For example, the high and low equitable representation target staff numbers for each country are divided by the respective organization's total number of geographic staff used in the calculation of these targets. For the Secretariat and WHO, this is a specified base number, which includes actual filled positions and vacancies. For ILO, it is the number of filled positions. FAO provides its targets as a position-weighted percentage.[2] In order to compare a country's actual employment to the target range, the total number of national staff employed is divided by the organization's total number that was used to calculate the annual targets. For organizations that do not have formal targets–UNDP, UNHCR, and WFP–the organization's total number of filled international professional positions is used.

[1]WFP provided aggregate employment figures for the period of 1996 to 2000; UNDP data covered 1995 to 2000.

[2]See appendix I for a description of the methodology used to calculate equitable representation targets.

For the figures in appendixes II and IV, grade level employment percentages are presented as 3-year averages for the non-overlapping periods of 1992 to 1994, 1995 to 1997, and 1998 to 2000. Only 5 years of grade level data are available for WFP, 1996 to 2000. For this organization, the black bar in the figures describing country representation is a 2-year average, 1996 to 1997. The numbers in the 1998 to 2000 bars are the 3-year average of the number of nationals employed at the respective U.N. organization for the designated grade levels during 1998 to 2000. The sum of grade level employment numbers may not equal the total number due to rounding. The line that represents a country's financial assessment or contribution percentage share is a 3-year average for 1998 to 2000. Similarly, the target range is a 3-year average for 1998 to 2000.

To calculate the grade level representation percentage, a country's grade level employment is divided by the organization's total employment for the corresponding grade level. For the Secretariat and WHO, the organization's grade level employment number is scaled up by the ratio of base number employment to actual total employment for each year. Thus, grade level employment percentages are constructed in a comparable fashion to actual total representation percentages and target range percentages.

We compared U.S. representation in senior-level and policymaking positions with those of four major contributors—Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. For the period of 1998 to 2000, we calculate the average ratio of each country's percentage representation of these high-level positions to the country's annual average assessment at the four U.N. organizations with formal geographic targets. The resulting number can be interpreted as the country's percentage representation at senior-level and policymaking positions per 1 percent of its assessment. For illustrative purposes, consider table 10 in appendix II describing representation at senior-level and policymaking positions at FAO. U.S. representation in these high-level positions is 9.4 percent, and its average assessment is 25 percent. Dividing 9.4 by 25 results in 0.38 percent, the U.S. representation of high-level positions per 1 percent of U.S. assessment. In a similar fashion, 0.14 percent is the Japanese representation per 1 percent of its assessment, and 1.48 percent is the French representation per 1 percent of its assessment. The average representation for the four selected countries is 0.76 percent per 1-percent assessment.

In table 4, in the report we multiplied this four-country average representation by the U.S. assessment to derive a hypothetical comparative representation level, under the assumption that U.S. representation in

senior-level and policymaking positions was proportionate to the average of these four major contributors. For example, if the United States, given its 25-percent assessment at FAO, were to have representation proportionate to the 0.76 average ratio for the four selected countries, then its representation would be 19.1 percent.

To describe U.S. representation over time, both the actual number and relative number of American staff in each organization are presented. For example, see figures 4 and 5 in appendix II, which describe U.S. representation at the U.N. Secretariat. A relative number, a ratio of the number of total country staff employed expressed as a percentage of the organization's total staff, allows the reader to examine the change in country staff size over time while taking into consideration the change in the total organization staff size. However, because of different means of measuring an organization's total staff size, care should be taken when interpreting this information.

For U.N. organizations that use a base number rather than the actual number of filled staff positions, there may be a significant difference in national representation trends and the trend of total national employment as a percentage of total actual organization employment. In some situations, as described below for WHO, one trend may be positive and the other negative. For example, annual U.S. representation at WHO during 1998 to 2000 can be interpreted as follows: As shown in figure 10 in appendix II, the gap between U.S. employment and the lower target range, which is calculated using a base number, is narrowing which indicates an improvement in U.S. representation. During this period, U.S. employment grew at an annual rate of 1.8 percent,[3] while the WHO employment base number remained constant at 1,450. Thus, U.S. representation increased relative to its target range. However, during this period total actual employment at WHO grew at an annual rate of 2.9 percent. Employment of non-Americans increased at a faster rate than for Americans. The percentage of Americans actually employed declined. However, based on

[3]Annual average growth rates are calculated using ordinary least square regressions of the logarithm of employment figures.

the representation methodology employed by WHO, U.S. representation is shown as increasing.[4]

The criteria to judge whether a country is underrepresented, overrepresented, or equitably represented at an organization are to compare the actual number of nationals employed to the target range numbers. That is the approach used for organizations with formal targets in the first of each U.N. organization's figures for U.S. representation in appendix II. The second figure for each organization in appendix II and all of the figures in appendix IV use a percentage measure to compare actual country employment with representation targets. Except for FAO, which uses a position-weighted percentage to calculate target ranges and actual representation, our percentage approach is not the official method used by the U.N. organizations. Our approach enables one to compare a country's total employment as well as grade level employment with representation target ranges.

The use of a base number rather than actual employment figures to calculate target ranges tends to reduce the number of countries that are classified as overrepresented. The base number includes actual filled positions and vacancies. Since the annual base numbers for the Secretariat and WHO are greater than each organization's respective actual number employed,[5] the upper target figure is larger than would be derived if the actual employment number were used in the target range formula. For example, the Secretariat's target range for the United States in 2000 is 424 to 314 when a base number employment figure of 2,600 is used. If the actual employment number of 2,389 were to have been used in the target range formula, the target range would have been 390 to 289. In this case, the United States still would have been equitably represented. However, if actual employment numbers had been used in the target range formula,

[4]The U.N. Secretariat used a constant base number of 2,600 when calculating representation targets for 1998 to 2000. Although the numerical trend rate of U.S. representation differs depending on whether it is measured against the Secretariat's declining total actual employment rate (-0.8 percent) or a constant base number, the overall trend of declining U.S. representation remains. In contrast to the situation in WHO, this occurs because the declining annual rate of U.S. employment (-4.6 percent) exceeds either measure of overall Secretariat employment trend changes.

[5]The base number used by WHO averaged 32 percent more than actual total employment during 1998 to 2000. In 1998, the Secretariat lowered its base number from 2,700 to 2,600. The base number averaged 8 percent more than actual total employment during 1998 to 2000.

Canada and the United Kingdom would have been classified as overrepresented. The larger, upper target may partially explain why the Secretariat and WHO have fewer overrepresented countries than FAO or ILO (see apps. III and V).

Comments From the U.S. Department of State

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.

United States Department of State

Chief Financial Officer

Washington, D.C. 20520-7427

JUL 19 2001

Dear Ms. Westin:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "UNITED NATIONS: Targeted Strategies Could Help Boost U.S. Representation," GAO-01-839, GAO Job Code 320013. We thank the GAO for its constructive report on an issue of concern both to the Administration and the Congress.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Ms. M. Deborah Wynes, Director, Office of UN System Administration, at 202-647-6424.

Sincerely,

Larry C. Eisenhart
Acting

Enclosure:

As stated.

cc: GAO/IAT - Mr. Harold Johnson
State/OIG - Mr. Atkins
State/IO/S - Ms. Wynes

Ms. Susan S. Westin,
Managing Director,
International Affairs and Trade,
U.S. General Accounting Office.

Department of State Comments
on the GAO Draft Report
"UNITED NATIONS: Targeted Strategies Could Help Boost U.S. Representation"
(GAO-01-839, Job Code 320013)

See comment 1.

The Department of State places a high priority on efforts to ensure the United States is adequately represented, at all levels, in the United Nations as well as other international organizations. We have been concerned for some time now that the United States is underrepresented in a number of important UN organizations. The GAO's findings in this regard parallel those that the Department has reported to the Congress in the past. To address the shortfall in American representation, the GAO recommends a number of steps the Department can take.

We concur with GAO's recommendations (1, 4, and 2 represented below respectively), that we:

- Develop, with other U.S. government agencies, a comprehensive strategy for achieving equitable representation and to incorporate these goals in the Department's annual Performance Plan and Performance Report;

- Provide to the heads of UN organizations copies of our annual report to Congress on efforts by the UN and other international organizations to employ Americans;

- Work with UN agencies where Americans are under-represented to help ensure that long-range planning efforts include measures to achieve equitable U.S. representation.

However, regarding recommendation 3:

See comment 2.

While we agree with GAO that we should have an "equitable" share of senior-level and policy-making positions in international organizations, we do not believe that a separate set of guidelines should be established for this purpose. As the report points out, U.S. goals should focus on equitable representation at all levels. We believe that this is best accomplished by continuing to apply the guidelines already being used to measure equitable representation for all professional positions as the measure to use for senior level positions.

GAO Comments

The following are GAO's comments on the Department of State's letter dated July 19, 2001.

1. While State commented that it places a high priority on efforts to ensure the United States is represented, at all levels, in U.N. organizations, we found that its actions to achieve equitable representation do not reflect this stated priority. For example, as discussed in this report, State has reduced many of its recruitment efforts without assessing how these reductions will affect recruitment and does not have recruiting or action plans in place to support U.N. employment of Americans.

2. State disagreed with our recommendation to develop guidelines that define its goal for obtaining an equitable share of senior-level and policymaking positions for Americans and use these guidelines to help assess whether the United States is equitably represented. State said it should not develop separate guidelines for defining its goal of obtaining an equitable share of Americans in these high-level positions but rather that it should focus on equitable representation at all levels. While we agree that State should be concerned about achieving equitable employment for Americans at all levels in U.N. organizations, we believe it is important to emphasize achieving an equitable share of high-level positions. We further believe that without guidelines defining equitable share, State lacks a mechanism for assessing whether its top recruitment priority—equitable representation of Americans in high-level positions—is being achieved.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Phyllis Anderson (202) 512-7364

Acknowledgments

In addition to the person named above, Joy Labez, Jeremy Latimer, Bruce Kutnick, Janey Cohen, Mark Speight, Mary Moutsos, and Rick Barrett made key contributions to this report.

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