mainstreaming and presented principles for the UN system. Recommendations were made for the intergovernmental process of the United Nations, institutional requirements for mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, gender units and focal points, capacity-building and mainstreaming in the integrated follow-up to global UN conferences.

**Women in the Secretariat**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/67 [YUN 1996, p. 1330], the Secretary-General, in a February report [E/CN.6/1997/7], updated information on the status of women in the Secretariat.

The Secretary-General had appointed a Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, who assisted him in ensuring the system-wide coordination of policy for implementing the Platform for Action and for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all UN activities. The year 1996 had proved to be very difficult for improving the status of women in the Secretariat due to the recruitment freeze, ongoing restructuring, retrenchment and early separation programmes. Nevertheless, the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution made a slight gain.

Recently, efforts had been made to implement the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) [YUN 1994, p. 1383], which aimed at achieving gender equality by the beginning of the twenty-first century: the issuance and review of special measures for the achievement of gender equality; information-sharing; and staff development and training (see PART FIVE, Chapter III).

**Commission action.** The Commission on the Status of Women took note of the Secretary-General’s report on 21 March [E/1997/27 (dec. 41/102)].

Also on 21 March [dec. 41/101], the Commission stated that efforts should be made to improve service to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to hold two regular annual sessions of the Committee, starting in 1997. Sufficient resources should be made available to the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide substantive support to the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

**Enhancing UN capacity**

**Reports of Secretary-General.** As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 51/69 [YUN 1996, p. 1062], the Secretary-General in May reported on ways to enhance the capacity of the Organization and the UN system to support the ongoing follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women [E/1997/64]. The report focused on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170] in intergovernmental forums reporting to the Economic and Social Council, by the regional commissions and in the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Also in response to resolution 51/69, the Secretary-General in August submitted another report on the subject [A/52/281]. The report described measures taken and progress achieved in implementing the Declaration and Platform for Action by the UN system since the submission to the Assembly of his 1996 report on the subject [YUN 1996, p. 1060]. It also described factors related to the capacity of the UN system in terms of human and financial requirements.

The Secretary-General concluded that significant progress had been made since the submission of his previous report. He stated that the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of agreed conclusions 1997/1 on gender mainstreaming stood out as the most comprehensive intergovernmental action to date on gender mainstreaming. The Council was planning to hold a session in 1998 to further consider integrated conference follow-up, which should provide an opportunity to build upon the agreed conclusions. The consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women of a synthesized report on national action plans in 1998 would provide a comprehensive assessment of action at the national level and a stepping stone for the initiation of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, scheduled for 2000. The mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women, 1996-2001, by the Commission and the Council in 1998 should accomplish the same purpose with regard to action within the UN system.

**Inter-Agency Committee on Women**

The ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality held its second session (New York, 5-6 March) [ACC/1997/8] to consider mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the UN system. The Committee was established in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 1060] to address, system-wide, all aspects of the implementation of the Platform for Action as well as gender-related recommendations emanating from other international conferences.

The Committee decided to establish an intersessional working group on gender mainstreaming and entrusted the group with preparing draft guidelines for budgeting processes and coding of budgets. It also decided to continue monitoring