Many respondents commented on the difficulty of reaching management positions and their interest in receiving mentorship and further training in a range of professional development areas. The majority of respondents (62%) are aware of existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct in their workplace, and less than 7% of CCP officers reported having experienced gender discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace. However, of those who did experience gender discrimination or sexual harassment, only 50% and 66%, respectively, filed a complaint.

The COVID-19 pandemic had differing impacts on gender, with women being more likely than men to report its negative effects on their professional development and work-life balance (19% vs. 9%, respectively.)

In the last edition of the Women’s Network Newsletter, we announced the launch of a comprehensive survey to assess gender equality within the Container Control Programme, and solicit your ideas for activities the Women’s Network should pursue in the future.

We are pleased to announce that 109 responses were received from CCP officers working in Port Control and Air Cargo Control Units across the globe. Your participation in the survey has enabled the identification of major challenges faced by CCP officers in the course of their duties and their priorities for the future. Here are some of the highlights:

- Many respondents commented on the difficulty of reaching management positions and their interest in receiving mentorship and further training in a range of professional development areas.
- The majority of respondents (62%) are aware of existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct in their workplace, and less than 7% of CCP officers reported having experienced gender discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace.
- However, of those who did experience gender discrimination or sexual harassment, only 50% and 66%, respectively, filed a complaint.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had differing impacts on gender, with women being more likely than men to report its negative effects on their professional development and work-life balance (19% vs. 9%, respectively.)

One of the newest countries to join CCP, Namibia is fast emerging as a gender champion. Women are well represented in CCP Namibia: the PCU established in 2021 in Walvis Bay already has 50% women officers and is headed by a woman. The PCU also achieves gender parity during its training and mentoring activities.
Meet the women of CCP - Sara Siddiqi

Sara Siddiqi is an Inspection Officer at the Air Cargo Control Unit in Kabul, Afghanistan.

**CCP:** What drew you to the field of customs and then CCP?

**SS:** Customs is one of the main sources of income for Afghanistan and it is the responsibility of each Afghan to work for their country and collect its revenue to support national stability. The main reasons that inspired me to join CCP are its honest and professional staff and the specialized equipment used to prevent the smuggling of contraband and prohibited goods to and from Afghanistan.

**CCP:** What do you think are the strengths of the Kabul ACCU and what valuable skills do you bring to the Unit?

**SS:** Kabul ACCU officers are well-experienced and have received various trainings, which enable them to frequently carry out important seizures. My participation in these trainings will also allow me to gain more knowledge and work together with the team to fight against the trafficking of drugs and other illicit goods. Moreover, as a woman, I can bring a positive impact to the programme, supporting the ACCU with my experience working in the field of Customs.

**CCP:** What are common misconceptions that people have about your work?

**SS:** Afghanistan is a traditional society, where people have different perceptions, both positive and negative. This can be particularly challenging in terms of gender, sometimes limiting women and girls’ access to opportunities and affecting their interactions with others. The field of Customs is not an exception, and women Customs officers who work alongside a diverse range of agencies constantly experience challenges on account of their gender.

Subtle sexism can appear in all facets of life, subtle sexism in the workplace can be increasingly complex, with the potential to hinder career progression. Examples of subtle sexism in the workplace can include: a colleague apologizing for cursing to only one person, women being the only ones tasked with office "housework" such as taking minutes, taking care of snacks, buying presents or other practical arrangements (i.e. cleaning up) and relying on men for making difficult decisions or providing technical assistance. Even if these actions are well-intentioned or presented in a positive tone, they can undermine the experiences and progression of those affected.

**What you can do:**

Subtle sexism can be difficult to recognize, but if not dealt with, it can hinder job performance, lead to disengagement at work and undermine the status of both women and men in organizations. Here are some useful steps you can take today to prevent subtle sexism in the workplace:*

1. **Your feelings are valid:** Offensive words & actions should not be ignored. If subtle sexism occurs, consider discussing this with your colleagues. Bringing this to their attention allows them to better consider their impact in the future and support a feeling of equality in the workplace.

2. **Bring it forward!** Gender stereotypes can hurt morale in the workplace, and can have a negative impact on meeting outcomes, an individual’s career, and their self-perception. It can also seriously undermine diversity efforts.

3. **Be an active bystander.** Men and women alike can come to the defense of a colleague if they are targeted by sexism. One great way to do this is to publicly highlight the achievements or accomplishments of colleagues, which can help silence attempts to undercut their status.

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*Source: Canva


**Beilock, S (2021, Jan 7). How to address subtle, ‘friendly’ sexism at work. Forbes. (online).**