

Expert Group Meeting  
Work Life Policies, Practice and  
Potential  
9 11 November 2010



# Definitions of Flexibility

- Æ “How and when work gets done and how careers are organized”
- Æ “Allows each person to work fully”

Expert Group Meeting on *Work Life Policy, Practice and Potential*  
United Nations, 9 11 November 2010

# Participants

- Æ Corporations totalling approximately 400 billion dollars of asset value and totalling approximately 1 million employees
- Æ Harvard and Wharton Business Schools
- Æ Cranfield University, U.K
- Æ University of Navarra, Spain
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# Case for Flexibility

Flexibility should not be positioned as a benefit or accommodation to employees

Rather, as a tremendous benefit to the organization and the individual alike win: win

In our age of decreasing resources and increasing demands, must find ways to do more with less

Flexibility yields the “more” with relatively less cost infusion

# Flexibility Business Case – Needed?

Æ Whether measured by productivity,

# Flexibility Yields

- Æ Flexibility – even small measures – in when and where work gets done yields powerfully significant influence on:
  - Æ a) job satisfaction Some studies show a linear relationship between degree of flexibility and level of job satisfaction and that flexibility's most powerful effect is an increase in employee engagement and commitment
  - Æ b) employee commitment and level satisfaction

# OSAGI Survey Results 2009

- Æ Between 64% and 69% of FWA users reported higher levels of organizational loyalty and increased productivity, job satisfaction and motivation
- Æ Nearly 75% of respondents indicated a strong interest in using the existing FWAs options
- Æ 67% indicated that FWAs are a modern tool



# Challenges Identified in 2009 Survey

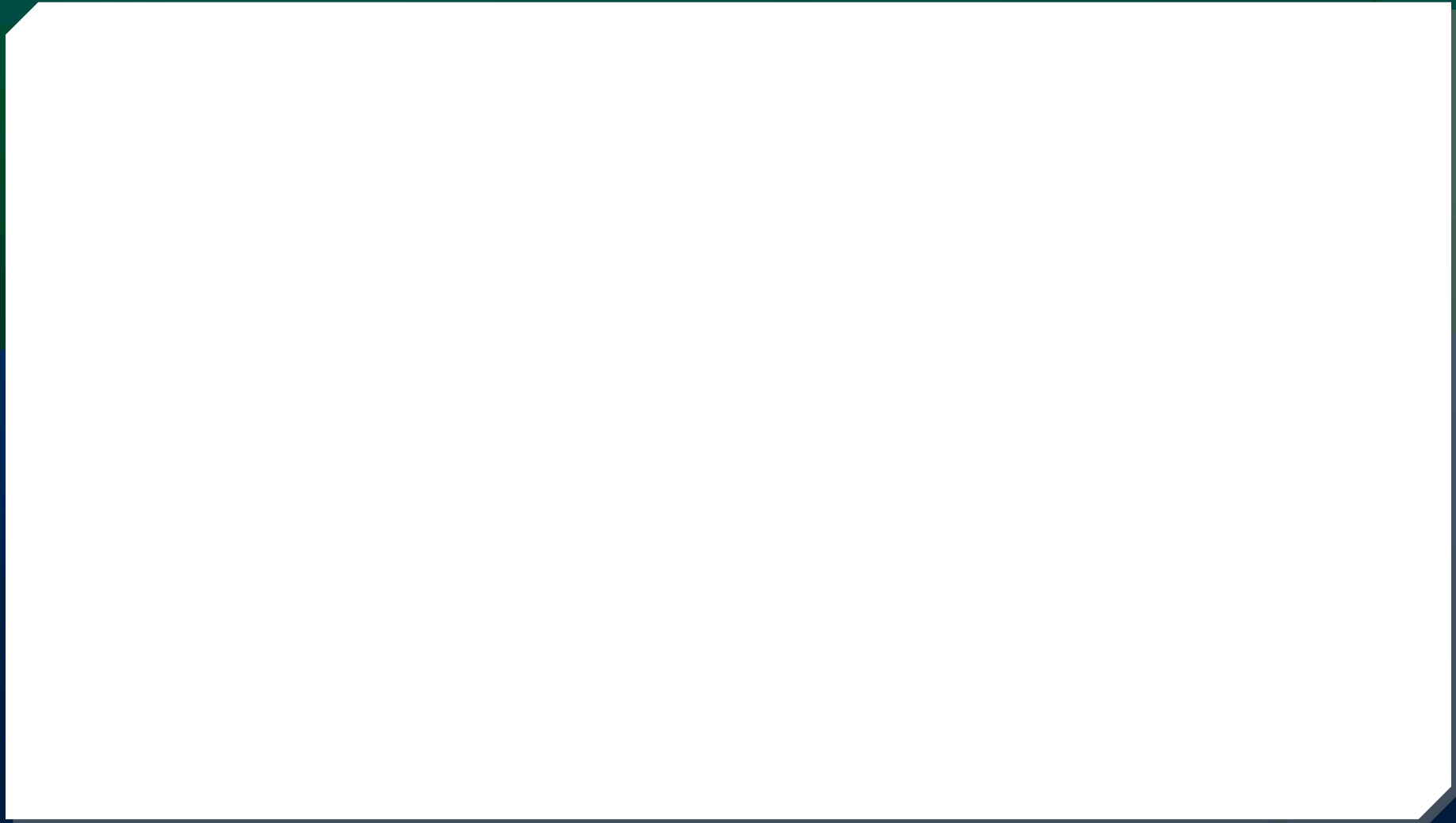
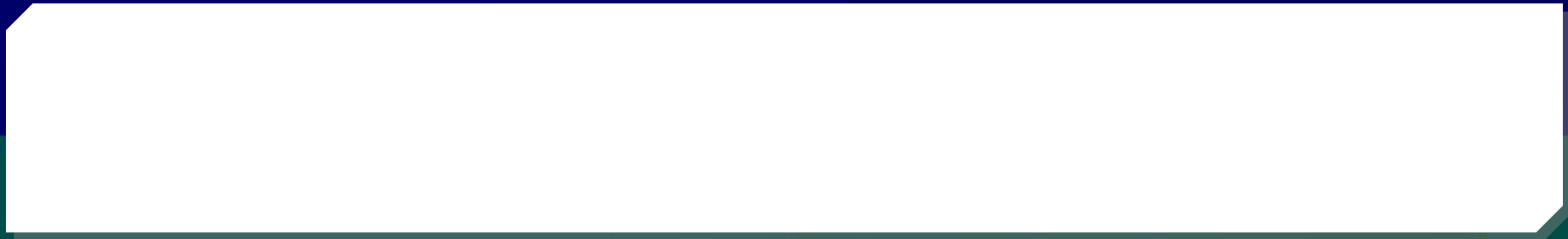
Æ 20% and 27% of respondents perceived senior and middle management respectively as not supportive of the use of flexibility work arrangements

Æ Approximately half of respondents reported not exercising their right to request use of FWA

# Areas of Focus

## Expert Group Recommendations

- Æ Organizational culture – Trust and respect constitute the foundational elements: You trust and respect my work life needs and I will trust and respect your organizational needs; *UN could do more in this area*
- Æ Flexible work arrangements – organizational means to manifest culture of flexibility: *UN has the basic policy package – needs only to broaden and strengthen implementation*
- Æ Career path flexibility – flexibility to synchronize and meet larger life needs over a career path e.g. burdens of care : *UN has partially achieved but more needs to be done, especially given demographic and generational attitudinal shifts*



# Organizational Culture ..cont'd

## Æ Communication and awareness raising strategy

Æ Continue consistent and frequent highest level support (SG and DSG)

Æ Reframe the discussion to position flexibility not as a “perk,” staff accommodation; rather as a powerful organizational tool and necessary component of optimal and modern management, productivity and outcomes

Æ Designate “champions” within each large department and/or large unit for FWA

Æ Use new and validated instruments to generate important metrics to measure for example employee 11J/C20d(metrics)Tj/C201Tf0Tc00aC201Tf0Tc4.1010Td0080Tc4.101



# Flexibility

## From what to what

### **Accommodation-based Flexibility**

- Private deals based on individual's needs
- Inconsistent implementation, often secret
- Restricted Access to Flexibility

### **Business-Based Flexibility**

- Decisions based on both businesses and individual needs
- Policy infrastructure that defines scheduling options and supports consistent implementation

### **Culture of Flexibility**

- Incorporates options for formal arrangements as well as widespread, informal flexibility
- Culture that rewards results achieved rather than time spent
- Flexibility viewed as a management strategy

# Flexible Work Arrangements

- Æ MYTH – Massive Exodus of Staff clamouring to use FWA simultaneously and universally – especially telecommute
- Æ Evidence – at any give time only about 20 percent will use any given arrangement
- Æ Establish a Steering Committee to oversee and encourage implementation of flexibility
- Æ Have it adopt principles for flexibility (exist) that guide in establishing, monitoring and contributing to successful FWA outcomes
- Æ Integrate Flexibility into mainstream management practices e.g. establish flexible management as a competency or requirement so stated in job descriptions
- Æ Encourage use of team approach vs. individual approach to plan FWA in a given office or unit
- Æ Select some managers to lead by example (and convince themselves that it works) i.e. Output and not face time based staff assessment
- Æ Systematically use metrics instruments such as surveys to document change in perceptions and use, as well as educate
- Æ Publicize/designate FWAs FPs tasked to assist with informal resolution of FWA cases in each department without burdening administration
- Æ Monitor requests, approvals and general issues with implementation
- Æ Showcase current good practices
- Æ OSAGI/





# UN Women

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# Role of UN Women

