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Better Than Status Quo (1 Letter)

To the Editor:

Re "A Status Quo Secretary General" (editorial, Jan. 6):

From a gender equality perspective, the new secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, has challenged the status quo by appointing two highly qualified women from developing countries to key positions: Asha-Rose Mtengeti-Migiro, former foreign minister of Tanzania, to the No. 2 position of deputy secretary general, and Alicia Bárcena Ibarra of Mexico to the post of under secretary general for management.

The secretary general pledged to appoint women to half of the top Secretariat positions. As an organization that has spearheaded a global 50-50 campaign to promote women in decision making, including at the United Nations, we have heard such pledges before.

But based on his initial appointments, this secretary general may be on his way to setting a record that begins to approach gender parity at the highest levels of the United Nations, a goal that eluded his predecessor. Such an achievement should be applauded, not ignored.

June Zeitlin

New York, Jan. 6, 2007

The writer is executive director of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).