

INTRODUCTION

In June 2008, the ICSC in full cooperation with organizations and staff federations launched the first ever attitude survey of staff serving throughout the UN Common System. The survey was open to all staff, in all categories, in all locations.

The results of the survey were used to inform the discussions in the International Civil Service Commission on the effectiveness of the recruitment and retention measures taken by the Common System organizations.

The following are the initial findings based on a first analysis of the data and in the months ahead we intend to perform further analysis.

The summary does not yet cover all the areas covered by the survey, but focuses on the three main questions which were: (1) what are the reasons staff joined the UN System in the first place (i.e. recruitment); (2) what are the reasons staff elect to stay in the common system (i.e. motivating retention factors); and (3) what might the reasons potentially be for staff to consider leaving the common system (i.e. de-motivating retention factors).

The confidentiality of individual responses is guaranteed, and the feedback to organizations has been designed in such a way that no single individual can be identified by his or her responses.

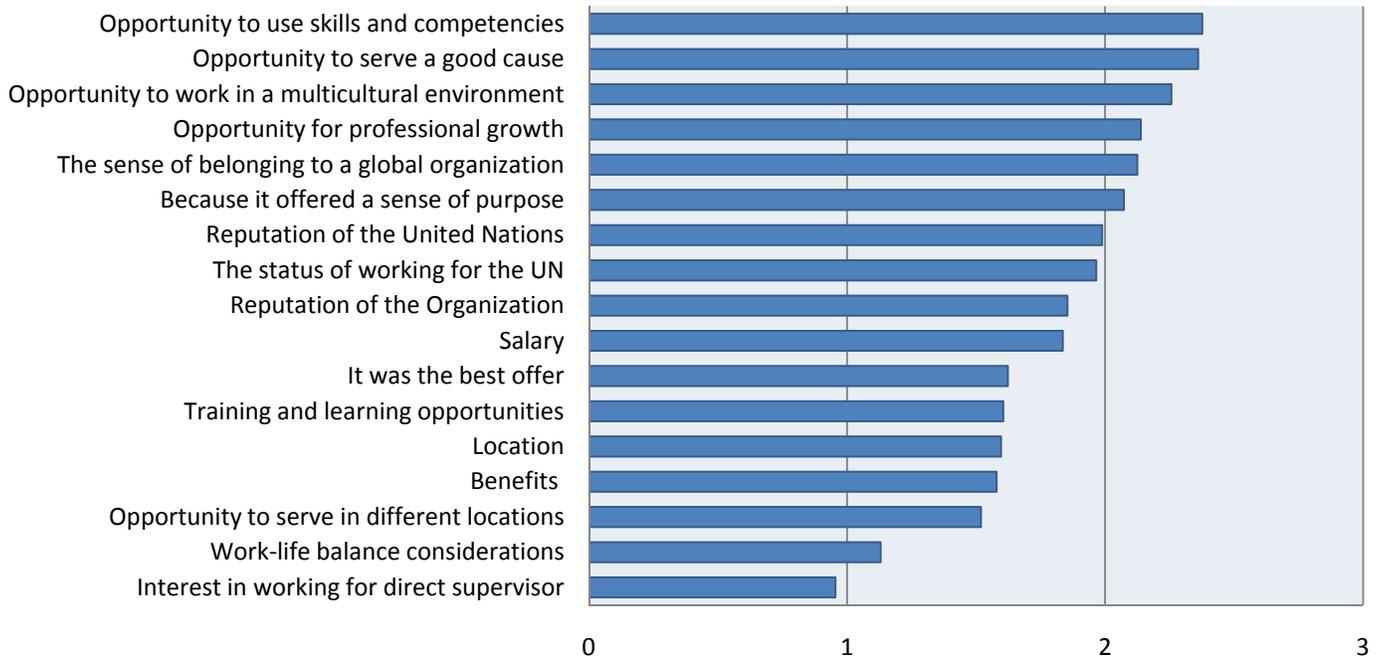
We should like extend our sincere thanks to the more than 15,000 staff members who took the time and effort to respond to the survey. This was an excellent response rate and demonstrates the importance staff attach to these important questions. We also thank staff for their frankness and honesty in replying: this is what made the survey the powerful tool that it is.



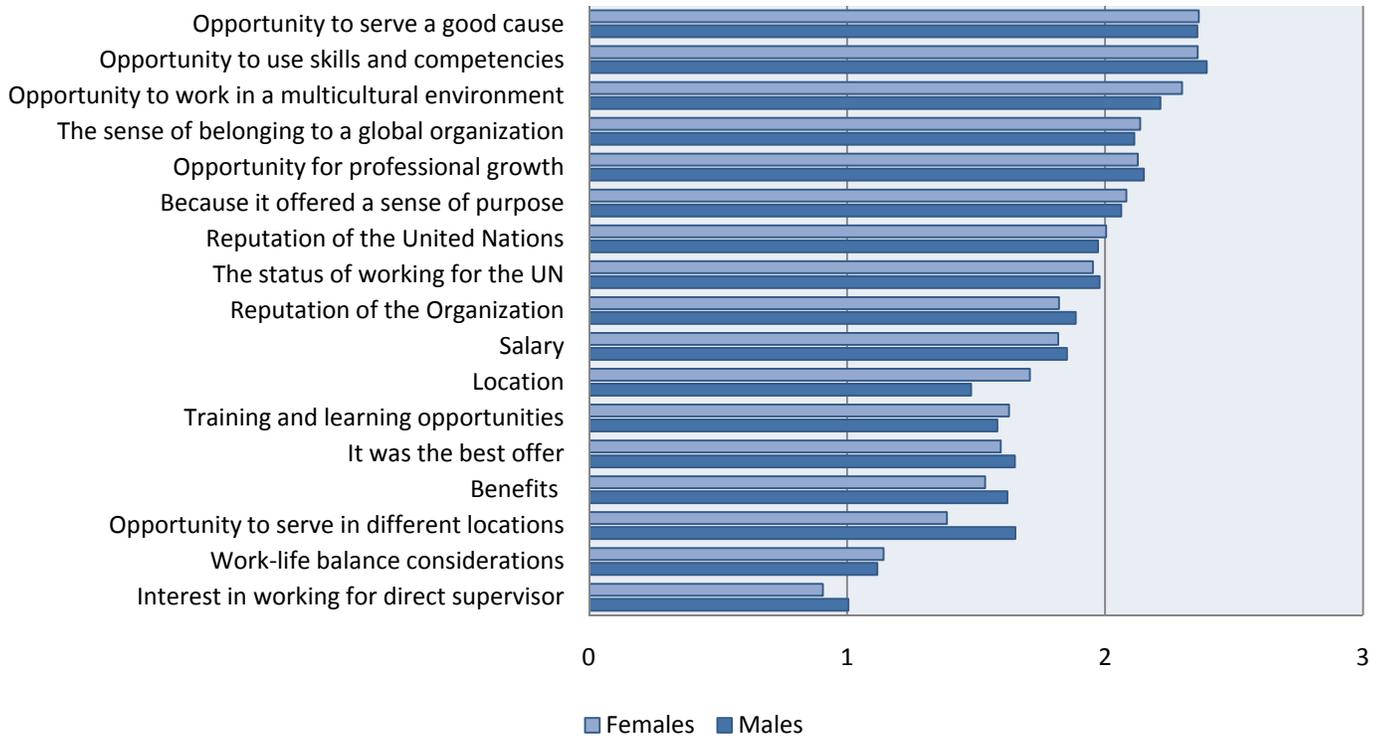
REASONS FOR JOINING

**Respondents' reasons for accepting their offer of
employment by the United Nations**

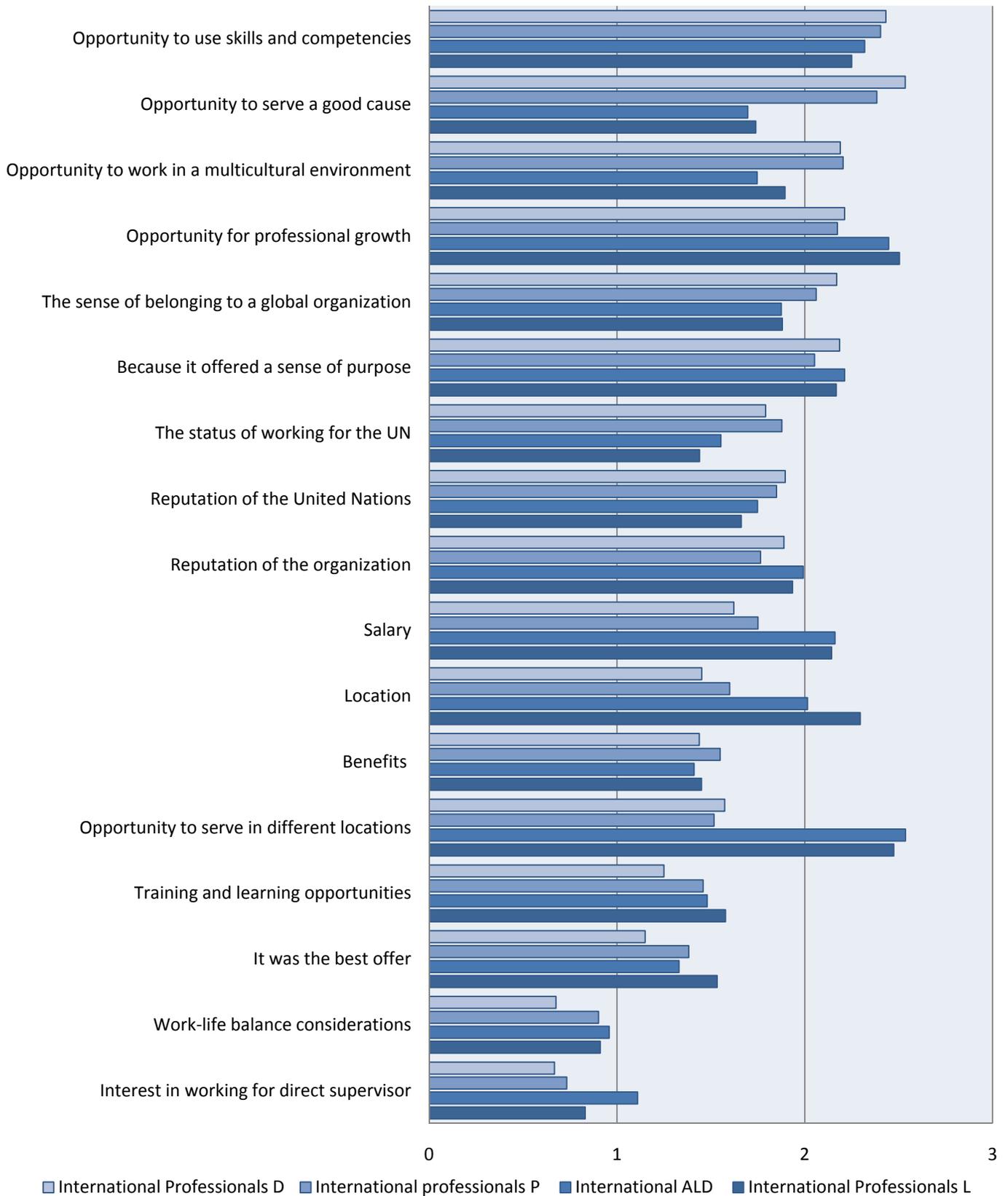
Reasons for joining All respondents



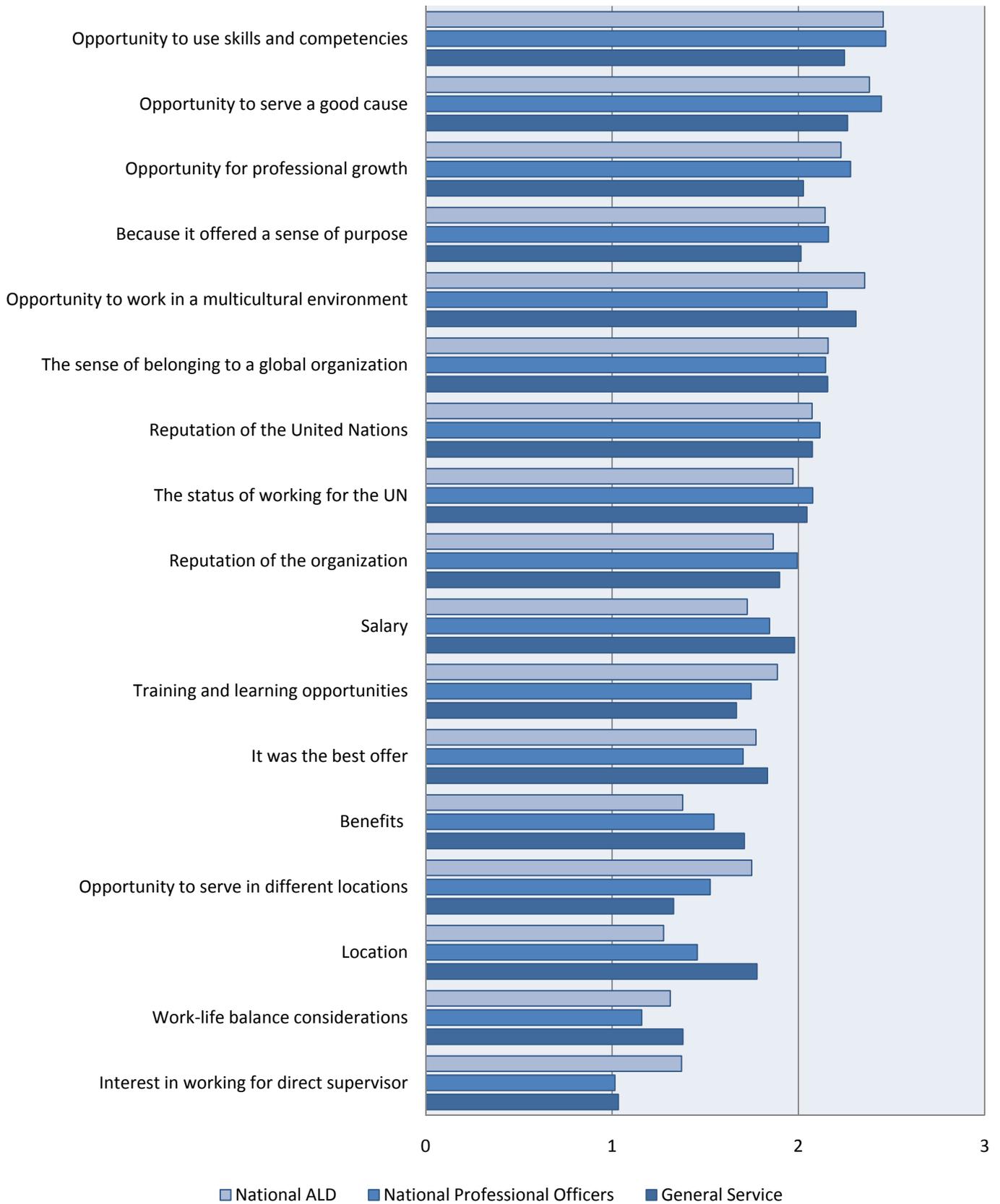
Reasons for joining, by gender All respondents



Reasons for joining, by category of staff
Internationally recruited staff



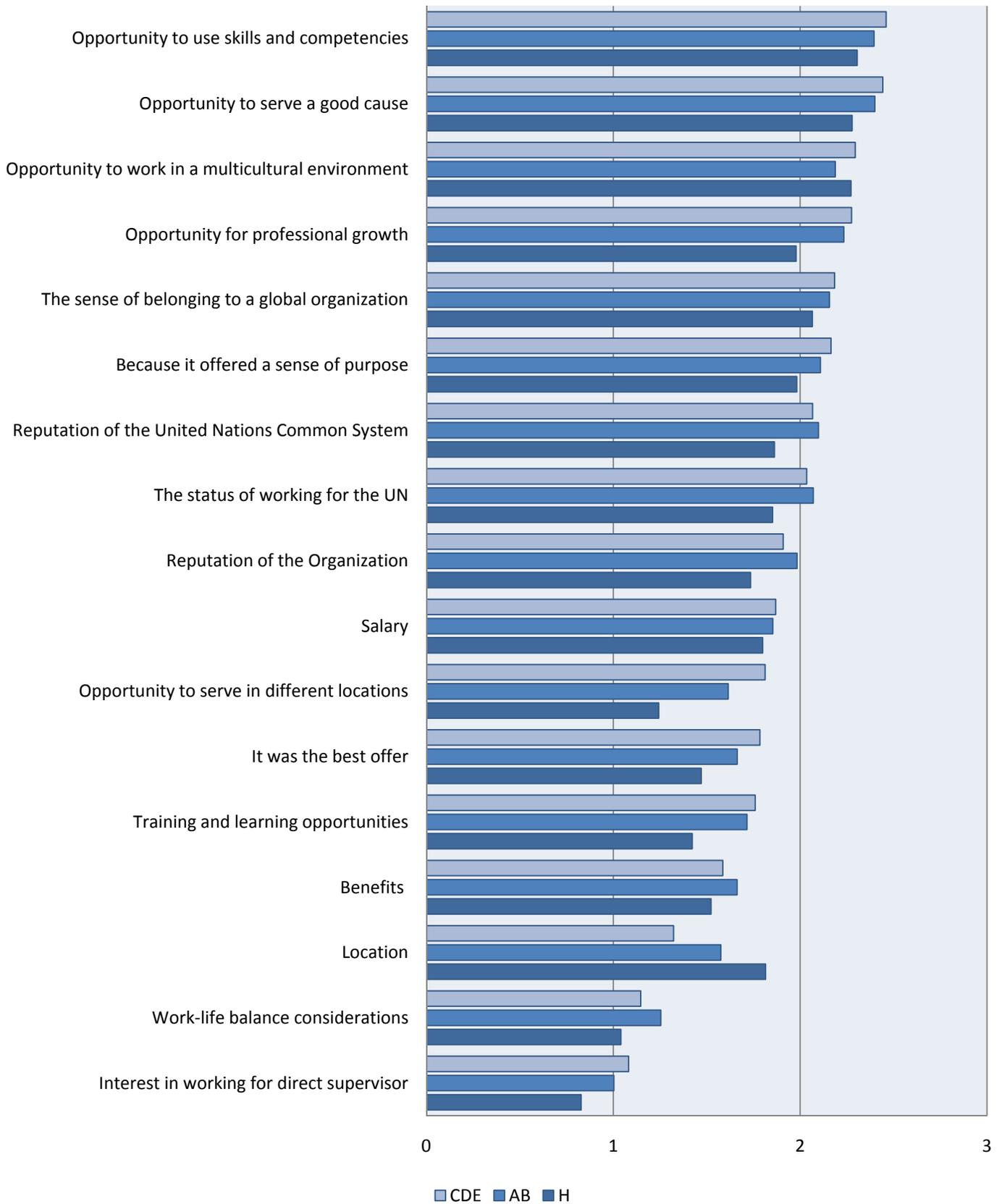
Reasons for joining, by category of staff
Nationally recruited staff



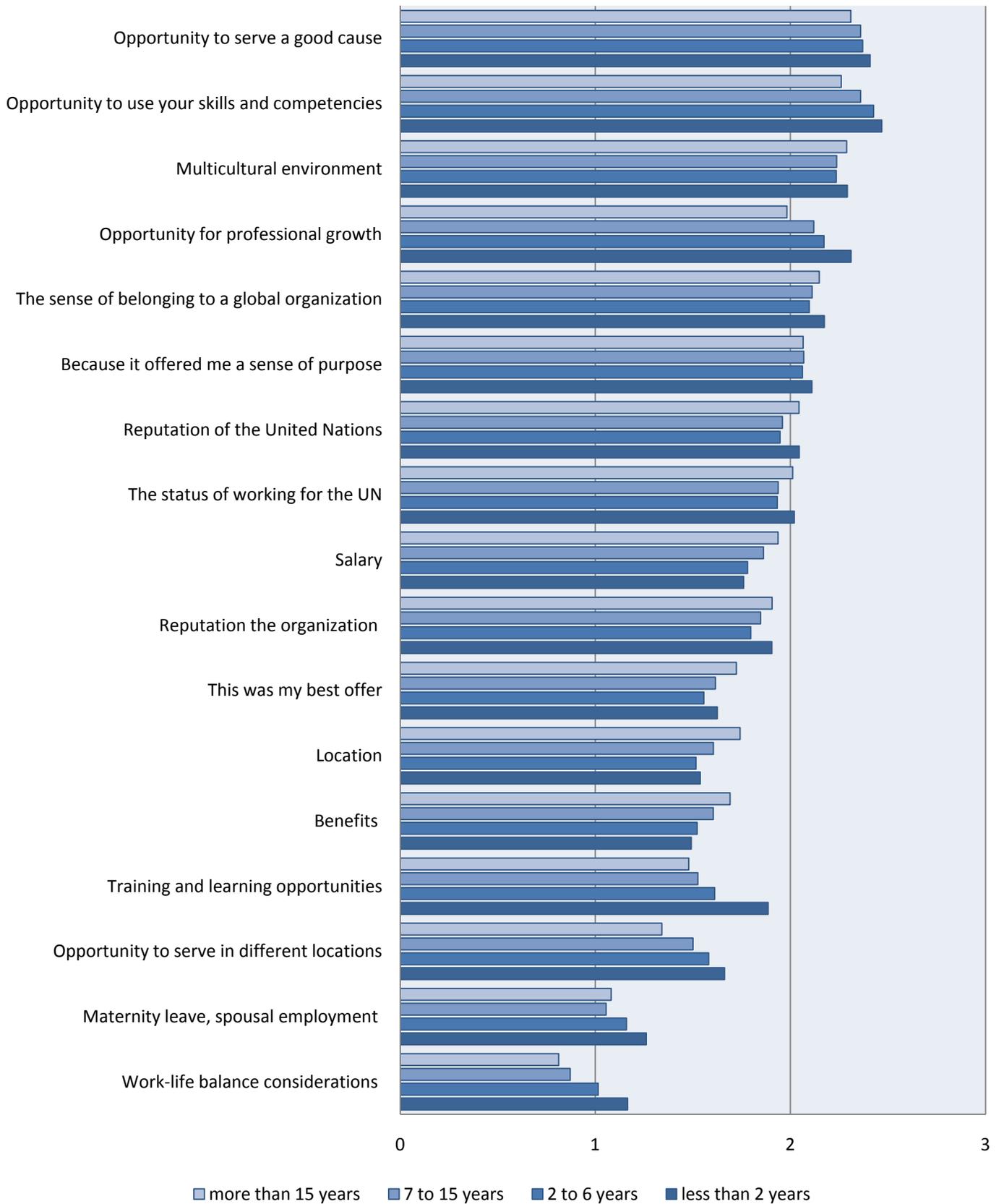
Reasons for joining, by category of staff Field Service



Reasons for joining, by type of duty station
All respondents

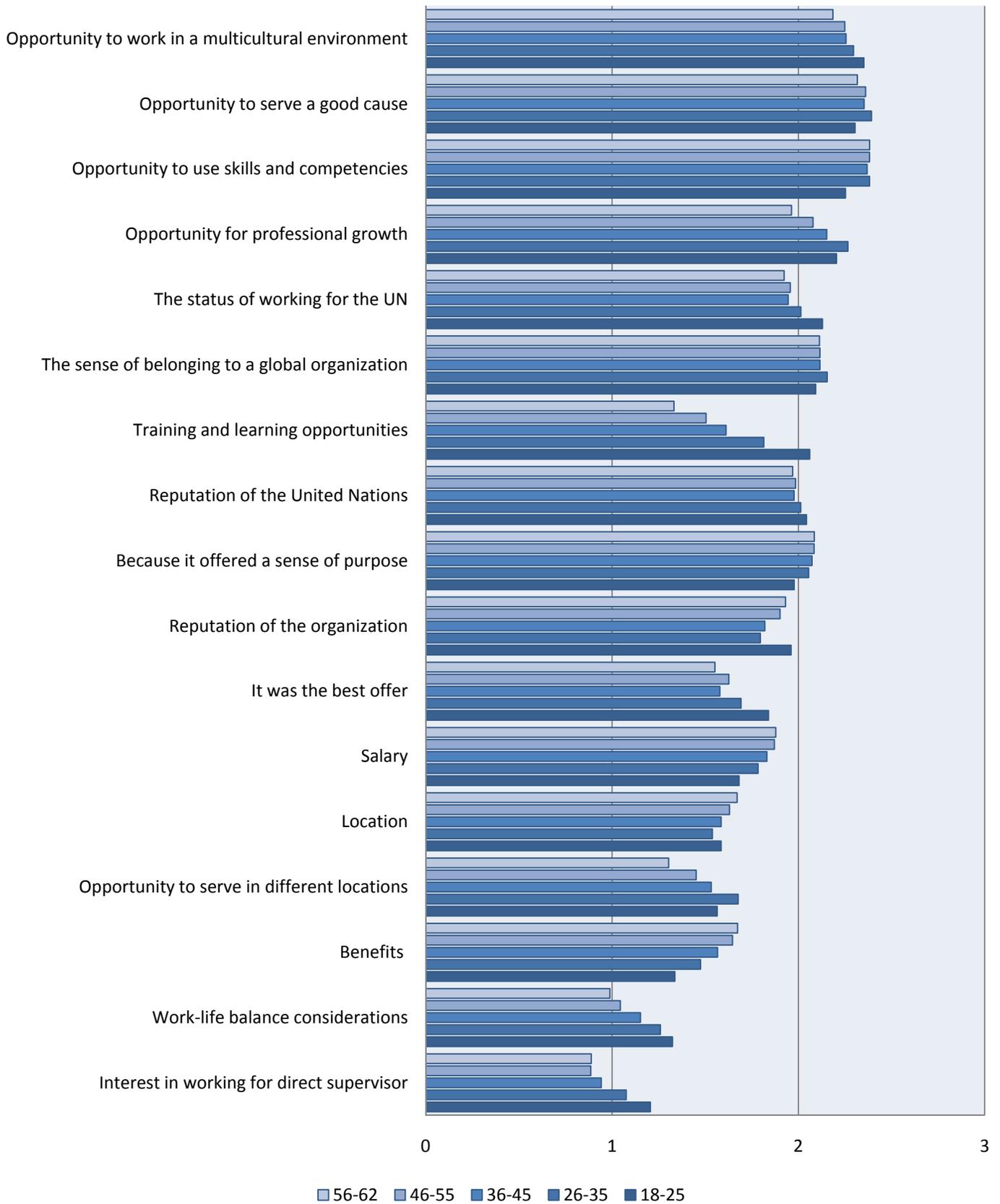


Reasons for joining, by length of service All respondents



Reasons for joining, by age

All respondents

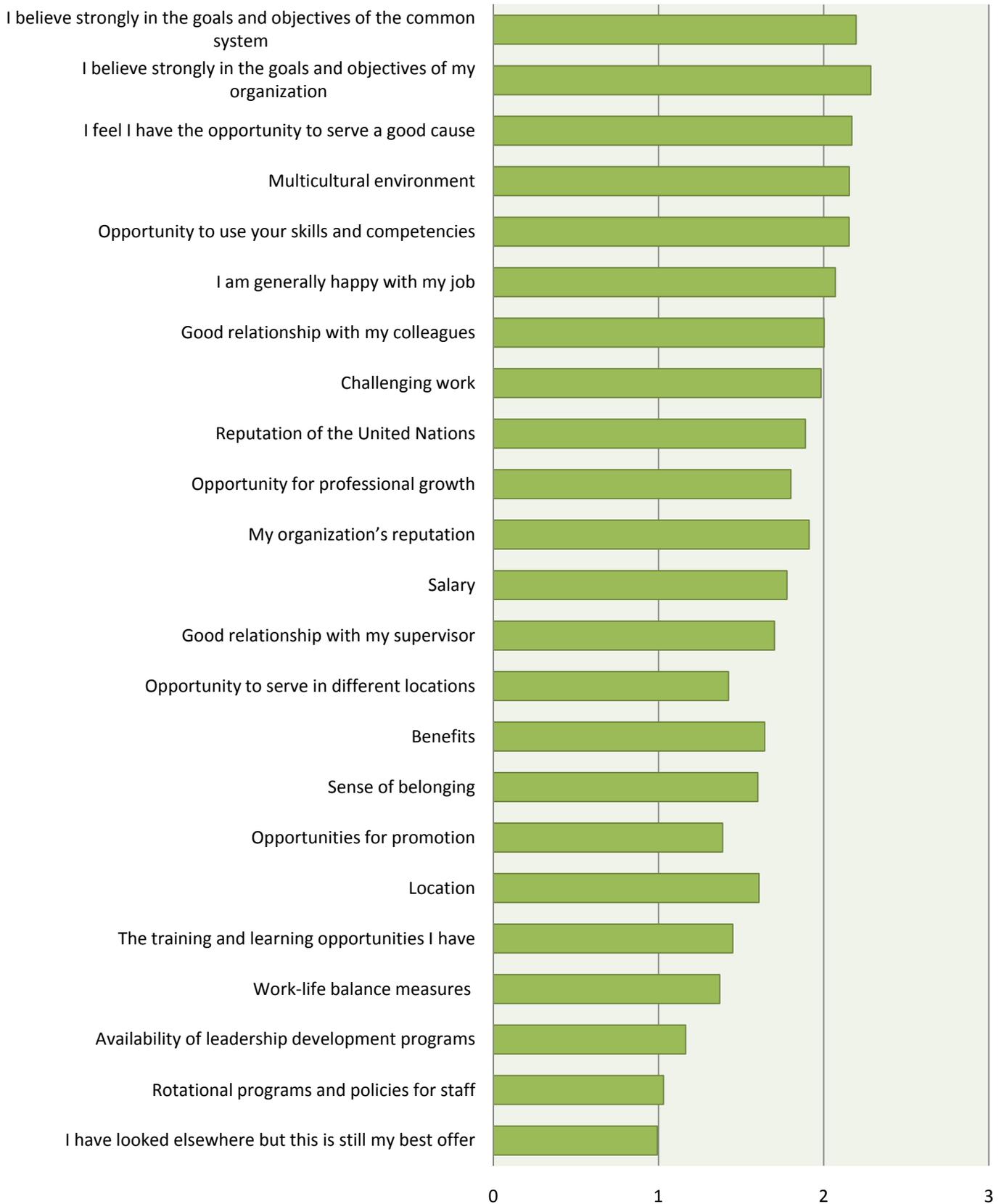




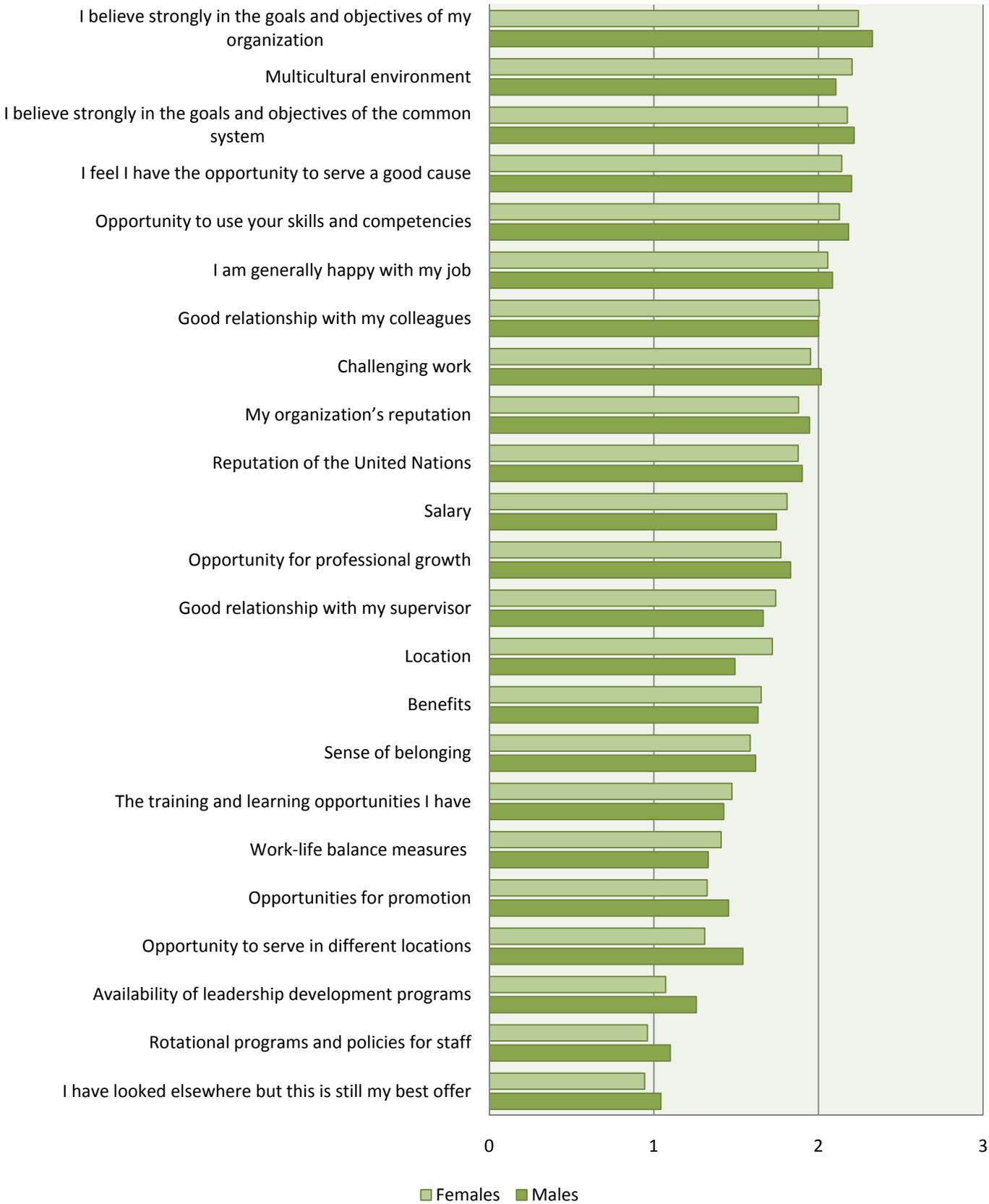
REASONS FOR STAYING

**The most important reasons for respondents to continue
working with the United Nations**

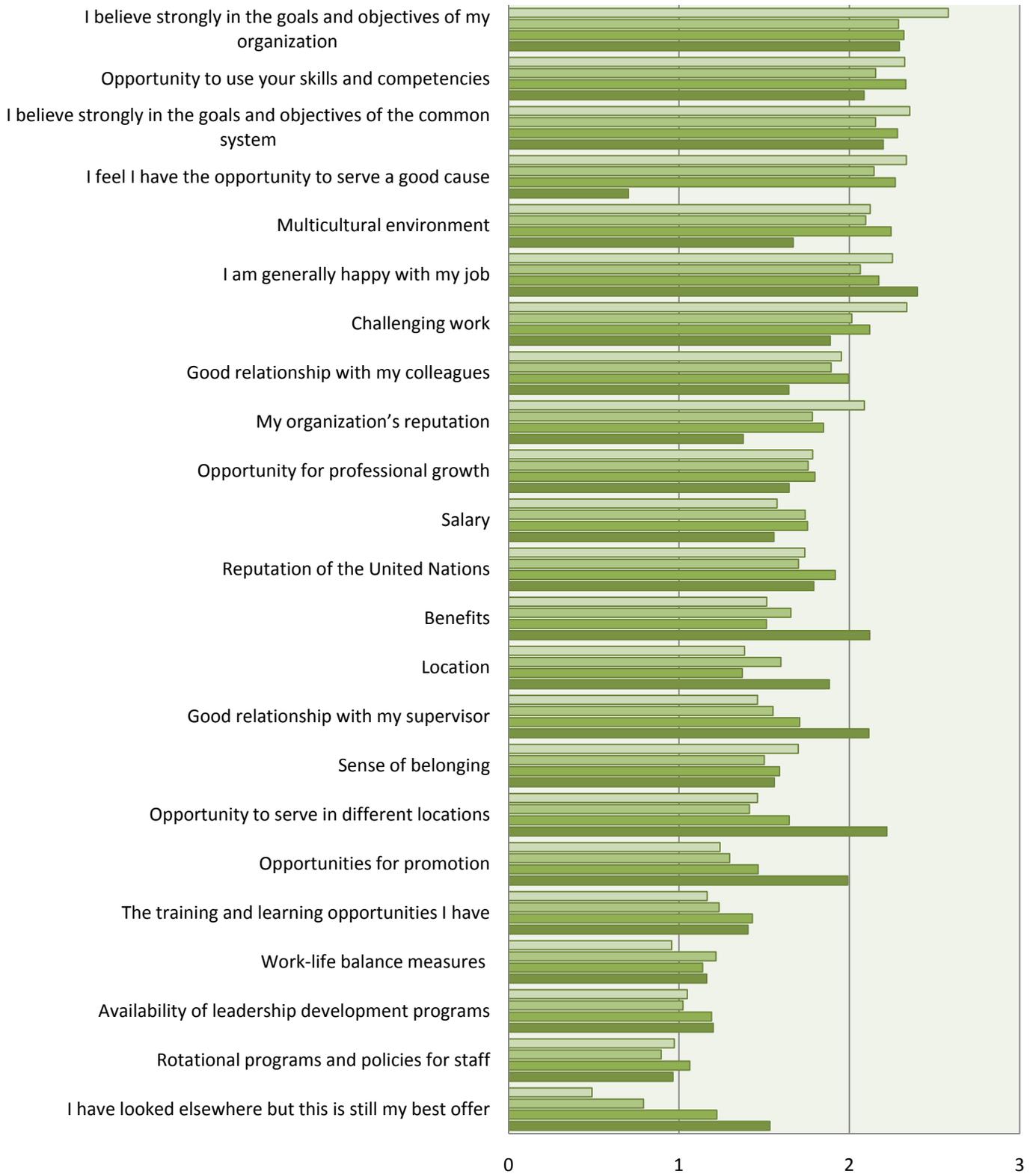
Reasons for staying All respondents



Reasons for staying, by gender
All respondents

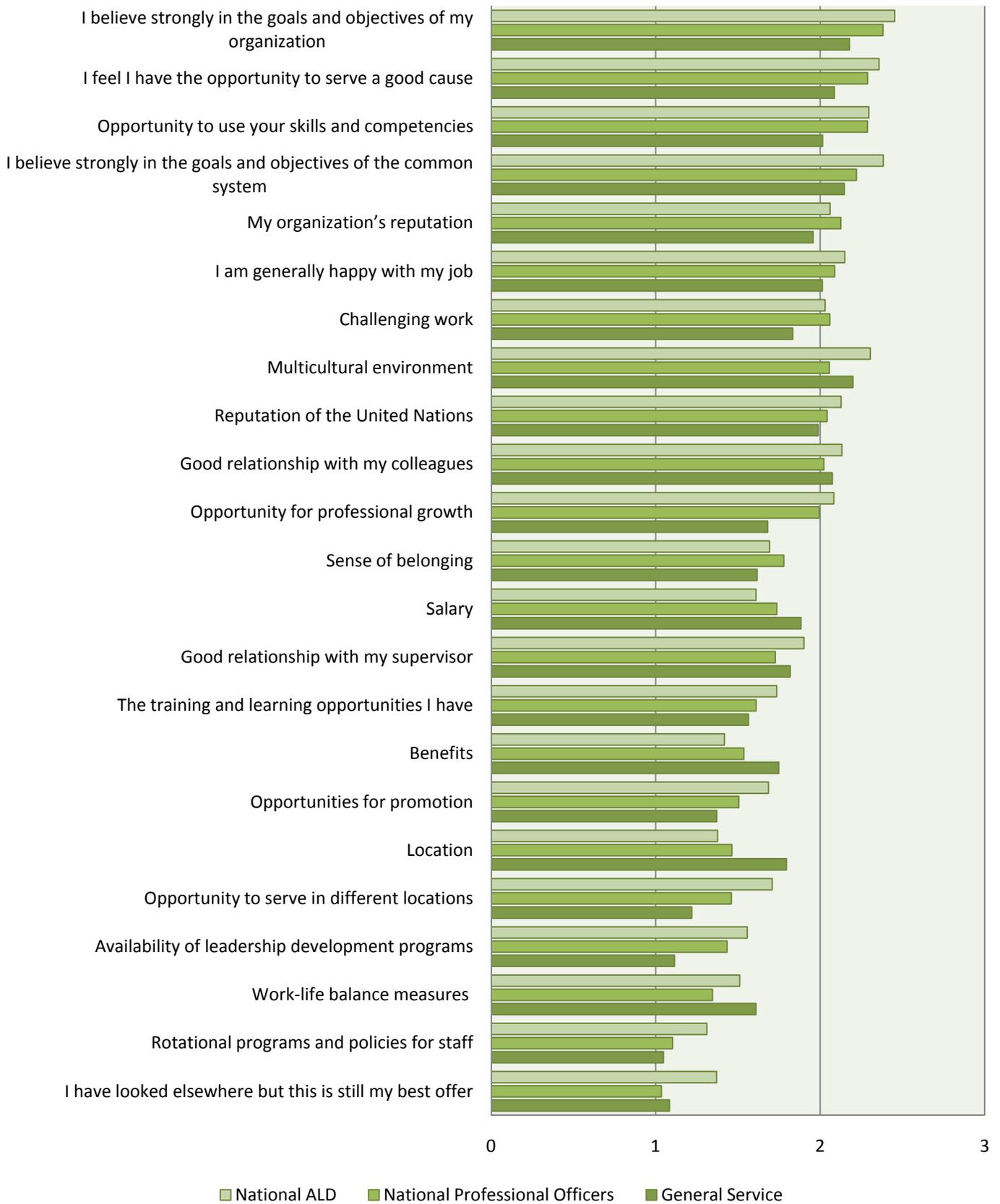


Reasons for staying, by category of staff Internationally recruited staff



■ International professionals D level
 ■ International professionals P level
 ■ International ALD
 ■ International Professionals L

Reasons for staying, by staff category Nationally recruited staff

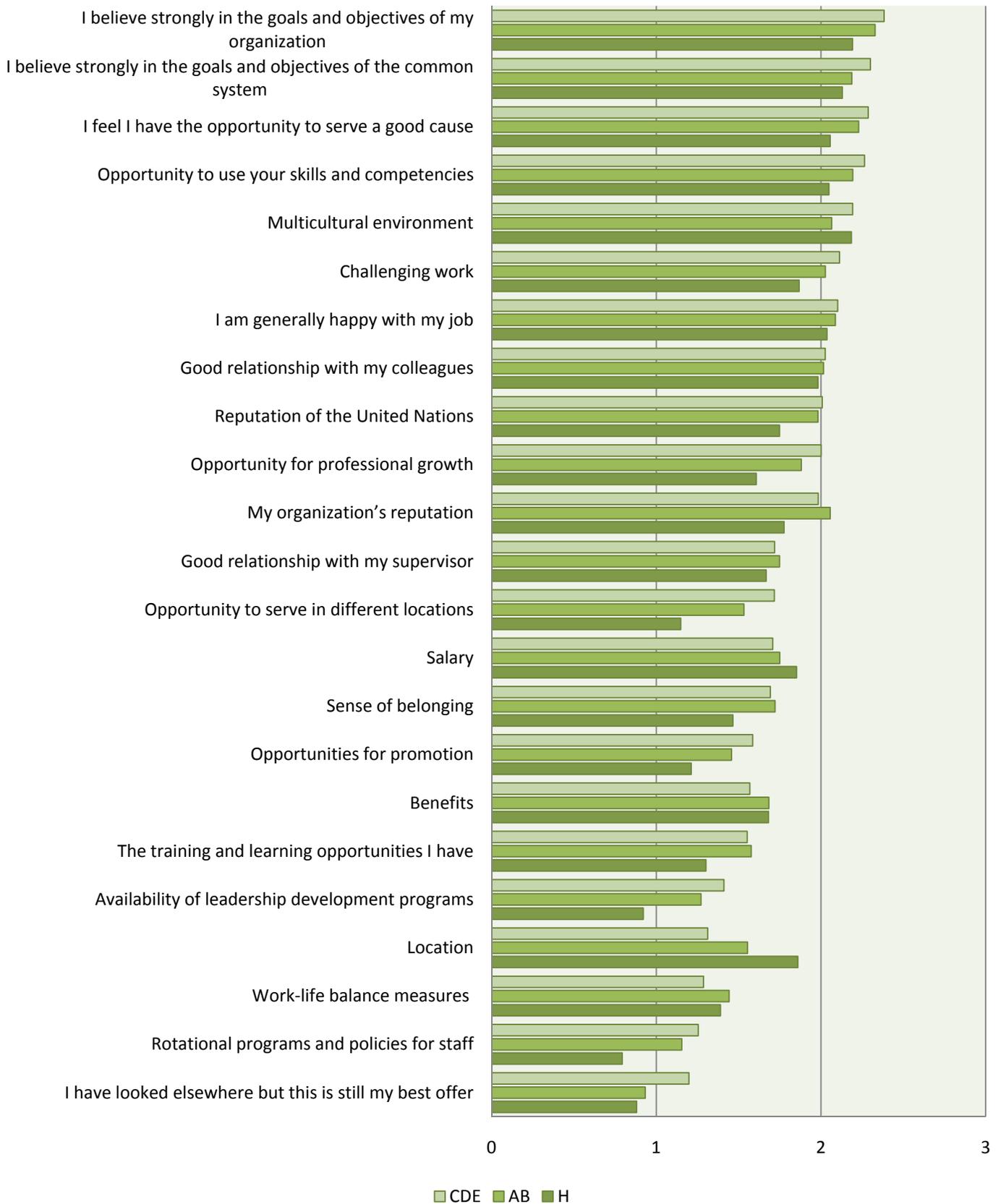


Reasons for staying Field Service

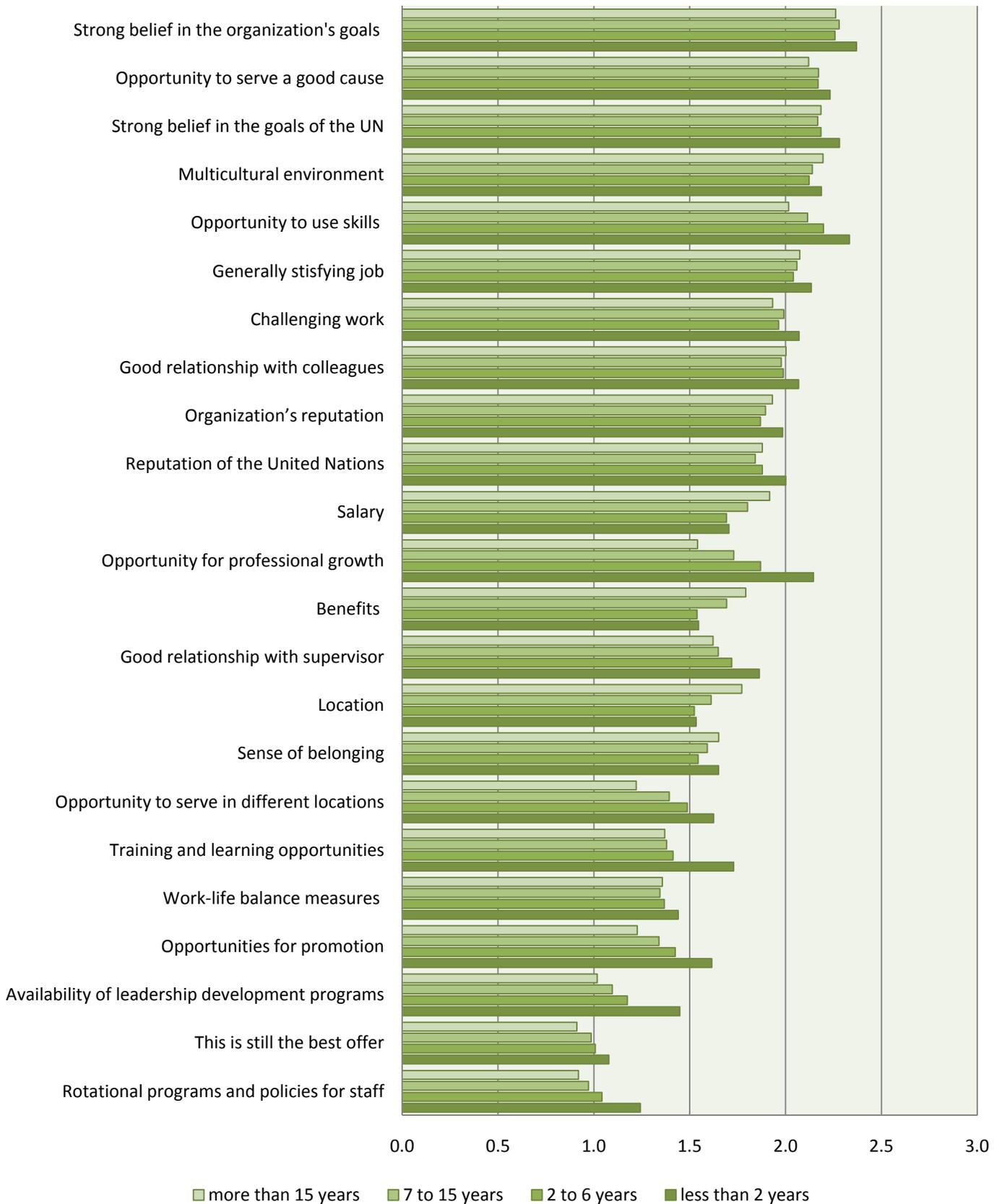


Reasons for staying, by type of duty station

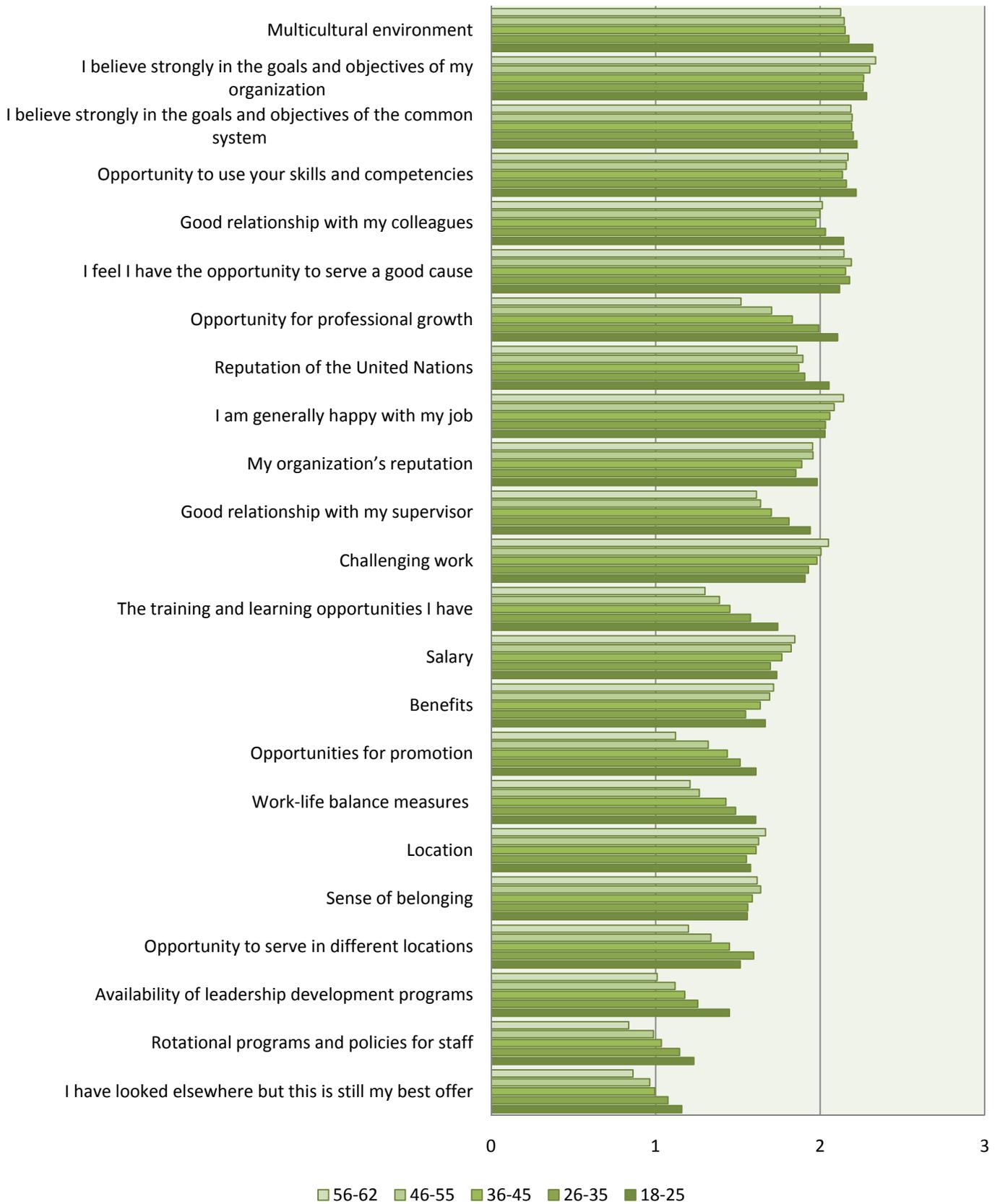
All respondents



Reasons for staying, by length of service All respondents



Reasons for staying, by age All respondents





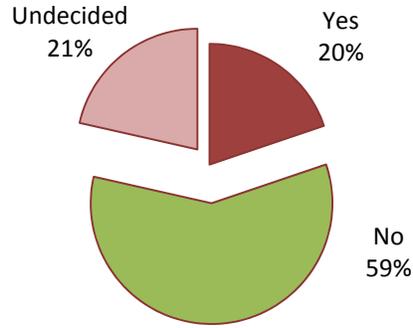
REASONS FOR CONSIDERING TO LEAVE

(Part 1)

Staff considering leaving their Organization

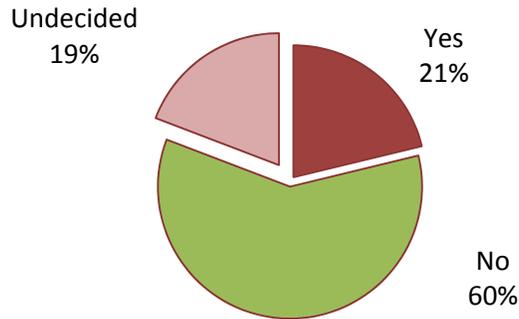
Percentage of staff seriously considering to leave their Organization

All respondents



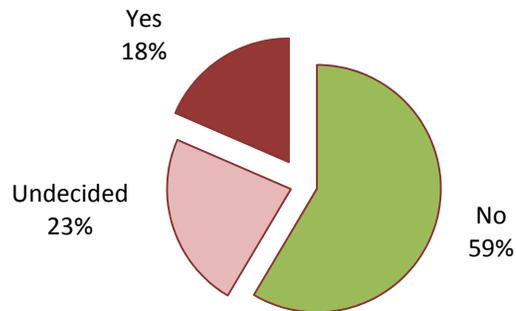
Percentage of staff seriously considering to leave their Organization

Headquarters duty stations



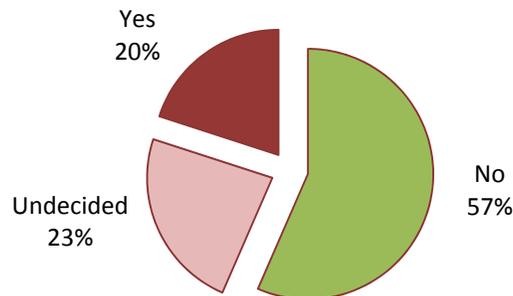
Percentage of staff seriously considering to leave their Organization

A and B duty stations



Percentage of staff seriously considering to leave their Organization

Difficult duty stations



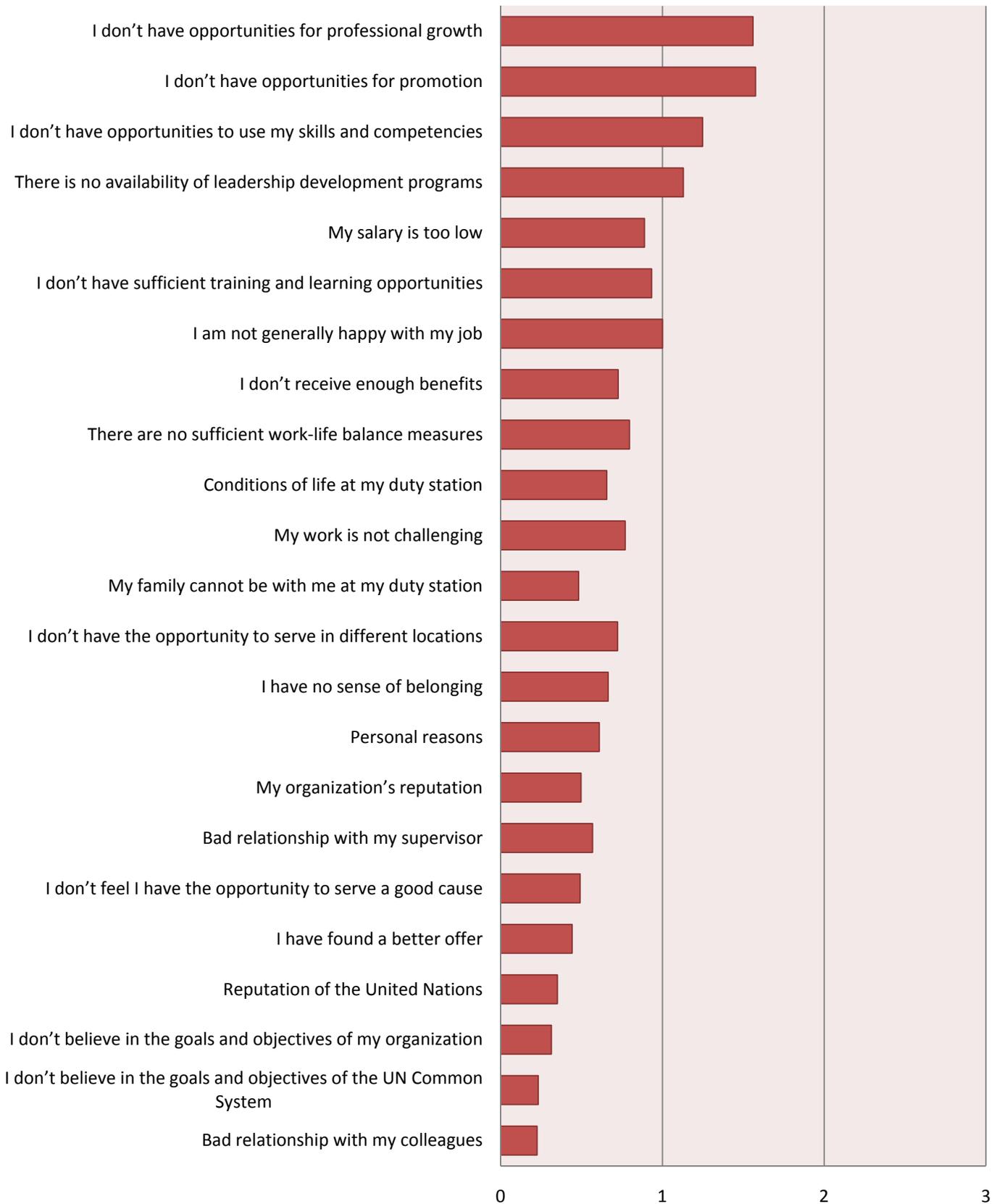


REASONS FOR CONSIDERING TO LEAVE

(Part 2)

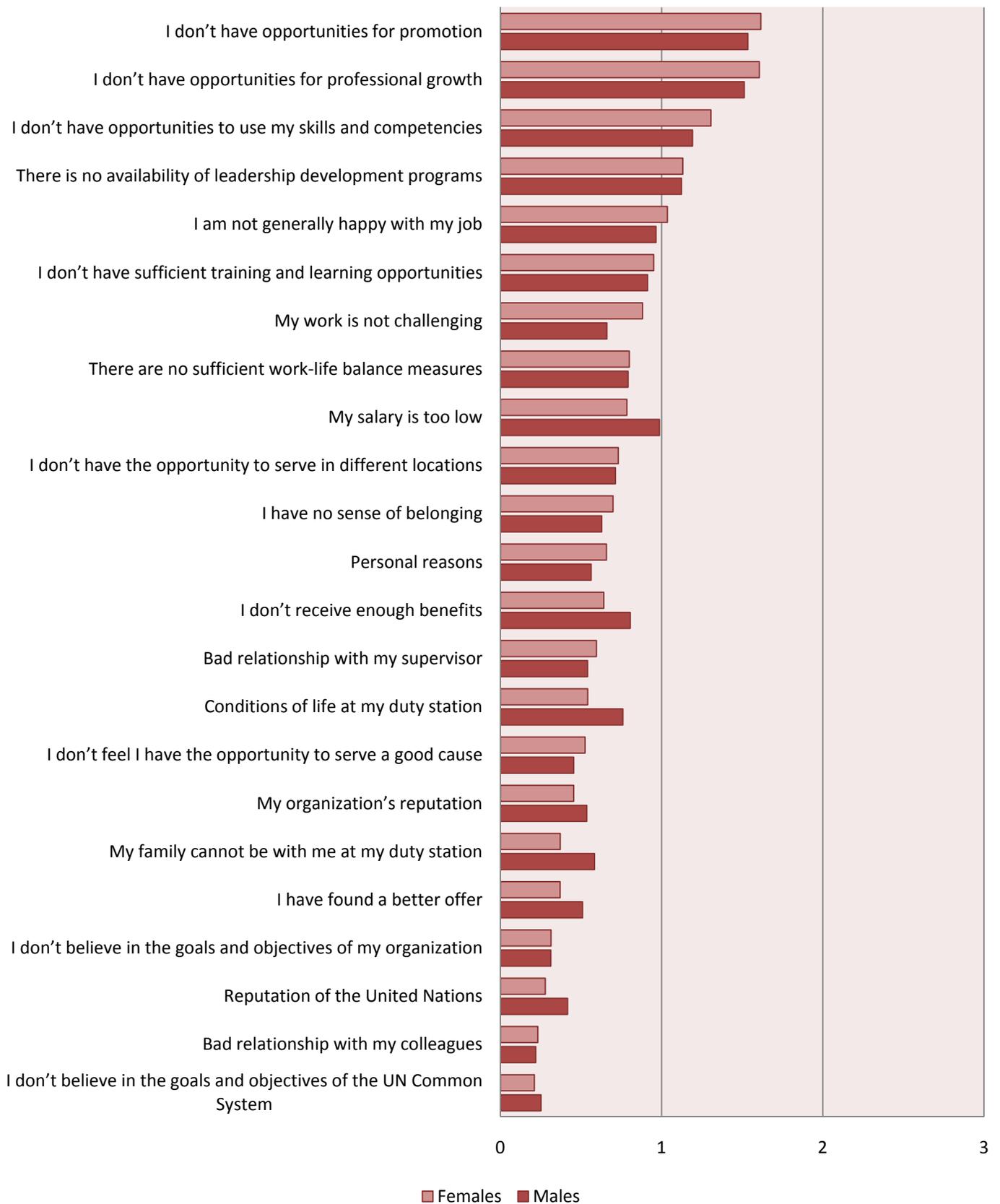
Most important reasons staff consider leaving their Organization

Reasons for considering to leave All respondents

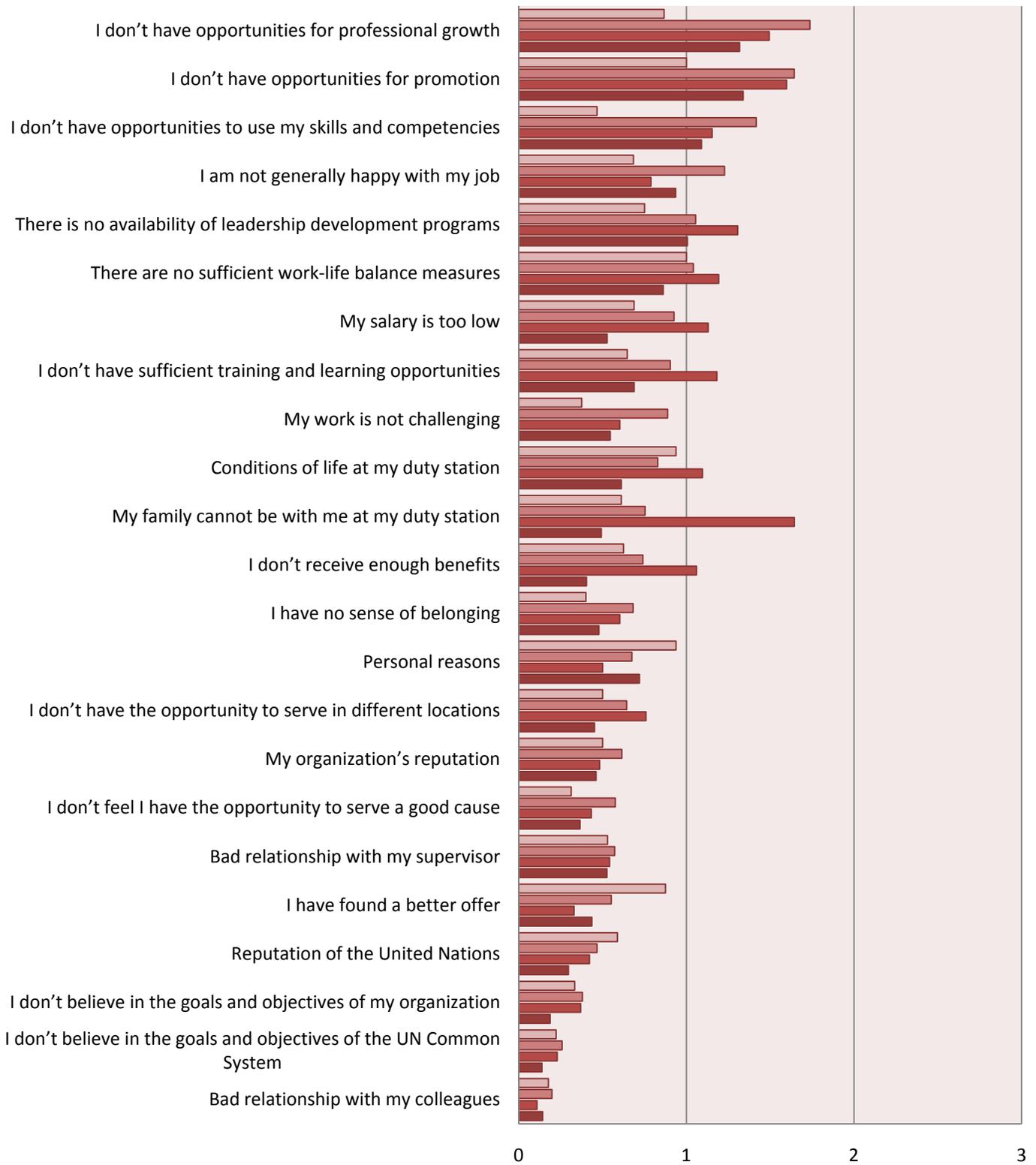


Reasons for considering to leave, by gender

All respondents

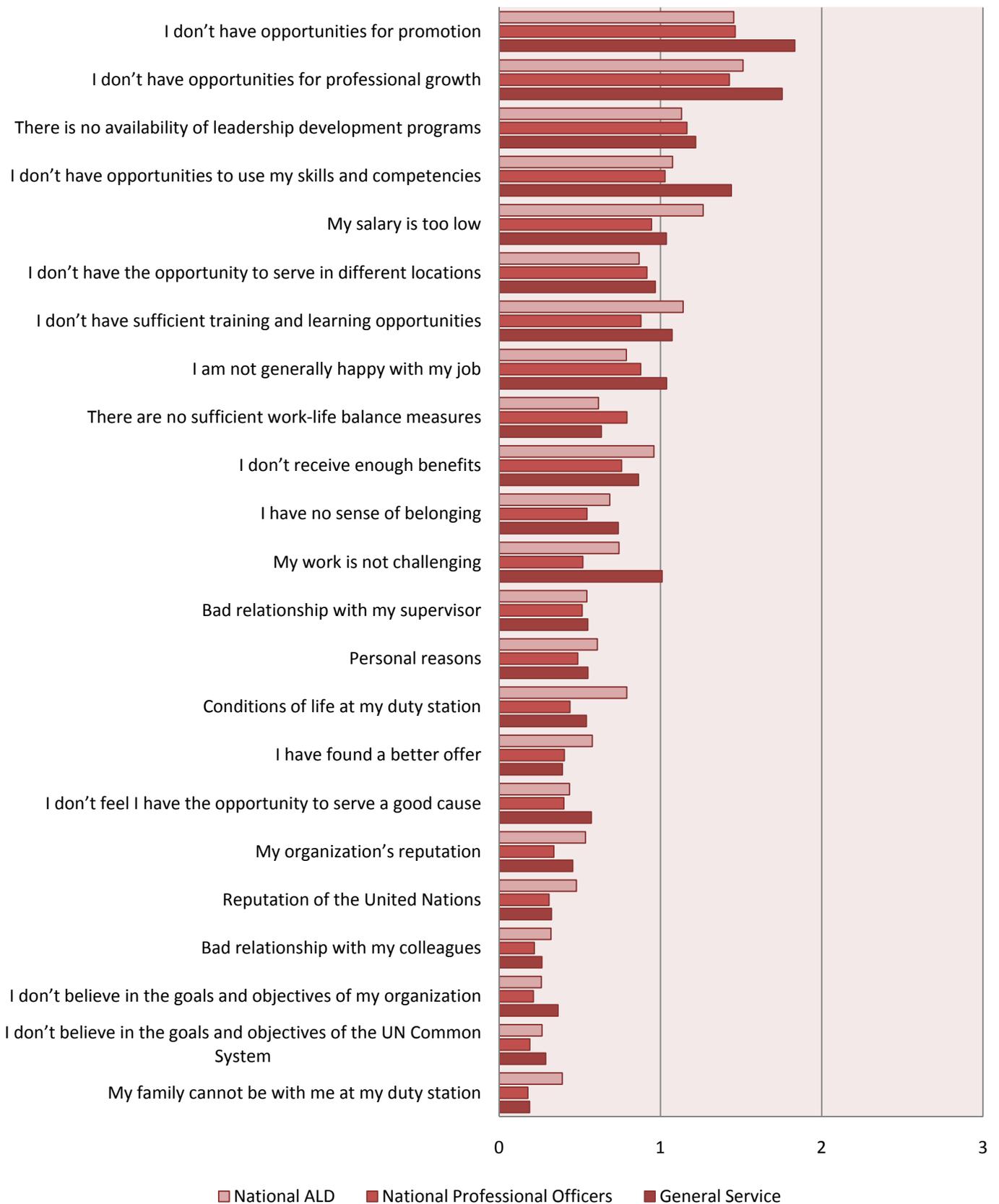


Reasons for considering to leave, by category of staff Internationally recruited staff

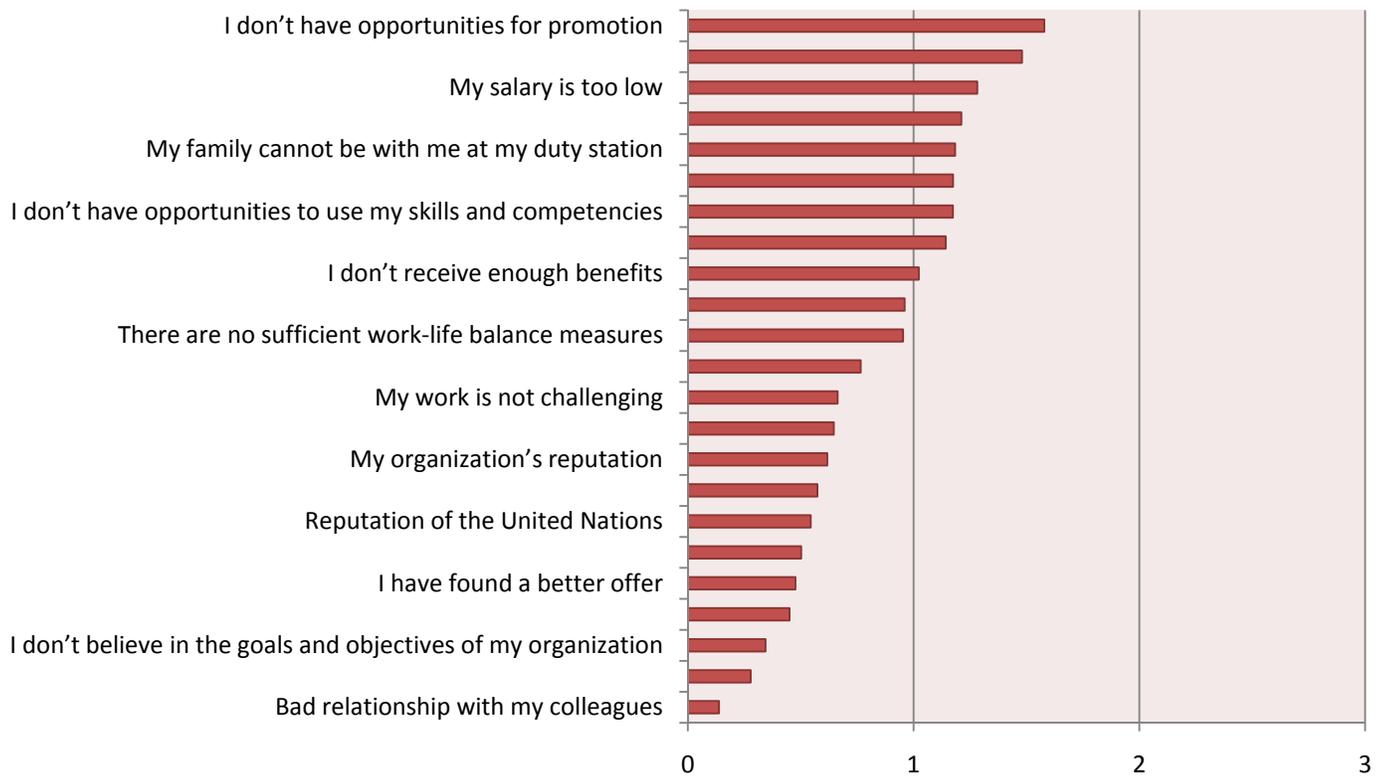


■ International professionals D level
 ■ International professionals P level
 ■ International ALD
 ■ International professionals L

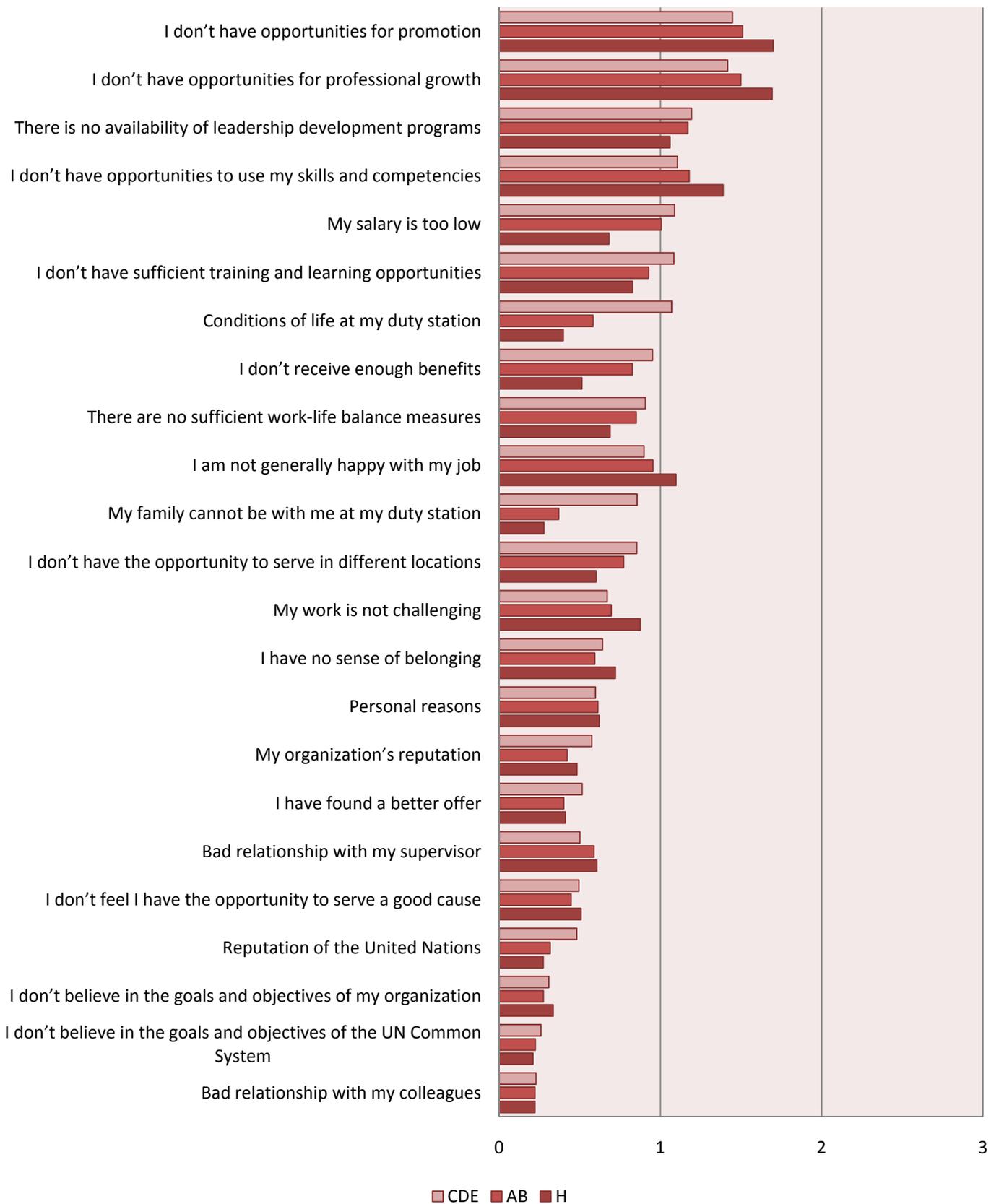
Reasons for considering to leave, by category of staff Nationally recruited staff



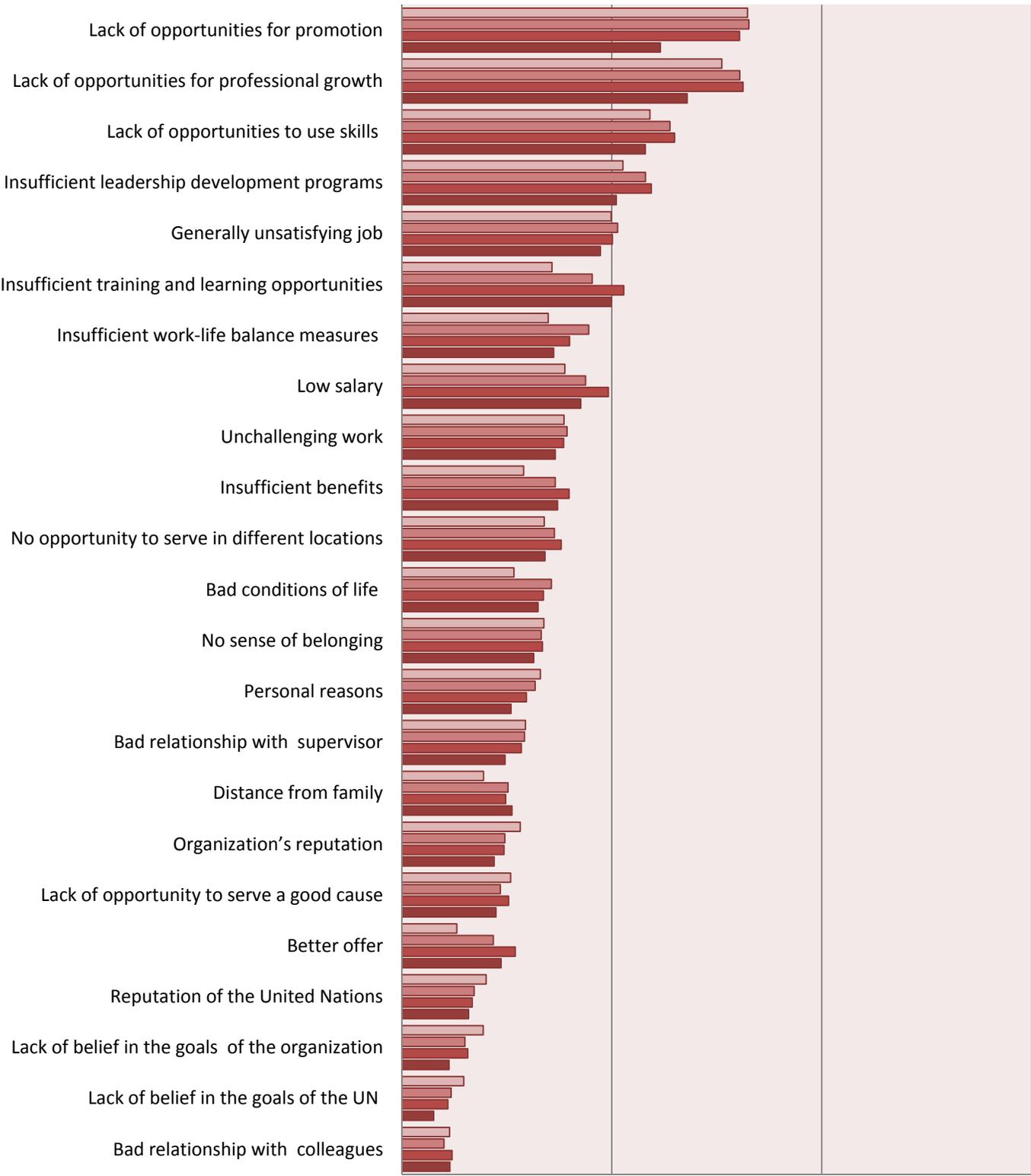
Reasons for considering to leave Field Service



Reasons for considering to leave, by type of duty station
All respondents



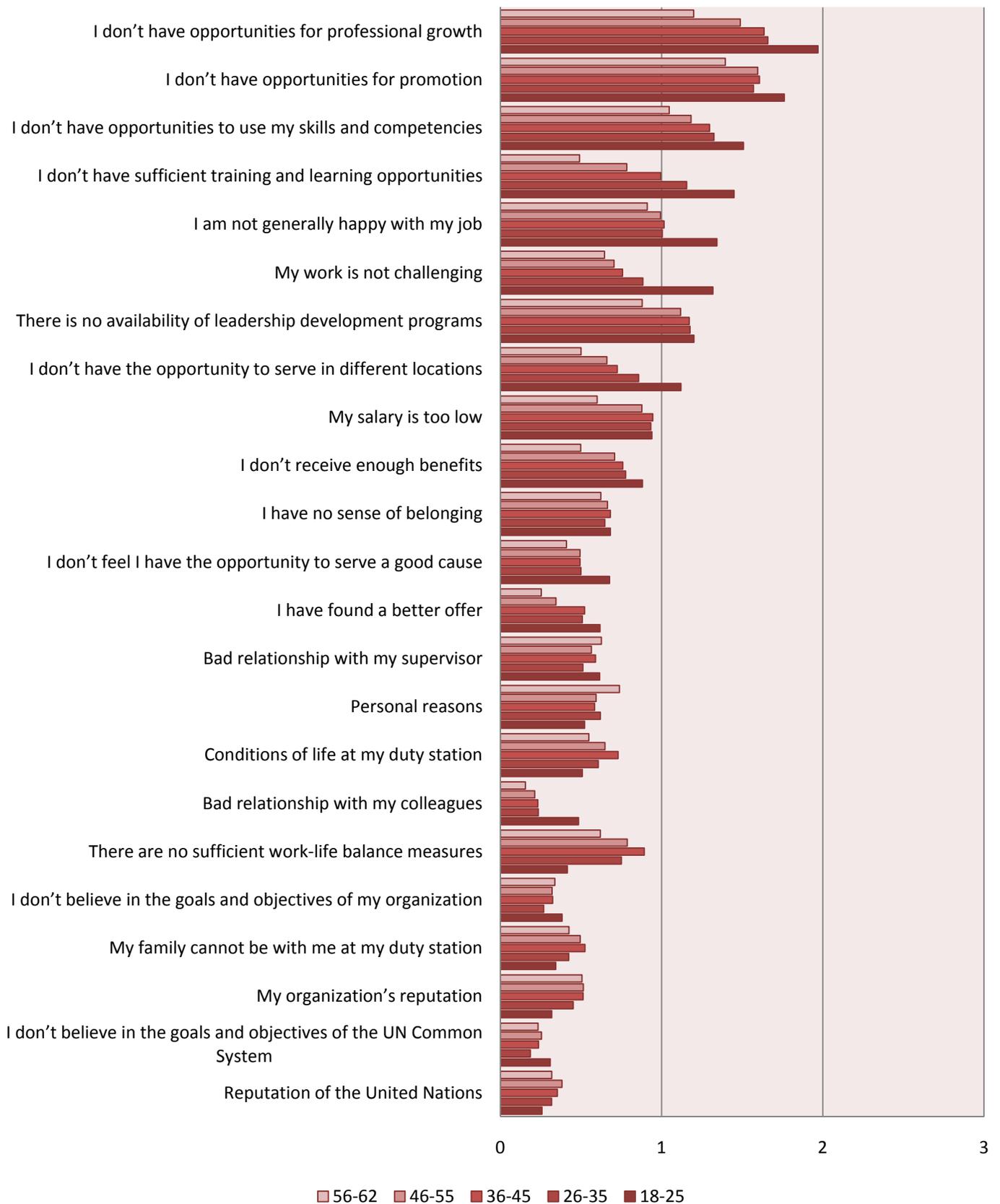
Reasons for considering to leave, by length of service
All respondents



more than 15 years 7 to 15 years 2 to 6 years less than 2 years

Reasons for considering to leave, by age

All respondents



Preliminary Conclusions

1. The data generated by this staff survey were so rich and comprehensive that it has been challenging to condense the main findings to a short report such as this one. It is the secretariat's intention to subsequently issue supplementary reports with some of the more detailed findings of the survey, in particular as they pertain to the selected issues covered by the survey which had a bearing on the recruitment and retention of staff (recruitment time, search media, career plans, training and development, areas on which managers encourage staff to focus, communication issues, recognition and involvement, supportive policy frameworks, and stress).
2. For the immediate purposes of reporting to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of measures taken in the areas of recruitment and retention, and to formulate recommendations on how such measures might be improved, the present analysis has focused on the three main questions: why did staff join in the first place, why do they stay, and are they considering to leave (and why). Each of these questions has been examined from the perspective of gender, broad staff category, age, and location.
3. Gender does not seem to play any significant role in terms of different responses to the same question, whereas age and category of staff do introduce some differences. Some striking differences are sometimes seen when analyzing the data by type of duty station.
4. An analysis of the responses from staff of the reasons for joining the United Nations system in the first place provides a good insight into what organizations should be focusing on when attempting to attract talent. Candidates seeking employment with the United Nations system do so predominantly because they see the United Nations as a place where they might use their skills and competencies, and because of the opportunity of serving a good cause and the reputation of the system. The United Nations brand is still strong, and is in itself an attraction factor: this greatly facilitates the job of any recruitment manager.
5. When we look at the reasons why people stay, it is to a large extent the same factors which are repeated. But when we look at the approximately 40 per cent of the total population which informs us that they are either seriously considering leaving the organization, or are undecided (i.e. they might leave if the conditions were right), we see a very different pattern: while the attraction and retention factors are still present, they are not necessarily strong enough to keep people motivated. They are often out-weighted by internal factors related to the frustration of individuals: lack of promotions, lack of professional growth, lack of opportunities to use the very skills and competencies staff had said was what attracted them in the first place.

6. Yet, the attrition rate is minimal. This could lead to the conclusion that staff do not leave because they deep down believe in – or would like to – the worthy cause for which they toil, but they are not very happy or do not feel very appreciated in their everyday institutional lives. The problem may therefore not be retention, but effectiveness.

7. If this is indeed the case, then there could be a potential problem for the United Nations system. If a proportion of the staff are not well motivated they are unlikely to be as productive as they might otherwise be. The challenge for organizations will be to capitalize on the goodwill generated by the United Nations image, while maximizing the positive experience of working within the system.

8. As a means of achieving this, the following graphs may be helpful in identifying where the areas of potential intervention might be most effective. Based on the responses received, each graph measures the reported level of satisfaction against the relative importance of the various retention factors (what keeps staff on board) and push factors (what drives staff to leave). This analysis is done by broad category of staff, and by duty station location since these are the two factors which showed the greatest differences.

9. Policy makers might use these graphical representations of the results of the staff survey to inform the development of effective talent management strategies that will specifically target areas of organizational vulnerability and build on areas of organizational strength.

10. By way of illustration, items in the upper right-hand quadrant represent high retention factors. These are the organizational **strengths**, things the organization appears to deliver well on. They are of high relative importance, reflecting a high level of satisfaction within the segment of the workforce being represented. Items in the lower right-hand quadrant represent secondary retention factors (low relative importance, but high level of satisfaction). These are the factors which should be **monitored**. The organization must strive to maintain the high retention factors as they are and ensure that the secondary retention factors continue to reflect a high level of satisfaction.

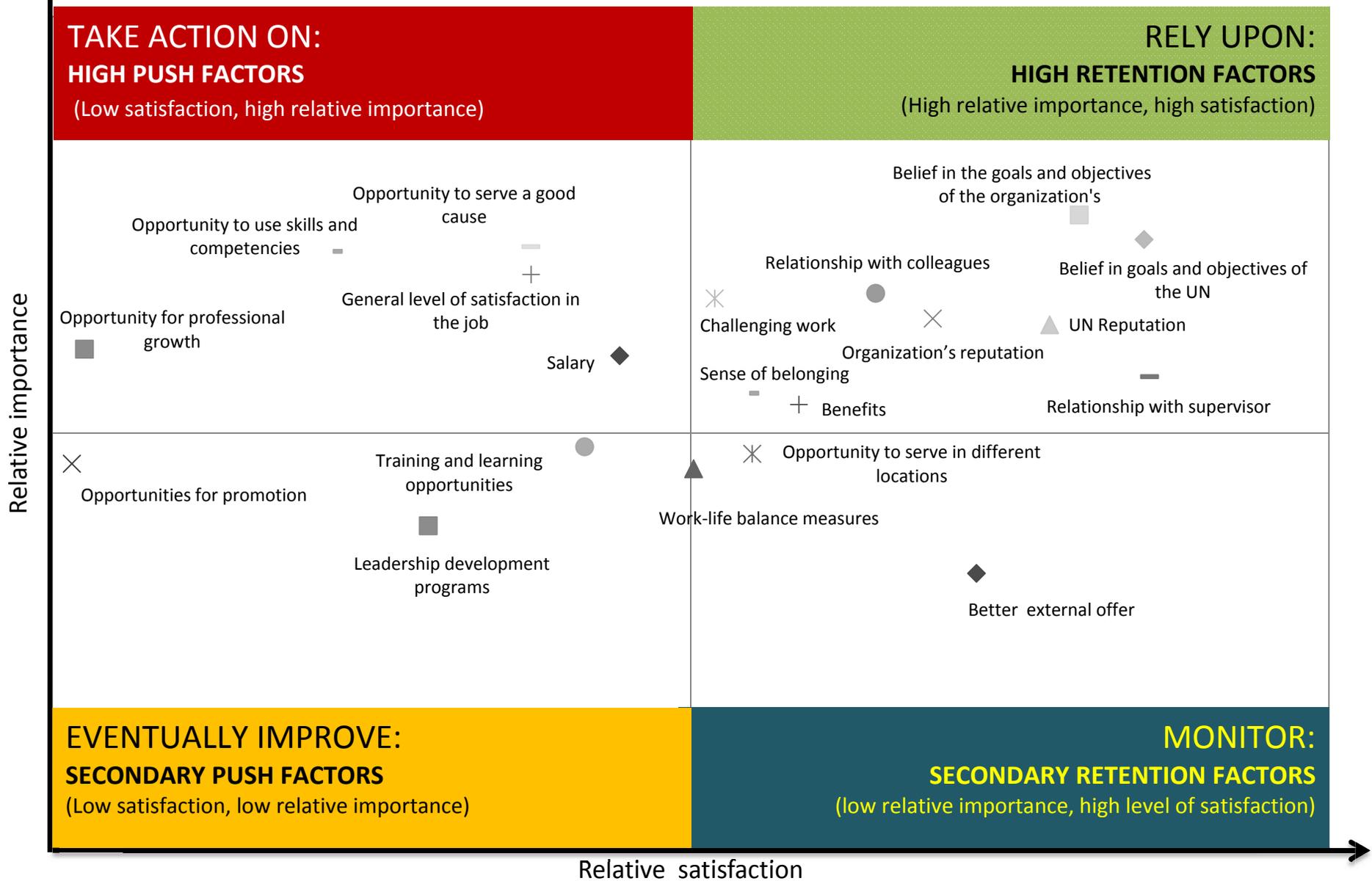
11. Items in the upper left-hand quadrant represent the high push factors, those of high relative importance, but which enjoy only a low satisfaction rate. Items in this quadrant are the **action items** which require the most immediate attention in order to improve staff morale, organizational performance, and potential loss of talent. Items in the lower left-hand quadrant represent the secondary push factors, reflecting low satisfaction but also low relative importance. They are items for **eventual improvement**. Once the issues in the upper left hand quadrant have been addressed, efforts should shift to focus on the lower one.



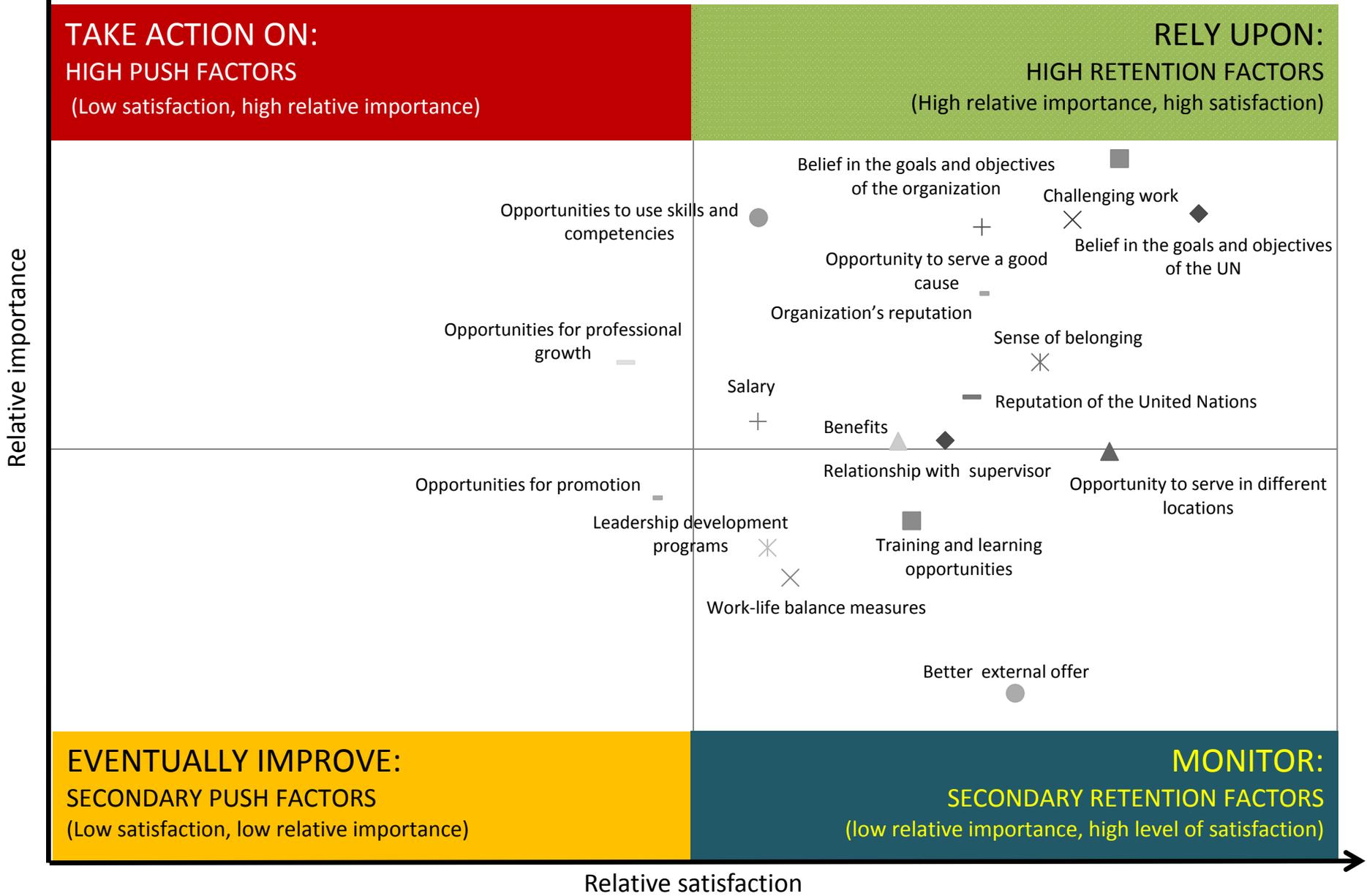
STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE



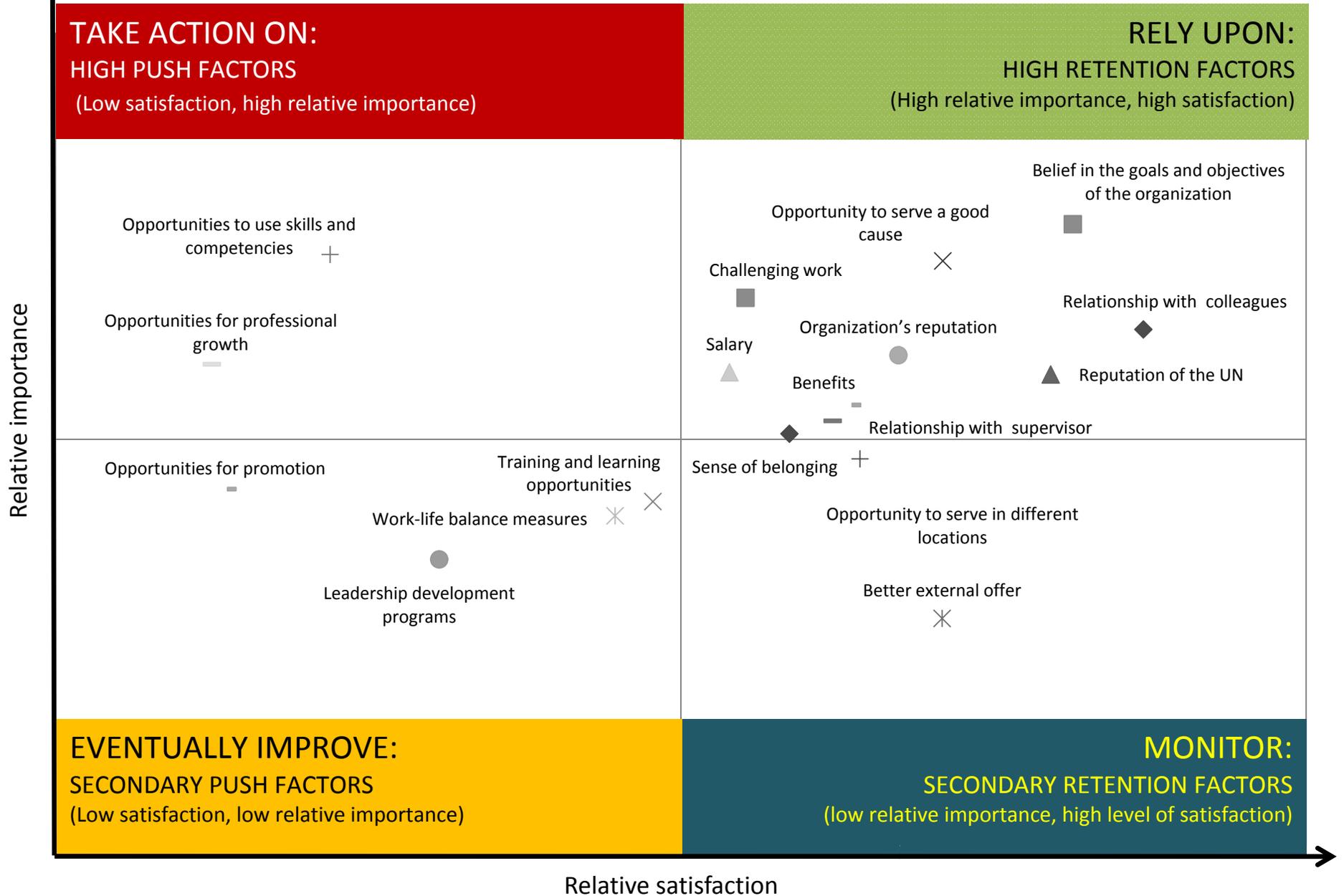
Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common system's retention potential
All respondents



**Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
International Professionals D**

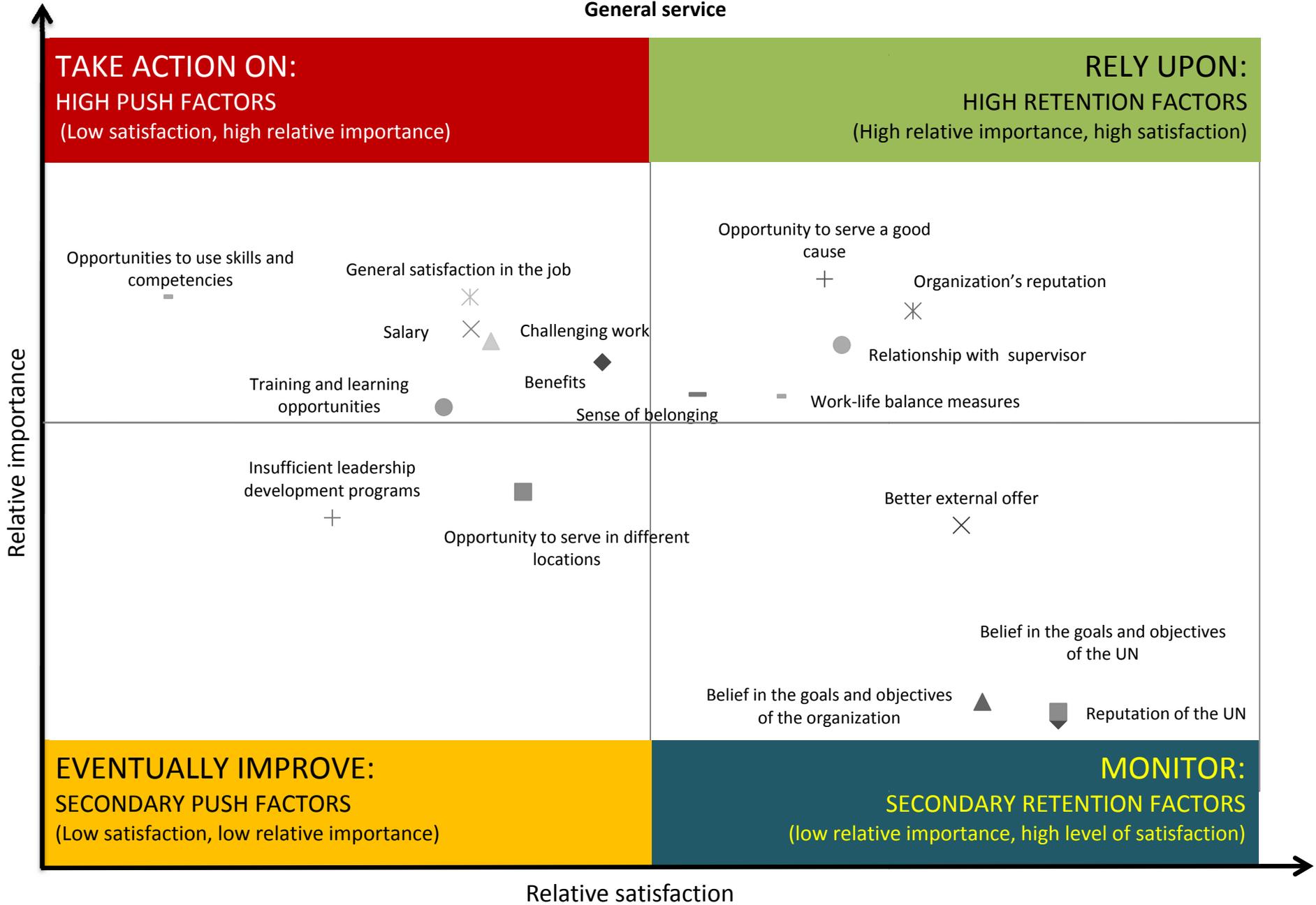


**Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
International Professionals P**

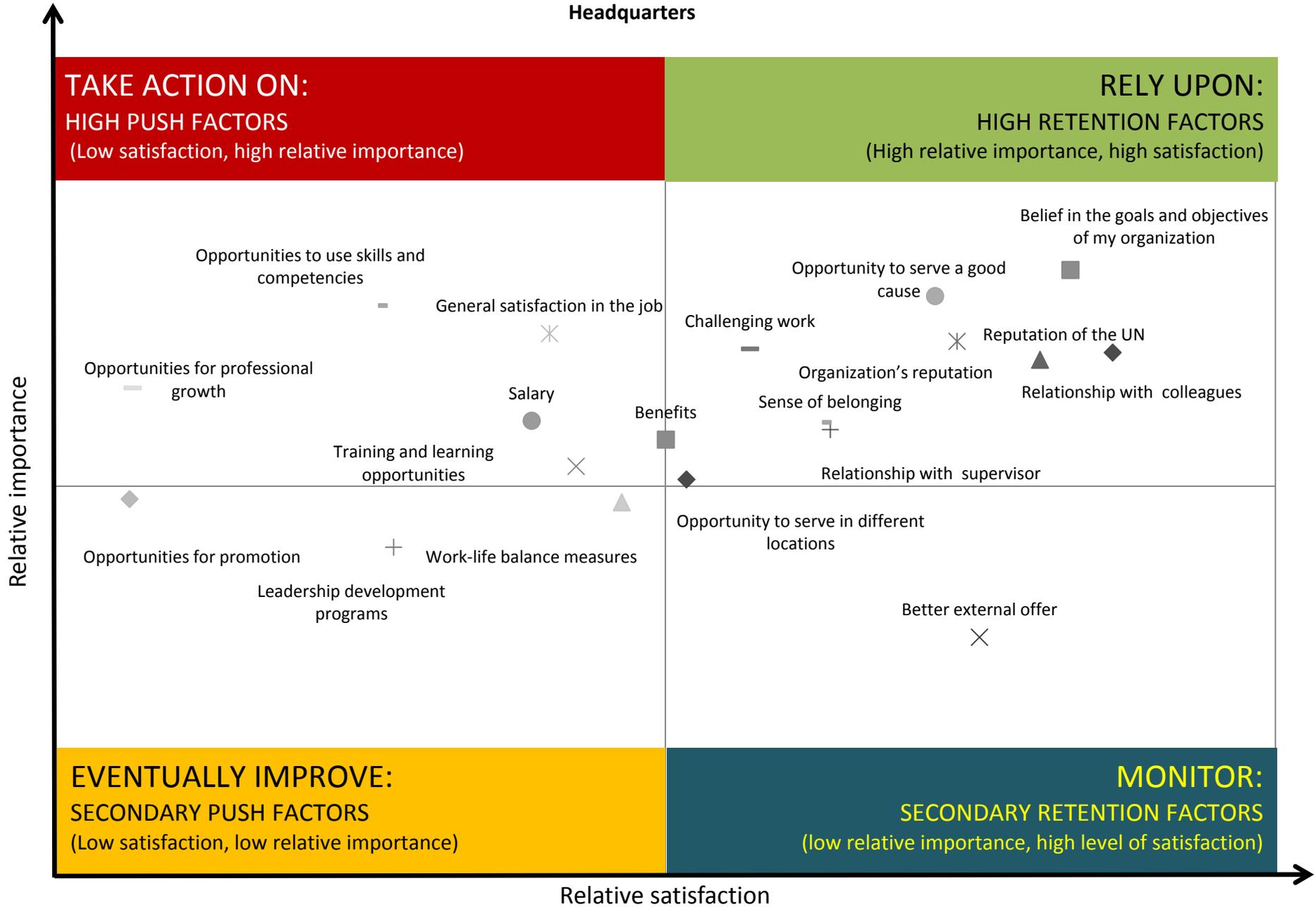


Relative satisfaction

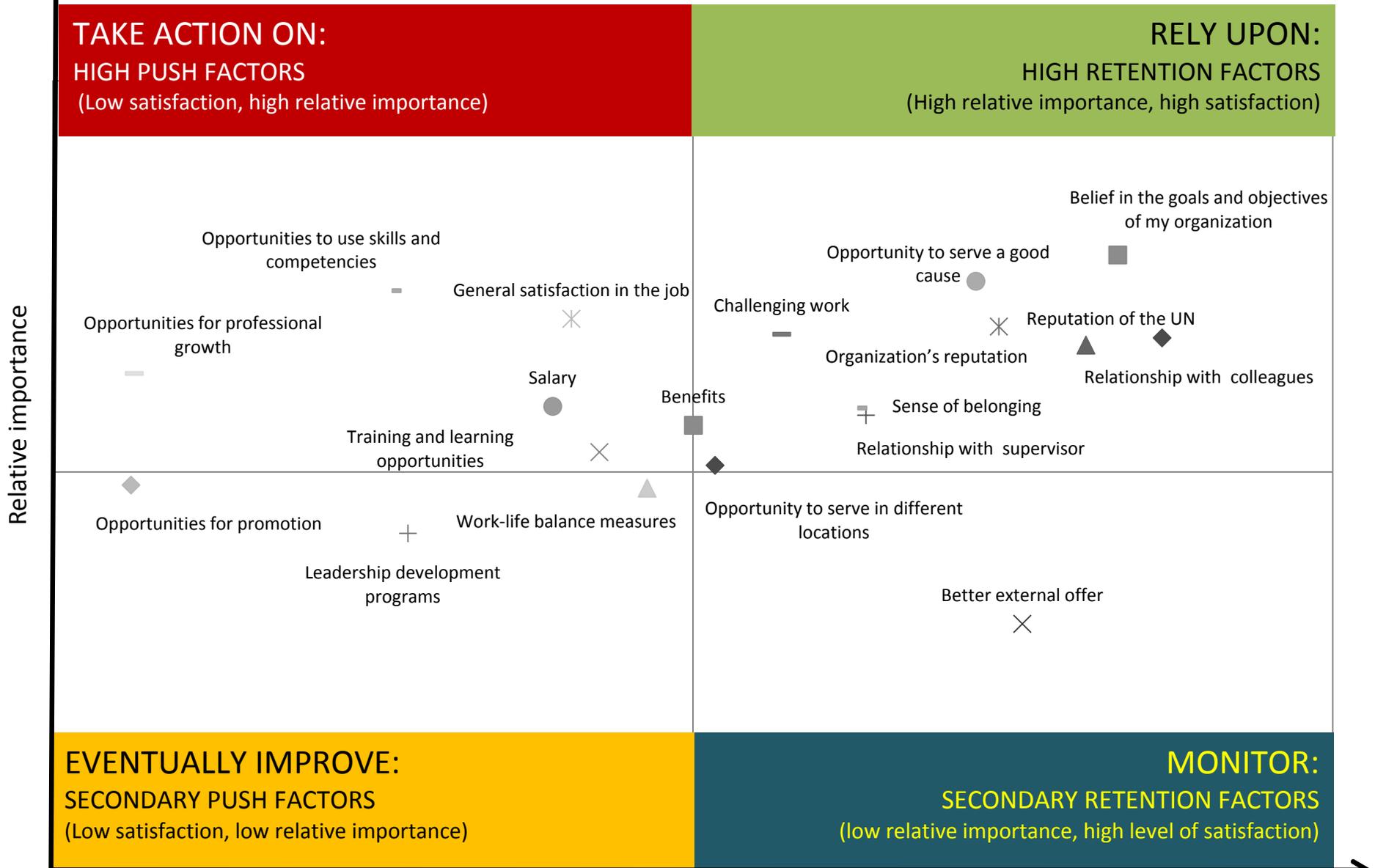
Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
General service



**Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
Headquarters**

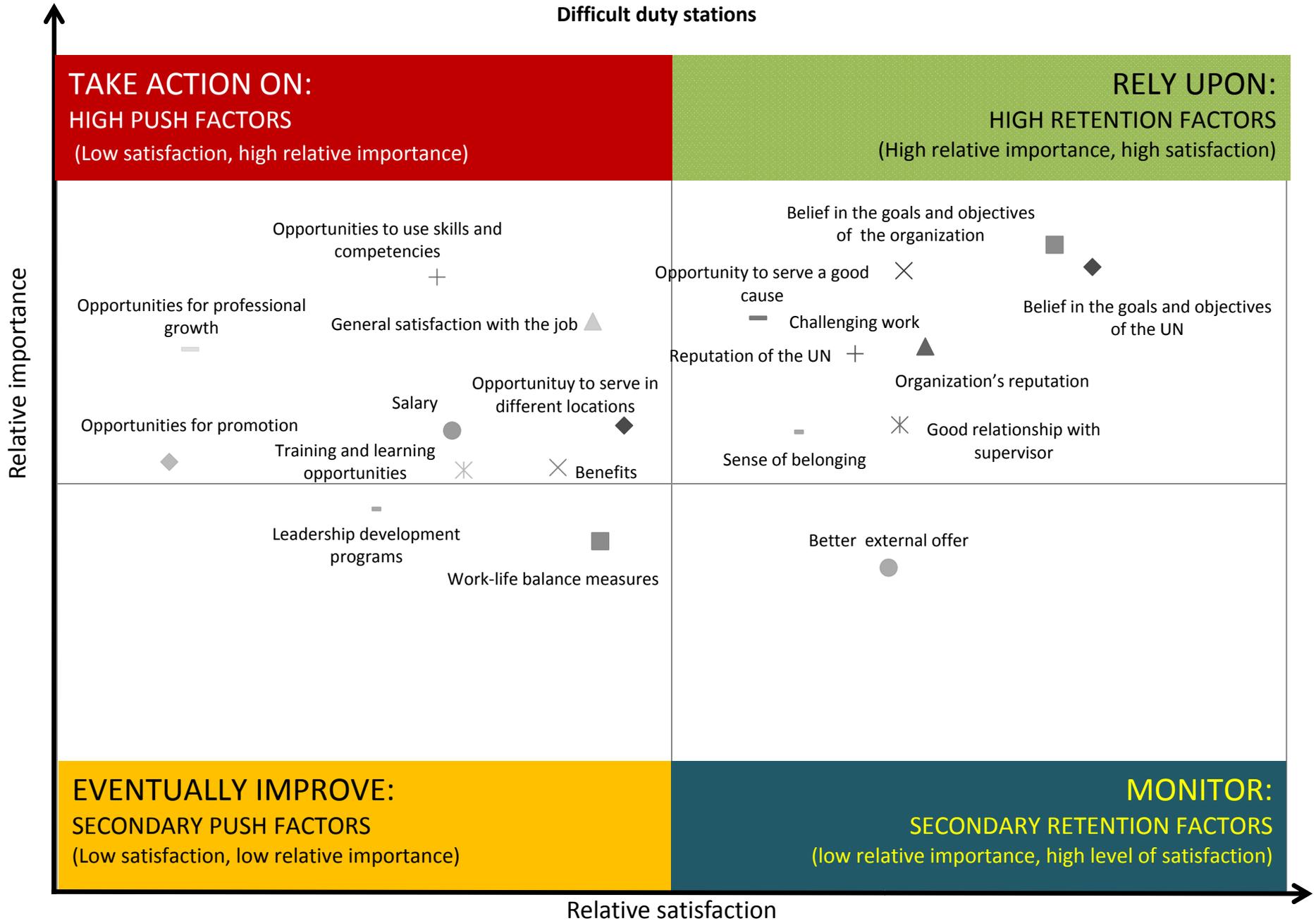


**Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
A and B duty stations**

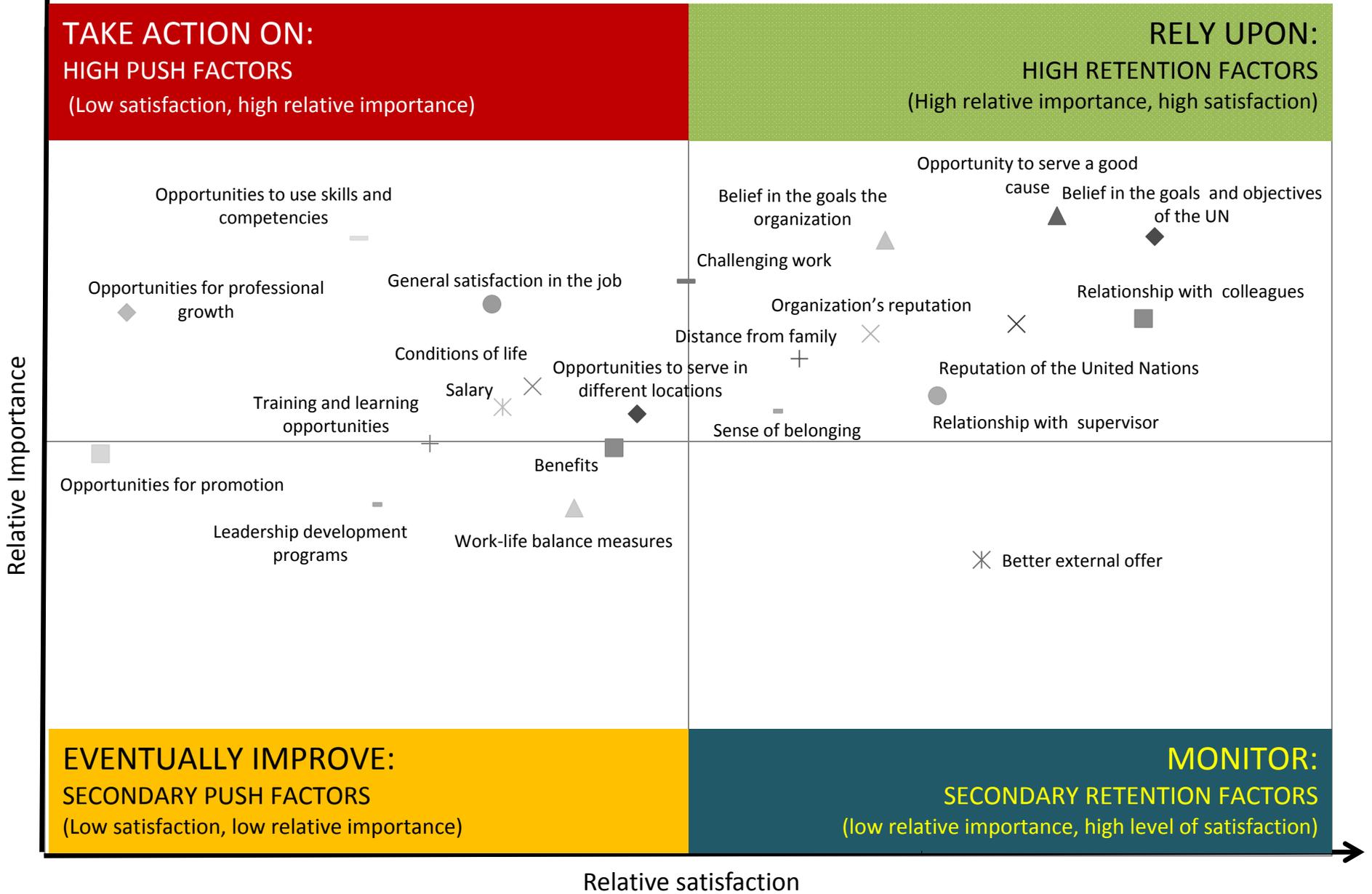


Relative satisfaction

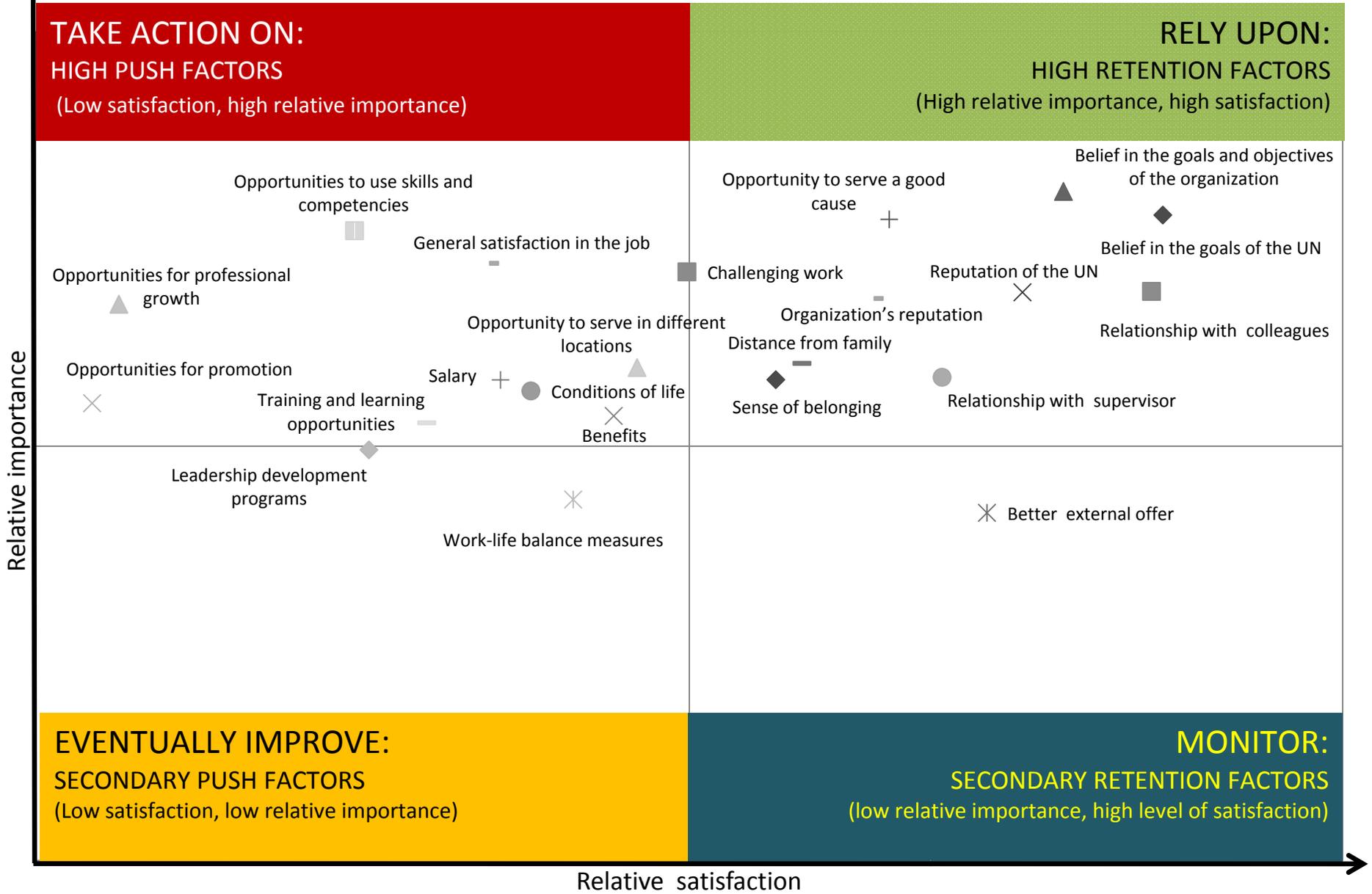
Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
Difficult duty stations



**Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential
Difficult Duty Stations
Females**

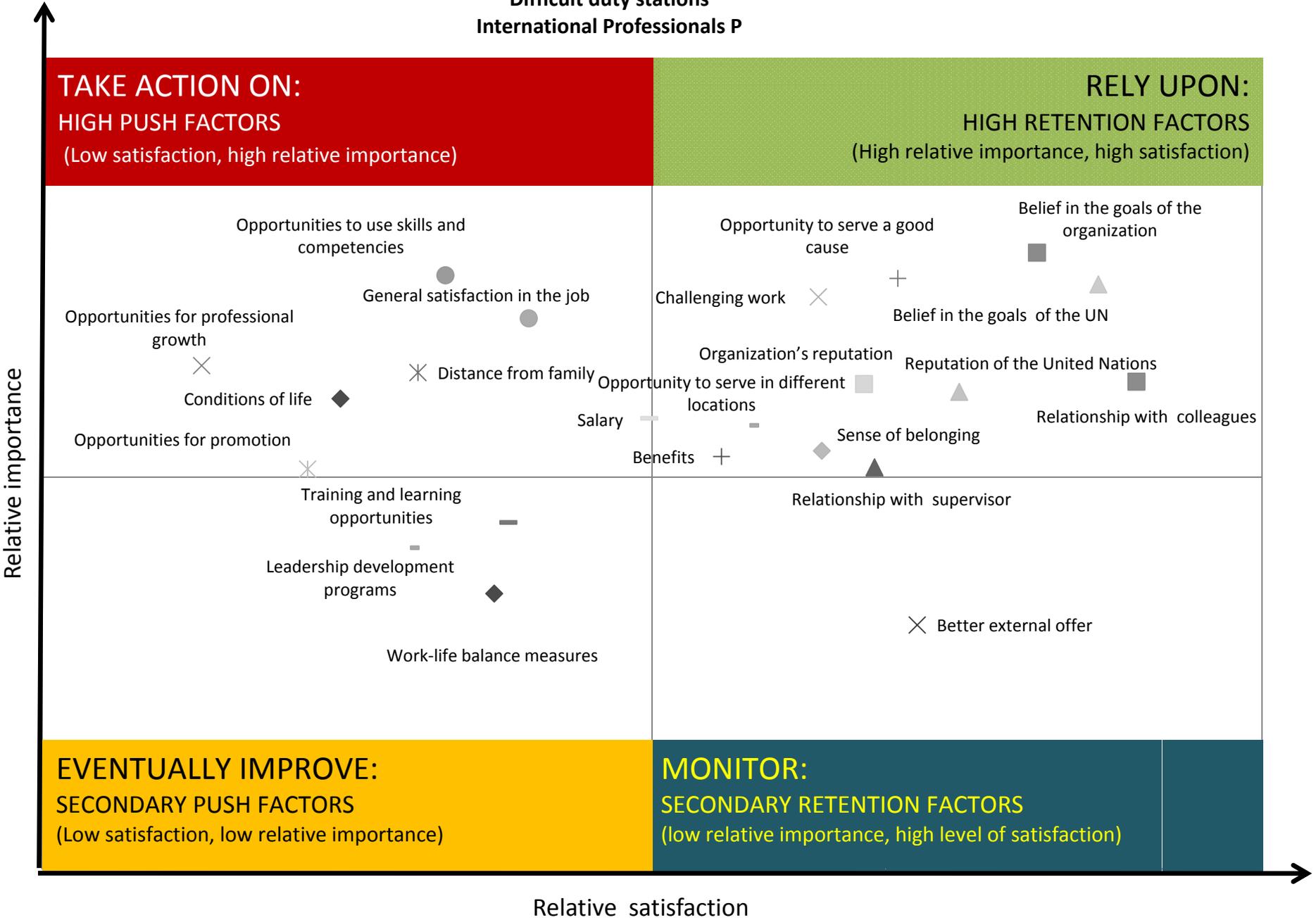


Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations System's retention potential
Difficult Duty Stations
Males



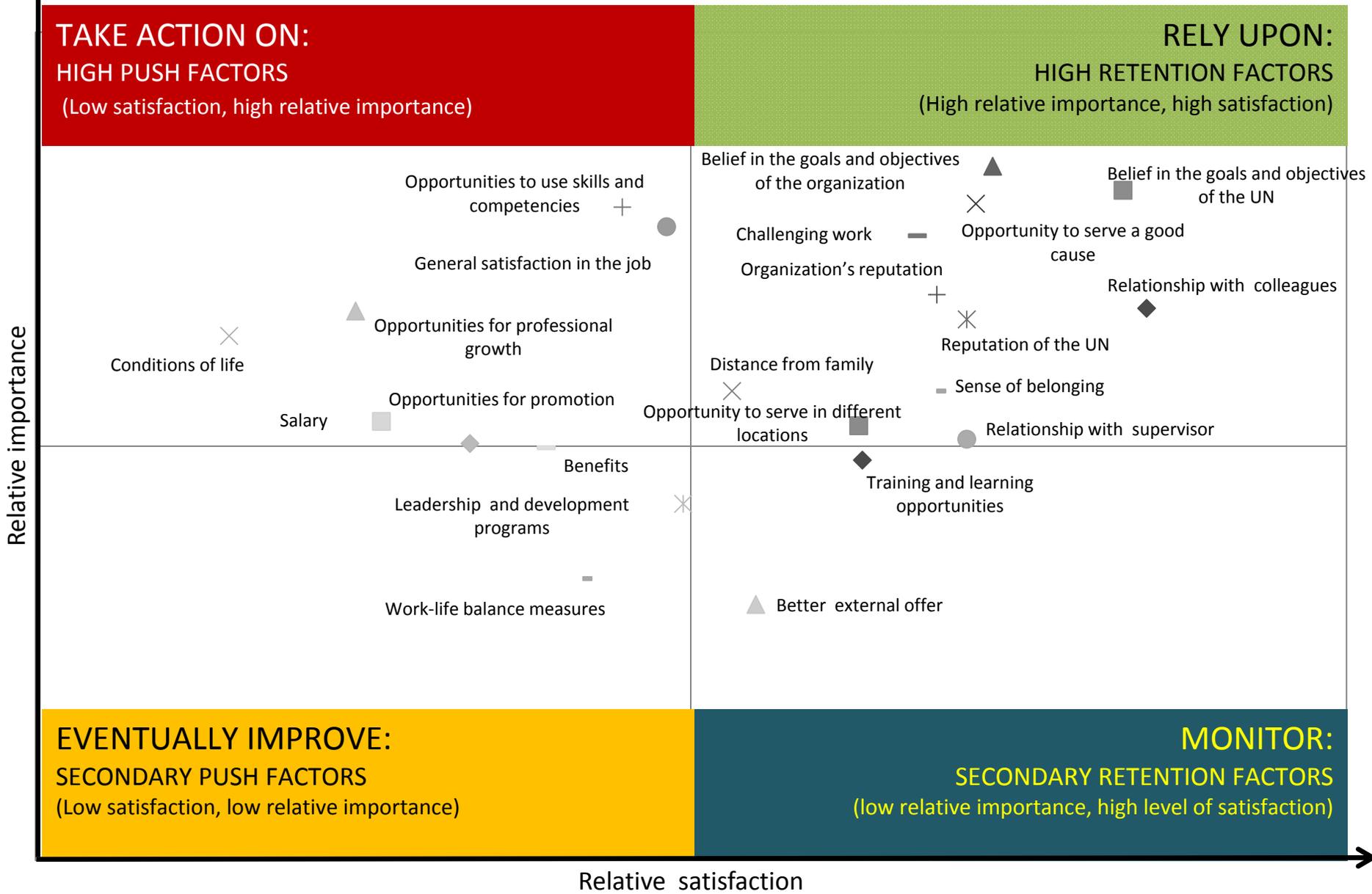
Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential

Difficult duty stations
International Professionals P



Strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations Common System's retention potential

Difficult duty stations
International Professionals D





DEMOGRAPHICS

Females												
		ALD- Internationa I	ALD- National	Field Service	General Service	International Professional D	International Professional L	International Professional P	Category Not Stated	National Professional Officer	Other	Total
Duty Station Type	H	101	65	13	1708	76	89	1253	27	68	108	3508
	AB	35	105	24	911	23	55	327	30	341	89	1940
	CDE	121	141	147	556	18	56	334	13	206	71	1663
	Unknown	6	14	18	129	6	9	36	8	40	17	283
	Total	263	325	202	3304	123	209	1950	78	655	285	7394
Males												
		ALD- Internationa I	ALD- National	Field Service	General Service	International Professional D	International Professional L	International Professional P	Category Not Stated	National Professional Officer	Other	Total
Duty Station Type	H	98	27	18	510	134	95	1452	20	52	86	2492
	AB	83	75	65	355	61	83	465	14	255	63	1519
	CDE	272	395	335	520	48	110	543	54	372	164	2813
	Unknown	16	23	23	80	5	10	60	11	33	21	282
	Total	469	520	441	1465	248	298	2520	99	712	334	7106
Grand Total		ALD- Internationa I	ALD- National	Field Service	General Service	International Professional D	International Professional L	International Professional P	Category Not Stated	National Professional Officer	Other	Total
		722	854	643	4769	371	507	4470	177	1367	619	14500

Organization	Number of respondents
UN	2076
WHO	1668
UNDP	1483
UNICEF	1216
IAEA	852
UNHCR	705
UNESCO	702
WFP	623
ILO	591
UNFPA	589
PAHO	370
FAO	263
UNAIDS	232
ICAO	196
ITU	195
UNEP	167
UNIDO	164
IFAD	146
WIPO	133
UNODC	109
ECLAC	95
UNRWA	91
UNOPS	90
UPU	78
UNCTAD	75
ECE	72
UNOV	71
WMO	59
IMO	48
UNWTO	43
UNON	43
OHCHR	34
UNOG	32
OCHA	32
UNU	30
ICSC	12
UN-HABITAT	3
ESCAP	2
UNITAR	1

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Explanatory Notes for Readers Who May Not Be Familiar with Categories of Staff in the United Nations

The United Nations Common System employs various categories of staff, the most notable distinction between them being those who are internationally recruited, and those who are locally recruited. Different organizations within the UN Common System may have different designations for similar categories of staff, but the following may offer a broad guide to the most typical types.

Internationally recruited staff are those who are engaged to deliver the substantive work of the organization in any location or country and who therefore receive a compensation package which is established with reference to the global labour market, in order to attract and retain talent from all Member States. For the purposes of this survey the following broad types of internationally recruited staff are represented: **“D” staff** which are individuals at the Director level; **“P” staff** who are individuals at the international professional level, and **“International ALD staff”**, who are internationally recruited staff engaged under Appointments of Limited Duration, i.e. short-term staff with a maximum contract duration of 4 years. **“Field Service”**, or FS staff, are individuals who perform either substantive or support functions, predominantly in technical support areas in peacekeeping and similar missions, and who are recruited for international service. **“L” staff** are internationally recruited individuals engaged to provide professional services for a specific purpose and duration: this type of staff is also known as “project staff”.

Locally recruited staff are those who are engaged to provide local expertise and/or support services in a specific location or country in which the United Nations operates and who therefore receive a compensation package established with reference to the local labour market, in order to attract and retain the best available local talent. For the purposes of the survey the following broad types of nationally recruited staff are represented: **“General Service” staff** who are individuals predominantly hired to provide support services to UN offices and activities; **“National Professional Officers”** are staff who are the locally recruited national equivalents to “P” staff (see above) and who perform professional functions requiring local expertise; and **“National ALD”** staff who are nationally recruited support staff engaged under Appointments of Limited Duration, i.e. short-term staff with a maximum contract duration of 4 years.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Explanatory Notes for Readers Who May Not Be Familiar with Categories of United Nations Duty Stations

A location to which UN staff are assigned to perform official functions is known as a Duty Station. Duty stations are categorized according to conditions of life and work, taking into account such factors as health, security, climate, isolation and local conditions, as well the availability of housing and international educational facilities. The categorisation of duty stations results in the classification in one of five categories, from A to E, with A being those locations with the least overall degree of hardship and E being those with the highest. Duty stations in North America, member states of the European Union, Japan, and Australia/New Zealand are not classified, and are known as “H” category duty stations. For the purposes of this survey, duty stations have been grouped in three main categories: H-type duty stations, typically representing Headquarters locations; A and B type duty stations, typically representing locations with excellent to good conditions; and C-D-E type duty stations, which are considered to be the most difficult.