MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEDIA GENDER GAP IN AFRICA

Paper prepared by Gender Links for the African Union
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Introduction
The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA), an outcome of the 1995 Fourth World conference on Women, declared the media one of twelve critical areas of concern for the advancement and empowerment of women.

This potential is mirrored in the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 which speaks of “critical enablers for Africa’s transformation” including “ownership of the African narrative and brand to ensure that it reflects continental realities, aspirations and priorities and Africa’s position in the world.” It is also mirrored in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all girls and women, which encourages states to enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

Potentially having a huge role to play in this “liberation of the mind”, the media has more often than not been part of the problem rather than of the solution. And, while the media has set itself up as the watchdog of the rest of society, it does not always take kindly to being “watched”. The result has been an unfortunate antagonistic relationship between those working to transform gender relations and the mainstream media.

While governments have some leverage over the public or state-owned media, the private media guards its independence jealously. Sexist stereotypes are said to be essential to the industry’s bottom line. Audiences, to the extent they have been studied, have been assumed to be largely male, and overwhelmingly passive.

The media has been content to argue that to the extent society is male dominated that is the reality it will convey. There has been little willingness to grapple with what is meant by freedom of expression when half the population is virtually mute; nor the more philosophical question of the role of the media in a democracy: to project only what is, or what could be.

The media in Africa continues to be characterised by underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women. Research by civil society organisations and academics shows that news media sidelines women’s voices and women’s issues. As such they systematically deny women a voice resulting in a silent “gender censorship” that mostly goes unnoticed and unchecked. Most countries lack legislation, policies, and a conducive environment for gender equality in and through the media.

The state of women’s voices in the media
Voice is one of the most important measures in development. Women’s ability to participate in their societies is bound up in their right to communicate publicly. When women begin to speak up and speak out against issues that concern them most then they become part of an active citizenry.

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2015, a global study which ascertains the representation and portrayal of women in the world’s news, “women make up only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news,

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1 African Union Agenda 2063
2 SDG (5.b)
exactly as they did in 2010." Africa results from this study are no better. Table one reflects the breakdown of Africa findings.

**Table 1: Women sources in Africa**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Global Media Monitoring Project 2015. Who Makes the News?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2015</strong></td>
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<td>No of African countries participating</td>
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<td>% women sources crime and violence</td>
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<td>% women sources celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports</td>
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<td>% women sources other</td>
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<td>Women are reporters</td>
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<td>Women as presenters</td>
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The GMMP notes that in Africa women’s relative presence in the news has increased from 19% in 2010 to 22% in 2015. In SADC alone “there is one percent increase of women sources in the media from 19% to 20% since 2010.” The GMMP study comments that “mainstream media coverage continues to rely on men as experts in the fields of business, politics and economics. Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about accidents, natural disasters, or domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities or expertise.” In West Africa “women desire to contribute to the national discourse and to their local public sphere. But radio is still male-dominated and too often consigns women’s programming to a narrow interpretation of gender issues including marriage, childcare or domestic responsibilities. Women on the air are usually viewed through a traditional model - in the context of their relationship to their husbands or children –and not as individual beings with a broad range of interests and needs.”

This lack of women’s voices, women concerns, opportunities and space for women violates the SDGs principle of “leaving no one behind.” The underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women can significantly skew the way women and girls view themselves, as they do not see themselves reflected in the all-powerful media as being of equal importance.

**Portrayal**

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6 Ibid.

A related concern is the portrayal of women by the media. Where women are represented in the media, they tend to be portrayed in ways that are both unfair and inaccurate. Sexualised images of women are rife, and women tend to be defined in terms of their physical appearance, not abilities. Women are most often shown as victims of violence and homemakers. Although the stereotypes of women as care-givers (such as the selfless mother so popular in advertisements) have more positive connotations, they are nevertheless stereotypes, which do not reflect women’s complex experiences and aspirations.

There is also an increasing realisation that gender stereotyping is as problematic for men as it is for women. Boys to Men: Media Messages About Masculinity, a study published in the USA, highlights the fact that young boys are being bombarded with media images of aggressive, violent males, and raises questions about the media’s construction of masculinity. As with gender stereotypes of women, boys are being offered a very limited definition of what it means to be a man.

Violence against women is either not reported at all because it is seen to take place in the private sphere, or reported in bizarre and sensationalist ways that invariably place the blame on the victim. The stories convey no sense of women’s human rights being abused. Specifically, coverage of violence against women is fraught with trivializing issues; bizarre cases, blame and exoneration. Stories on abuse and rape frequently imply that the woman “asked for it to happen” through references such as “she was alone at night” or “she was wearing revealing clothing”. There is also a tendency to highlight the experiences of men as perpetrators rather than women as survivors. “Love” features with disturbing frequency in stories relating to violence against women. It is often cited as the motive of men who kill their partners (femicide). When men go on to commit suicide, the focus tends to be on the suicide, rather than on the fact that they killed their wives or partners. In South Africa, a case of a man shooting his wife in the head when she objected to him trying to feed a meat pie to their infant child was reported under the headline “wife killed after argument over pie.”

Women working in the media
Diversity in media workforce composition remains a critical issue in the sector. Having a diverse media workforce will pave way for an industry that is reflective of the communities they represent. A diverse work force is necessary to shift what the media prioritises as it embodies different perspectives to news coverage on issues.

A report by the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) in 2011 on women in the media work force shows that women are under-represented in the media, especially at decision-making level. There is a gendered division of labour in media houses which dictates news practices. Women often cover soft news beats compared to hard news beats covered by men. This affects what is reported and whose opinion is consulted on as research shows that women journalists are likely to interview more female sources. This also affects portrayal of women in the media.

Table 2: Women and men in Sub-Saharan Africa newsrooms in 2011

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9 Children Now. 1999. “Study shows that media reinforces gender straitjacket”.

10 Lowe-Morna, C. “Promoting Gender Equality in and through the media”, paper presented at a UN round table Expert Group Meeting on “Participation and access of women to the media, and its impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women”, October 2002.
Table 2 shows that women constitute 28% of board members; 24% of top and 5% of senior management, despite constituting 49% of those in the technical professional field in sub-Saharan Africa\textsuperscript{11}. The question that arises is what prevents women from advancing from the shop floor of media houses to decision-making level.

Men still dominate in the sector, but it is noteworthy that women have been carving great career paths in the industry in many parts of the region. “Women today have a significant presence in the industry, but they continue to struggle to break the glass ceiling and move up the ladder in media houses.”\textsuperscript{12} Although “there are women in newsrooms, men still steer the boat and their ideals and concerns continue filling newspapers, radio programmes and television productions.”\textsuperscript{13}

Globally the GMMP 2015 found that there appears to be a global glass ceiling for female news reporters as far as they are visible in newspaper by-lines and newscast reports.\textsuperscript{14} “In Eastern Africa for example, the status of women remains low women journalists face numerous problems in their push for professional rights and to report on gender issues. Notably, discrimination at work as a result of employers failing to adhere to labour rights of women journalists. They do not receive equal opportunities as male journalists do in terms of training and advancement in their career. There are conflicting positions on the role

\begin{table}
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\begin{small}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Occupational level} & \textbf{Women} & \textbf{Men} & \textbf{Total} & \% women & \% men \\
\hline
Governance & 111 & 282 & 393 & 28 & 72 \\
Top level management & 64 & 202 & 266 & 24 & 76 \\
Senior management & 811 & 698 & 1509 & 5 & 46 \\
Middle management & 98 & 225 & 323 & 30 & 70 \\
Senior level professional & 716 & 1585 & 2301 & 31 & 69 \\
Junior level professional & 655 & 1390 & 2045 & 32 & 68 \\
Production and design & 3876 & 4555 & 8431 & 46 & 54 \\
Technical professional & 1621 & 1711 & 3332 & 49 & 51 \\
\textbf{Sales, Finance & administration} & 504 & 1221 & 1725 & 29 & 71 \\
Other & 759 & 1006 & 1765 & 43 & 57 \\
\textbf{Total} & \textbf{9215} & \textbf{12875} & \textbf{22090} & \textbf{42} & \textbf{58} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{small}
\caption{Women's representation in media jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa.}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{11} North Africa is grouped with the Middle East in this study.

\textsuperscript{12} Ndlovu and Nyamweda .2015.Gender and Media Progress Study. Gender Links. Johannesburg


\textsuperscript{14} World Association of Christian Communicators. 2015. Global Media Monitoring Project. Toronto

As Africa continues to deregulate the media this must be an opportunity to cultivate a diverse and plural media with varied ownership and management. Ownership and control are critical areas where women can begin to influence the institutional practices and even the content that is produced. If gender aware women begin to own media outlets, they will be in a better position to influence content, decision-making, industry practices and policies in a gender aware manner. They can also bring different perspectives to stories on gender issues. "As women begin to occupy top most positions in media companies, we will slowly see the sector’s long-standing glass ceiling begin to shatter."\footnote{Nyamweda, T 2017. in SADC Gender Protocol 2017 Barometer. Johannesburg: SADC Gender Protocol Alliance p 251} However, access to funding to establish competitive media houses might be a hindrance, especially if woman-owned media does not fit the typical model that funding institutions and investors seek. Other structural issues within regional media landscapes may also be a hindrance to women, for example in broadcasting, a sector that remains highly regulated, leaving little room for new players.

Through legislation and enforcement of international and regional instruments that are already in existence governments must ensure all media allows for women’s access to all levels of the media.

**Media regulation and policy**

One of the key strategies in achieving gender equality lies in the development and formulation of national policies, laws and codes of ethics that will promote and protect women. Policies accompanied by action plans are useful tools to prevent and address the sexism whether in content, in the newsrooms or in advertising, which supports our media. They are also useful in ensuring sustainable changes.

In Southern Africa, many countries through their national policies support a gender sensitive media and prioritise the importance of access and use of media to advance gender equality. "Member states have crafted policies to promote the full and equal participation of women in management, programming education training and research through the SADC protocol on gender and development."\footnote{SARDC, SADC. 2016 SADC Gender and Development Monitor 2016.SADC, SARDC, Gaborone, Harare} This will assist the media in each country to operate within the confines of gender equality.

The introduction of gender policies both at national and institutional in the media sector has been seen as a covert way of pushing unqualified and undeserving women to take over the media industry and has been held in contempt by many managers and media owners across Africa. However, having policies that will tackle stereotypes and promote gender equality is paramount in redressing the sexism and misogyny depicted by the media as this a deterrent to women’s progress.

The lack of gender and media policies or inability to mainstream gender in national policies affecting the media will result in a much slower pace in closing gender gaps in the industry. There is need for mechanisms to be in place to ensure implementation of policies and revision of media information and communication policies to include gender mainstreaming and followed by close monitoring, evaluation and learning on these media houses by media councils ethical committees, civil society and government departments responsible for
communication. Women should be able to participate in the development and monitoring of these media policies.

The presence of media self-regulatory bodies, unions and associations can encourage diversity in the media. As the watchdogs of the media they have the responsibility to ensure that media and journalists collectively work towards an ethical media environment. Regulatory bodies must also play an active role to in constantly monitoring women’s participation in all levels of the media sector. Quota systems must also be built into licensing requirements for a media house to be allowed to operate.

Although enacting gender and media policies and laws might one of the most effective ways to achieve gender equality from the top down this approach cannot act in isolation. Massive attitude change is needed to change perceptions and biases that continue to widen gender inequality.

**Journalism and media studies training**

Training is a critical entry point for mainstreaming gender in the media. To be able to mainstream gender in journalism, journalism education should be the starting point. By mainstreaming gender in teaching and curricula, training institutions can enable the development of journalism cadres that have not been affected by a gendered media culture that will later seek to be remedied once more. Therefore, “improved media training is essential to remove gender biases that prevail...The challenge... is to integrate gender awareness training into all types and aspects of media training.”

“Many practitioners do not consider gender an important part of journalism and media training even though media education institutions and media development organisations have the capacity to influence attitudes, skills and knowledge of media practitioners, starting at entry level, but also through ongoing capacity-building initiatives. Massive gender gaps remain prevalent in media training institutional composition and in training curricula. Although a larger number of female students enrol in journalism and media studies, fewer women work as journalists. With the changing environment of the media industry, which is experiencing major cutbacks, some worry that in coming years even fewer women will work in the industry.”

Today in many African journalism and media studies departments the enrolment rate of female students surpasses that of male students. In the SADC region, female students are 60% of those in journalism and media studies. However, women consist of a proportion of 40% of media trainers. “The high proportion of women students is ...a stark contrast to the proportion of women in media houses.” With such proportions, there is need for empirical data that can show why access to higher education by female students in journalism and media studies is not having an impact on the industry composition. Full and accurate data is crucial so that all regions have baselines and can track their progress.

As journalism and media studies, departments formulate their curricula, course content, teaching, and assessments they need to be sensitive to the existing inequalities in the media

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19 Nyamweda, T. 2017 in SADC Gender Protocol 2017 Barometer.: SADC Gender Protocol Alliance Johannesburg

20 Ibid.,

21 Ibid.,
industry and strategise on ways to close the gaps. National governments should also be able to support women's education especially in public institutions of higher learning.

**The importance of alternative media**

Feminist organisations, journalist associations and local communities across the continent have sought to influence how gender equality or women's rights issues are told in the media through establishing their own media across the region. Initiatives such as Gender Links News Service, The Other and Mama FM by Uganda Media Women Association have sought to tell everyday news from a gender perspective and influence government policy on women's issue. Models of women's radio have also sprouted across Africa for example Radio Guitan in Mali, Radio Femme FM Mbalmayo Cameroon, Munyu FM Burkina Faso Kasmo Fm in Somalia Bubusa FM in DRC are amongst some of the many women radio across the continent that seek to amplify women's voices. These initiatives have "emerged as a response to African women’s need to be able to claim their space and raise their voices through the media that is available to them. Women especially those in disadvantaged communities will continue to be at the bottom of the food chain if lack of diversity persists. Women's marginalisation in both mainstream media and in alternative community media, as well as to women's need to have their own communication means."22

**Digital media**

ICTs play a significant role in advancing women's rights in the region: over a brief time becoming tools that women can use to amplify their voices. "Access and use of ICTs can facilitate education for women and girls, increase literacy, and improve participation in democratic and social processes. It can also improve access to relevant information and spur freedom of expression."23 ICT’s “allow isolated women to gain access to information that was not previously made available, thus helping them to become better informed members of society and consequently empowering them to speak up.”24

Women journalists are also benefitting from the use of online media platforms. According to the GMMP 2015, women in Africa report more stories online (41%) than in the traditional media (35%). The study also notes that comparing the traditional media on women’s presence by theme to internet news reveals a greater online presence of women in stories of politics (32%) and the economy (19%).

Channels such as social media have proved to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women’s rights issues to the attention of a wider public, galvanising action on the streets of cities around the world and encouraging policy makers to step up commitments to gender equality.

Social media has potential for mobilising attention and accountability to women’s rights, and challenging discrimination and stereotypes.25 Women’s rights organisations, women of different backgrounds and ages have harnessed the power of social media to bring their


23 Nyamweda, T. 2017 in SADC Gender Protocol 2017 Barometer.: SADC Gender Protocol Alliance Johannesburg


concerns to light. “Hashtag activism” has brought women’s issues to the forefront of political agendas.” Hashtag activism has helped to mobilise public attention on women’s rights and increasing the visibility of issues that are under-reported in mainstream media. For example in 2013, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign reached over 1 million tweets, helping to raise awareness of both national and international actors of the need to help rescue the abducted Nigerian schoolgirls.”

Although the proliferation of ICTS is providing numerous possibilities, it adds another dimension to gender inequality. “New media can also be a double-edged sword for women’s rights. Much as women can claim this space to make their voice count, it is also a space that can be used to fuel violence, conflict and misogyny.” The struggles that women face offline are extending onto digital media platforms. “Barriers faced by women in accessing ICTs, and that may limit their participation in digital life, are exacerbated by offline inequalities.

Data shows there is an increased gender divide in access to ICTs. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimates that the overall gap between men and women with regards to access to internet increased from 11% in 2013 to 13% in 2016. Africa has the highest regional gender gap (23%). Africa has the highest regional gender gap (23%).

Women especially in rural Africa are at the core of the digital divide and disproportionately affected by these gaps. They still do not have access to this technology due to inadequate infrastructure, affordability and availability, language barriers, illiteracy and even discriminatory social norms capacity and skills relevant content. Therefore stepping up efforts in “connecting the unconnected” is an important move needed if ICTs are to contribute effectively to the empowerment of women and girls.

There are strengthened calls for leaders in Africa to make universal access to information and communication technology a reality for women. Technology is not a luxury but a basic human right that can help women from different backgrounds to enhance their freedom of expression, freedom to access information that will better their lives. In recognising it as such it becomes an important conduit for progress on SDG 5. “Rapid progress is possible in all countries through simple steps like reducing the cost to connect, introducing digital literacy in schools, and expanding public access facilities.”

Recommendation on addressing gender gaps
Attached at Annex A is a Gender and Media Checklist for the media industry, governments and civil society, suggesting concrete actions that can be taken. AU Member States have made several commitments, through global and continental instruments, to advancing gender equality in and through the media. What is needed is to go from commitments to

26 Ibid.,

27 Ibid.,

28 Promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective


action. Below is a summary of key provisions included in the international and regional instruments:

**Research**: Encouraging research and media monitoring using public funds especially in public institutions of higher learning, offering journalism, communication and media studies to enable them to contribute to the body of knowledge on gender, media and ICTs. Research can focus on content, access, participation and use, online and offline violence and harassment against journalists, gender and media education so that there is good quality data that can used as reliable evidence in influencing advocacy efforts and change. Governments need to partner with civil society and academia to evaluate the efforts or lack thereof by the media to change the narrative on women working in the media sector and most importantly their development role in line with changing the narrative of African.

**Setting specific targets**: Such as women sources reaching 30% of the total by 2020, and 50% by 2030 (in line with AU targets for women's representation in decision-making) and increasing programmes for and by women. Governments have committed to empowering and investing in women through public and community media to create content that is relevant to them, in their own languages and that will respond to local information needs and influence knowledge of women's rights and informed decisions by women. As women produce and disseminate content this will give them active voices and roles especially. Although targets like this alone are not enough, they help to focus the mind, to mobilise and to conduct more effective monitoring and evaluation.

**Training**: Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all publicly funded media training institutions, and encouraging privately funded media training institutions to follow suit. There is also need to take a fresh look at training curricula by mainstreaming gender in journalism communication and media studies curricula and teaching. Improve enrolment of women in media training institutions in particular for programmes that are usually stereotyped such as sports, politics and economy reporting.

**Increase women’s participation in media**: Establishing quotas on the participation of women in the media industry that will increase the number of women in the media, including in leadership and decision-making roles and as media owners.

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32 East African Gender equality Bill 2016 encourages state parties to develop mechanisms for the collection and analysis of media and ICT disaggregated data on the basis of sex and gender

33 BDPA Section 1.1 Article 293 (b) urges governments to support research into all aspects of women and the media so as to define areas needing attention and action and review existing media policies with a view to integrating a gender perspective;

34 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Gender equality note member states shall encourage the media to give equal voice to women and men in all aspects of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender specific topics and that challenge gender stereotypes

35 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Gender equality Member States shall ensure that equality of rights between men and women is taken into account in all media-related legislation, policies, programmes, training and recruitment. training centres take account of the principle of equality of rights between women and men

36 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Gender equality Encourage the development of educational and training programmes for women in order to produce information for the mass media, including funding of experimental efforts, and the use of the new technologies of communication, cybernetics space and satellite, whether public or private;

37 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Gender equality note Member States shall take all necessary measures to promote equal representation of women in media practice and in media-related decision-making structures and ownership
**Policy formulation:** Ensuring that national gender policies and or strategies and action plans make specific reference the role of media and ICTs in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda and commit to achieving targets on gender and media. They must also ensure the review of media and ICT laws, and policies and mainstream gender in them to eliminate gender stereotypes and biases in content to improve the access, use participation and the voices of women in the media. Enact laws that will protect women and girls against cyber based GBV.38

**Regulation:** Ensuring the review of media and ICT laws, regulations and policies and mainstream gender in them to eliminate gender stereotypes and biases in content and improve access, participation and voices of women in the media. They should also ensure that national gender policies and or strategies and action plans make specific reference the role of media and ICTs in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda and commit to achieving targets on gender and media. Governments pioneer gender balance in the appointment of men and women to all regulatory and monitoring bodies and encourage self-regulatory authorities, to do the same. This could include requiring gender balance and sensitivity in institutional structures as well as editorial content through licensing agreements, as well as annual reports stating progress in this regard.

**ICTs:** Ensuring that women have greater access participation and can use ICTs39 and relevant content for their own empowerment that can enhance their lives and economic opportunities.40 This should include support and resources for gender and media networks, especially their efforts to use ICTs in cost effective, dynamic ways that increase access and applications; contributing to better e-governance, citizenship participation and policy responsiveness, especially for and by women.

**Bibliography**


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38 East African Gender Equality bill encourage the elimination all stereotypes in all forms of contemporary and traditional media

39 States Parties shall put in place ICT policies and laws in in order to ensure women's and girl's access to information and communication technology.

40 Solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa recognized of the digital divide between, men and women and the role of information telecommunication technologies (ICTS) in the advancement of the gender issues


UNESCO 2014. Media and Gender: A Scholarly Agenda for the Global Alliance on Media and Gender. Unesco, France


ANNEX A: GENDER IN MEDIA CHECKLIST

Gender policy
✓ Do you have a gender policy?
✓ Does the policy cover ethical considerations, internal human resource issues and the editorial product?
✓ Is it a stand-alone policy; is it integrated in all existing policy documents; or both?
✓ Is the policy informed by consultation?
✓ Does the policy allow public access and involvement?
✓ How is the policy implemented? What are the outputs?
✓ Are resources allocated for the implementation of the policy?
✓ Is there a high level commitment to the policy?
✓ How and where is this commitment articulated?

Audit and mapping
✓ How many, and what proportion of men and women are there in your institution?

41 Compiled by Gender Links, a Southern African NGO that promotes gender equality in and through the media.
✓ How many, and what proportion of men and women are there in the different levels of your institution?
✓ How many, and what proportion of men and women are there in the different beats of your institution?
✓ What gender stereotypes are implicit in this distribution?
✓ What effect do they have internally, and on the editorial product?

Access checklist

Affirmative Action Policy
✓ Do you have an affirmative action policy?
✓ Is the affirmative action policy prescribed by law or is it your own?
✓ Does it spell out precise quotas or targets for male and female representation?
✓ Are these broken down by rank?
✓ Are there timeframes for achieving this?
✓ Is there a plan and resources allocated for achieving this (for example, additional empowerment strategies for women, if required)?
✓ Do you keep regular staff records, disaggregated by gender?
✓ Does management regularly monitor and evaluate these?

Recruitment
✓ Do you advertise using a variety of communication channels, including direct interaction, that ensure men and women are equally reached?
✓ Do you actively encourage women to apply?
✓ Is there anything in the way your advertisements are phrased that could discourage women from applying?
✓ Do you have initiatives to encourage young women to take up careers in the media?

Selection
✓ Are your selection panels gender balanced?
✓ Do you ensure a minimum quota for women in the short-listing process?
✓ Do the same standards apply to women and men in the interview process? For example, would you ask a man whether he was married and had children?
✓ How are family considerations raised and addressed in the interview process?

Participation and advancement checklist

Work environment
✓ Do you have any initiatives in place that promote a gender friendly work environment?
✓ If someone told a sexist joke at your workplace how would others respond? Would there be any sanction?
✓ Do you have a sexual harassment policy?
✓ Do you offer flexi-hours?
✓ Have you taken advantage of IT to allow work from home under certain conditions?
✓ Do you ensure the safety of all your employees, for example with regard to their transportation to and from work, especially from certain locations and at certain hours?

Family friendly practices
✓ Do you have a maternity policy in place? What are its provisions?
✓ Are there stereotypes in your newsroom concerning the ability of women to perform their journalistic tasks, for example presenting programmes on television while they are pregnant? What have you done to correct these?
✓ Do you ensure that the careers of women journalists are not adversely affected by maternity breaks?
✓ Do you offer paternity leave?
✓ Do you have a policy on breast-feeding?
✓ Do you have child-care facilities?

**On the job experience**
✓ Is there a gender balance on all your beats?
✓ Are women encouraged to go into non-traditional areas of reporting?
✓ Are women encouraged and supported to take up technical sides of the job, for example as camerawomen in television or photojournalists in the print media?
✓ To the extent that there are physical constraints, for example, the weight of a camera, how have you used advances in technology to overcome this constraint to women’s entry into this sphere of work?
✓ To the extent that women may be more exposed to danger than men because of their sex (for example to the danger of rape or sexual harassment) while on the job, what measures have you taken to ensure their security? Have you consciously avoided the easy way out-to simply exclude them from that beat?

**Capacity building**
✓ Do all your employees have access to staff development programmes, and are these offered at suitable hours?
✓ Do you target women for training?
✓ Do you have mentorship programmes in place?
✓ Are these specifically targeted at women?
✓ Does the organisation offer assertiveness training and are men and women equally encouraged to undergo this training?

**Promotion**
✓ Do you have a clearly defined and transparent promotion policy?
✓ Do you have a minimum quota for women at all levels of the organisation?
✓ Do you have any measures in place to assist women to achieve these positions on merit?
✓ Do you have a roster of potential women candidates for top posts?
✓ When you head hunt, do you specify gender as one of the criteria to be considered in sourcing suitable candidates?

**Gender training checklist**
✓ Has the whole organisation undergone gender training?
✓ What form did this take?
✓ Has there been further gender training linked to various areas of responsibility within the organisation?
✓ Did the training have the support of management?
✓ How has gender training been perceived in the organisation?
✓ What has been the tangible impact of gender training?

**Gender beat checklist**
✓ Is gender awareness and sensitivity built into all reporting requirements?
✓ In addition to this, is gender recognized as a specialized beat?
✓ Is the gender beat accorded the same status as other beats, such as the courts, political, financial etc.
✓ Is the gender beat understood to include both women’s and men’s concerns?
✓ Are there both women and men specializing in the gender beat?
✓ Are they afforded the same opportunities as other beats for expanding their horizons and deepening their skills on this beat?

**Breadth of coverage**
✓ Does your coverage reflect a holistic and realistic view of women and do they appear in the full spectrum of activities in which they engage?
✓ To the extent that women are missing from certain categories because of their status in society, does the coverage raise critical questions as to why this is so?

**Depth of coverage**
✓ Does coverage give fair and equal space/time to women's and men's voices?
✓ Are reporters and editors trained to probe the gender issues that may underlie stories?
✓ Are the women who are consulted across the racial and class spectrum?
✓ To the extent some women are difficult to reach, is sufficient effort and are enough resources set aside for accessing these “marginal” groups?
✓ Are a variety of sources, representing a broad spectrum of views, consulted?
✓ Is there a specialist civil society organisation on the issue? Has this source been consulted?
✓ Is there adequate context and balance?
✓ Is the story analytical? Does it go beyond the event and raise the underlying issues?

**Story angles**
✓ Are male and female subjects treated equally?
✓ Does your story apportion blame on the subject?
✓ Does your story exonerate the perpetrator?
✓ Are all subjects treated with dignity?
✓ Does the story challenge or reinforce stereotypes?
✓ Does it examine the underlying issues?
✓ Are these approached from a human rights perspective?
✓ Are the experiences and concerns of women trivialized in any way?
✓ Is your story fair, accurate and balanced?

**Language**
✓ Is sexist language defined and forbidden?
✓ Is language used inclusive of men and women?
✓ To the extent that gender-neutral terms are used, is relevant gender disaggregated information provided?
✓ Are adjectives used objective and relevant, and do they convey any biases or stereotypes?
✓ Is physical description relevant to the story? Does it apply equally to men and women.

**Visuals**
✓ Are women and men equally represented?
✓ Over time, does the range of images portray women in all their diversity with regard to age, sexual orientation, class, disability, race, occupation, and urban/rural?
✓ Is there a gender bias in how the event is portrayed? Can changing the report reverse or change that bias?
✓ Does the media have a responsibility to ask why an area shows gender bias or begin to correct it through affirmative reporting and images? For example, if men's soccer is regularly featured, is there a responsibility to report on why this is predominantly a male game; and of the fact that women's soccer is an up and coming new sport? Would this help to balance gender images on the sports pages?
✓ Do pictures reflect women happy with exploitation— for example happy to be scrubbing the floors?
✓ Do images emphasise/ exaggerate physical aspects (especially sexual)?
✓ Would using a different image convey a better sense of the gender dynamics? For example, would a photo of women farmers in a remote rural area be more appropriate than a photo of the male minister of agriculture in a story on farming?
✓ For professional women, does the image show a professional role, as opposed to emphasizing the physicality of women?
✓ Is the image one of which the person would approve?
✓ Are women portrayed as survivors or victims?
✓ Are women portrayed as active or passive?
✓ Does the image degrade the dignity of women?
✓ If you substitute man for women does it make sense?
✓ To the extent that women are announcers on television, to what extent are they represented in all their diversity— gender, race, and physical attributes?

Advertising
✓ Is there a discussion in your organisation about the need for consistency in standards applied to advertising and editorial?
✓ What happens when there is a conflict between the two with regard to gender?
✓ Has there been any research to determine what really attracts consumers?

Packaging
✓ Do gender stories make the front page?
✓ Do stories written from a gender perspective run through all the pages— news, business, sport etc?
✓ Do you have special spaces/ slots for women?
✓ Should these be for gender rather than for women?
✓ Is the difference understood?
✓ Who are you addressing in these spaces?
✓ Where are they placed?
✓ For audio- visual media, do they take account of the dual roles and time constraints of women?
✓ Are they available during prime time when the largest number of men and women are likely to be watching and or listening?
  ✓ Does the headline convey the story or a stereotype?
  ✓ Is dignity and fair play sacrificed for witticism?
  ✓ Are the headline/ caption/ photo/image relevant and related?
  ✓ What are your first impressions about gender when you see the page/ view/ listen to the programme?
  ✓ Does it fit your own experience?
  ✓ What is said about men and women?
  ✓ How do you expect your audience to respond?

Gender structures
✓ Is there a champion for the gender policy in your organisation?
✓ Is this person at management level?
✓ What specific structures have been created for gender mainstreaming?
✓ Do these include the human resource, editorial and advertising departments?
✓ Is there a committee that includes all three?
✓ What informal structures have been created to encourage understanding and buy in? (For example a gender forum, brown bag lunches)?
✓ Do they include men and women?
Are women encouraged to form support networks and structures?
Are these structures accorded respect and status and given time to meet?
Do these structures network with civil society?
Do you have an internal system to undertake content analysis?
Is gender one of the criteria?
Does content analysis examine: a) events and issues through the voices of both men and women b) stories highlighting the impact of events on men and women? c) Thematic analysis to ensure that issues covered reflect gender challenges?
Does gender feature in readership/ listenership/ viewer ship surveys?
Do you conduct focus group surveys to solicit the views of audiences to products? Are men and women equally represented? Are the results disaggregated by gender? Are they acted upon?
Are there internal mechanisms for monitoring the overall gender policy including conditions of service and how they impact on men and women?
Do you engage with research findings by civil society, private sector and other bodies on the way in which gender is covered by the media, and on sexist attitudes in society?

**Government**
Do you have gender-disaggregated statistics on access to information in your country?
Is universal access to information regarded as a fundamental right? Where and in what way is this expressed?
What special policies are in place to ensure that women have equal access to information?
Do you have a gender unit in the ministry of information and communication that is specifically charged with this concern?
Is the public broadcaster obligated to ensure equal airtime for men and women, and to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all its policies and practices?
Is community radio supported and facilitated? Does this reach women? Are women encouraged to run their own community radio stations?
What policies are in place to ensure that women have equal access to ICTs and that these are accessible outside urban centres?

**Regulatory Authorities**
Do you have a definition of sexist complaints?
Do you encourage such complaints, and how are they dealt with?
Do you engage in public education and awareness regarding gender equality?
Is gender one of the considerations in your monitoring of media and or advertising?
How are these findings fed back to the media and or advertisers?
Have you fully used your “teeth” to require that the media and advertising industries challenge sexist stereotypes? For example, have you considered requiring that media and advertisers report annually on what they are doing to challenge sexist stereotypes?
Are best practices on gender mainstreaming in the media and advertising acknowledged and rewarded?

**Media training institutions**
Do you offer specialist courses on gender?
Do male and female journalists participate in these training courses?
Are gender considerations integrated into all your training curricula?
Do you receive requests for on-site gender training by mainstream media?
Are you able to respond to such requests?
✓ How do you measure the impact of the gender training offered?
✓ How could this impact be improved?

**Gender activists**
✓ Do you have a media and communications policy?
✓ Is it a priority in the organisation?
✓ Have members undergone media/communications training?
✓ Are you accessible?
✓ Is your information relevant and media friendly?
✓ Have you provided the media with a directory of contacts?
✓ Have you developed relationships with the mainstream media?
✓ Have you packaged the main gender documents eg CEDAW, BPA, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development for the media?
✓ Have you been strategic and proactive in networking?
✓ Have you lobbied for gender sensitive laws and regulations? Have you highlighted your activities to the media?
✓ Have you highlighted critical gender issues through public campaigns to build a media momentum?
✓ Do you share resources to ensure maximum coverage of gender issues?
✓ Do you take advantage of spaces and airtime for projecting your own views directly, such as opinion pieces and talk shows?
✓ Do you have mechanisms for monitoring media from a gender perspective?
✓ How is this research fed back to the media?