

Gender Equality in Media Policies and Practices in African Media

Roukaya Kasenally

Director of Communication and Knowledge
Management

African Media Initiative
(AMI)

Setting the African Scene

- Africa a very diverse continent: 54 countries -historical, linguistic, cultural and political differences
- A highly patriarchal society : women have had secondary or peripheral roles
- Prolonged violence and abuse against women

HOWEVER

- Young population: 40-45 % of population is under 25 years
- Last decade a transformation in women political leadership: number of parliamentarians, ministers and at least one head of state
- Energy of African women's movement since the 90's provided a supportive context for women to make certain inroads into a public culture of inquiry

Turning “Foes” into Friends: The Media

- “Sexist attitudes and stereotypes remains one of the major impediments to achieving gender equality”
- Reversing history of misrepresentation and cultural and political marginalisation
- The need for innovativeness in contesting discourses, practices and identities
- The Arab spring
- The advent of technology

African Media: Ensuring Presence and Representation

- Presence : the number crunching but also in what position (quantitative and qualitative)
- Content Representation: Women's centrality in the news, gender (in) equality in the news, creating and pushing a pro-gender, progressive and inclusive agenda
- AMI's Leadership Guiding Principles for African Media Owners and Operators

Existing Frameworks, Protocols and Platforms

In Africa have a myriad of initiatives that are challenging gendered representatives in newspapers, magazines, radios, television and websites

- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
- The African Women's Media Centre
- Women's Media Watch
- The Ugandan Media Women's Association
- Gender Links
- Association for Progressive Communication (APC)

CONTD

- African Union Charter on Gender Equality
- SADC Gender Protocol
- Windhoek Declaration
- ECOWAS Gender Policy
- NEPAD
- COMESA Gender Policy Development
- CEDAW

State of Affairs: The Statistics Speak

The challenge of 54 countries has created regional differences:

- In Southern Africa: 41 % of women in media houses, 28 % on boards of directors, 23 % of top managers in media houses (Glass Ceilings, 2010)
- Eastern Africa : 20 % of professional journalists, 3 % at decision making organs (EAJA, 2010)
- Western Africa at the 2006 ‘Conference on Media and Gender Strategy for West Africa’: the following was observed

“Deeply concerned that female journalists are under-represented in most leadership and decision making processes”

“Worried that most women in the media industries are not given the opportunity for further training which will enhance their management, research and leadership skills”

Media Representation

- In Africa in 2010 there was only 19% of female news subjects
- Stories where issues of gender equality or inequality raised 5%
- News stories citing gender equality or human and women's rights instruments 13%

(source: Global Media Monitoring Project, 2010)

Concluding Remarks

- Can and will new media deliver on gender equality?
- AMI's role and responsibility
- Tapping into people's power of advocacy and agency