# CHAPTER TWELVE
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
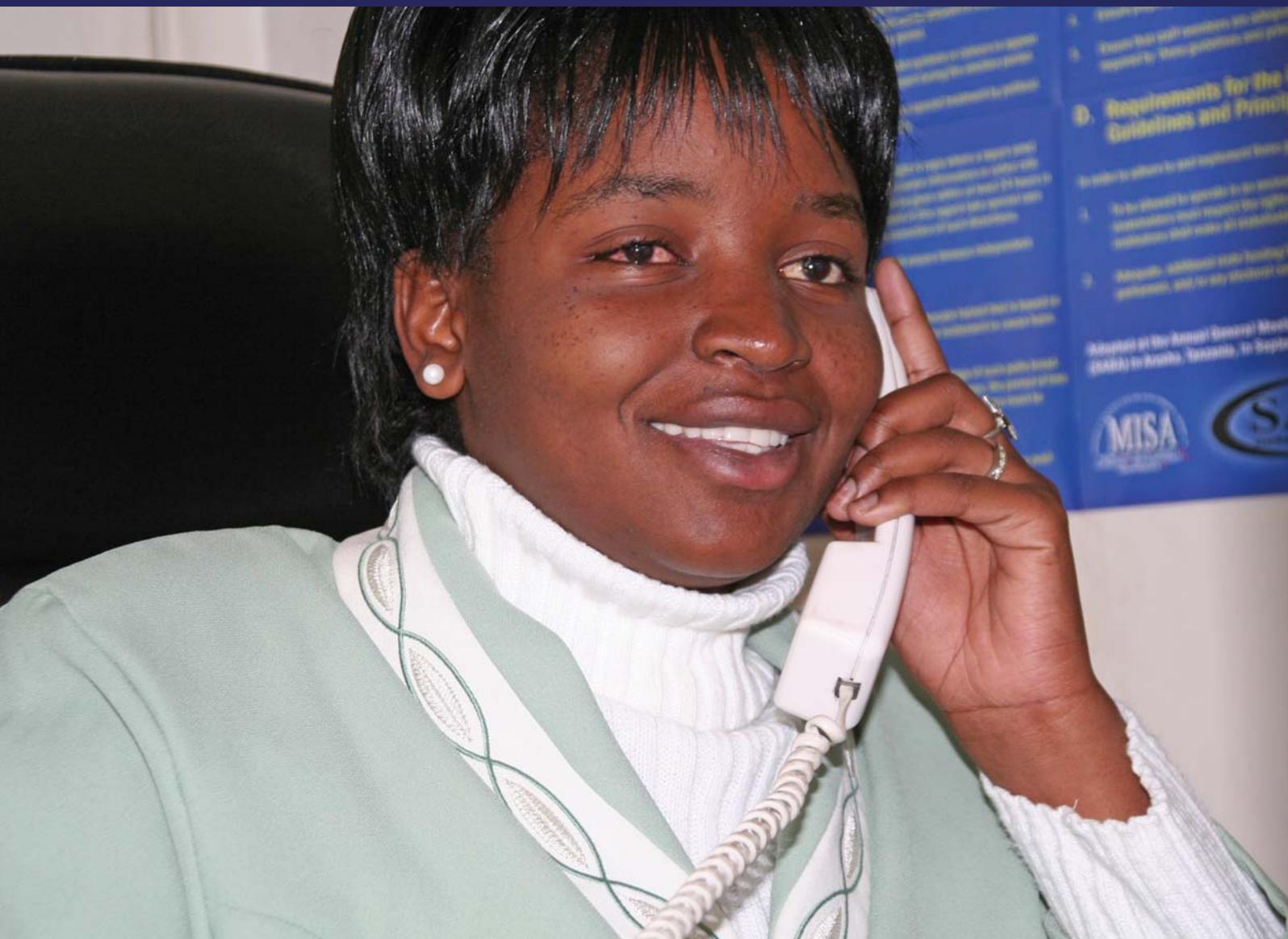
SADC has a mandate to communicate its work as well as promote the development of the media, information and communication practices and technologies in Member States. The Corporate Communications Unit (soon to become the Public Relations Office) has developed a SADC Communications and Promotional Strategy (Strategy) which is serving as "the blue print for the Southern African Development Community to adopt effective strategies to communicate with all its stakeholders internal and external".

The Strategy also identifies the role of the CC as 'branding, positioning and projection of the corporate image of the organisation at all times'. It is thus playing a pivotal role in the organisation. Importantly the role of the media and its engagement with SADC is seen as an important strategy to communicate SADC trends and developments, and it is noted that 'there is a demand and hunger amongst the media for more information about SADC activities'; it is thus key that gender equality in and through the media is addressed, and aligned with SADC priorities. As at June 2008, the unit had two male and four women staff. The Head of the Unit is a woman.

In terms of specific activities, the CC facilitates meetings of SADC, coordinates media coverage as well as liaising with SADC Media Coordinators in every Member States (usually from Ministries of Information), coordinates SADC Media awards and supports the structures related to the awards, and writes periodic SADC briefing documents. There is also a radio programme called SADC Calling which is aired on Channel Africa, and the CC works with the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA) on specific projects. The CC also coordinates the SADC Schools Essay Competition. In terms of publications, it produces and distributes several publications, including the Summit brochure, the SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review, the SADC Today, SADC Calendars and Diaries, and SADC Protocols.

Exercise 35: Spotting the gender gaps in communication

A. Examine some of the SADC Secretariat publications and answer the questions that follow:

1. Count the number of images of women and the number of images of men. Record these below

| No of women	No of men	Total	% women	% men

2. What kind of roles are women found in? Give examples?

_____

_____

_____

3. What kind of roles are men found in? Give examples.

_____

_____

_____

4. What is meant by gender stereotypes?

_____

_____

_____

5. In what ways are these limiting to personal/community/national/regional development?

_____

_____

_____

B. Consider the images in the promotional advertisements below for Swaziland and for the Kwa Zulu Natal province of South Africa in the SADC Investment journal.
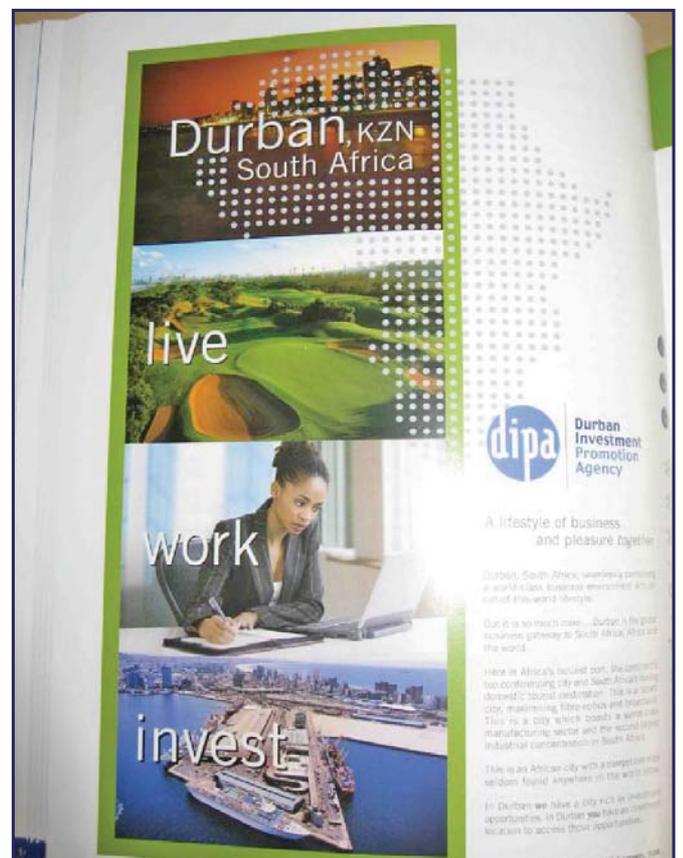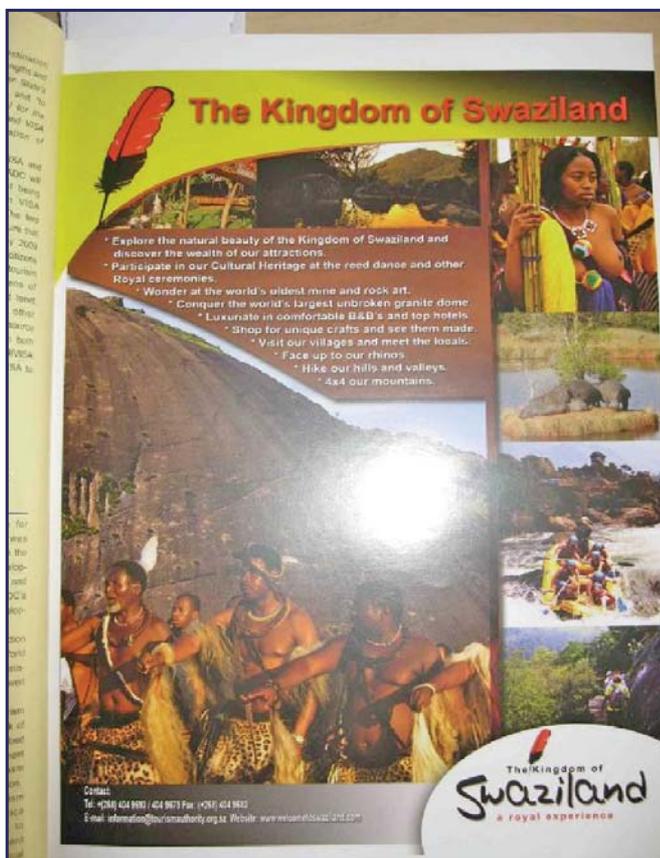
1. What messages are conveyed about women in each?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What is the difference?

_____

_____

_____

3. Which image challenges gender stereotypes? Why?

_____

_____

_____

4. What is the effect of this?

_____

_____

_____

C. Examine the two images below; one an advertisement for Community AIDS response in the SADC Investment journal and the other a photo of former President Kenneth Kaunda with an AIDS activist taken at the same event.
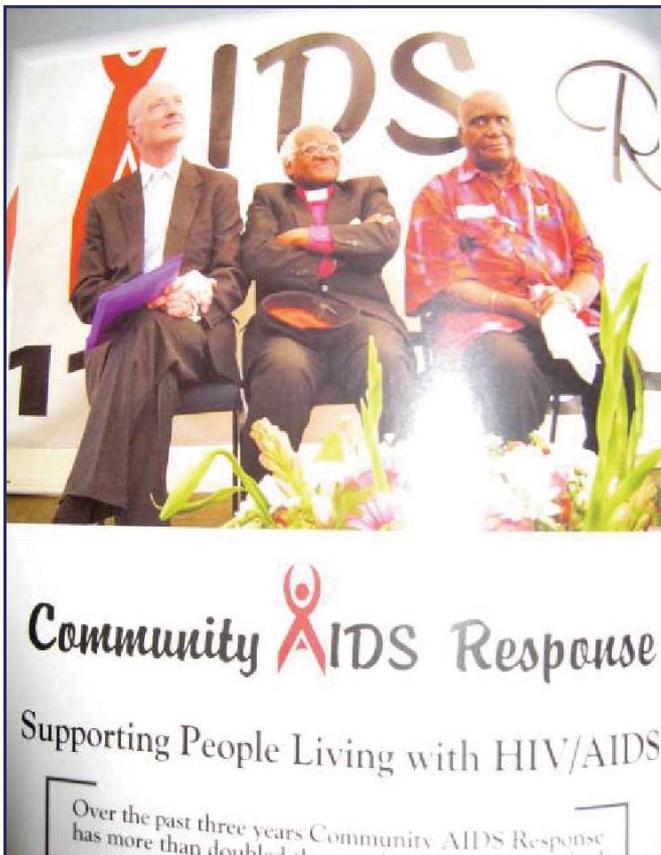
1. What messages are conveyed in the two pictures? How are these different?

_____

_____

_____

2. Which projects gender balance?

_____

_____

_____

3. Which challenges gender stereotypes?

_____

_____

_____

4. Which carries the stronger message as far as the pandemic is concerned? Why?

_____

_____

_____

D. Now examine this cover on Namibia's future:

Investing in Namibia's future.

NamPower
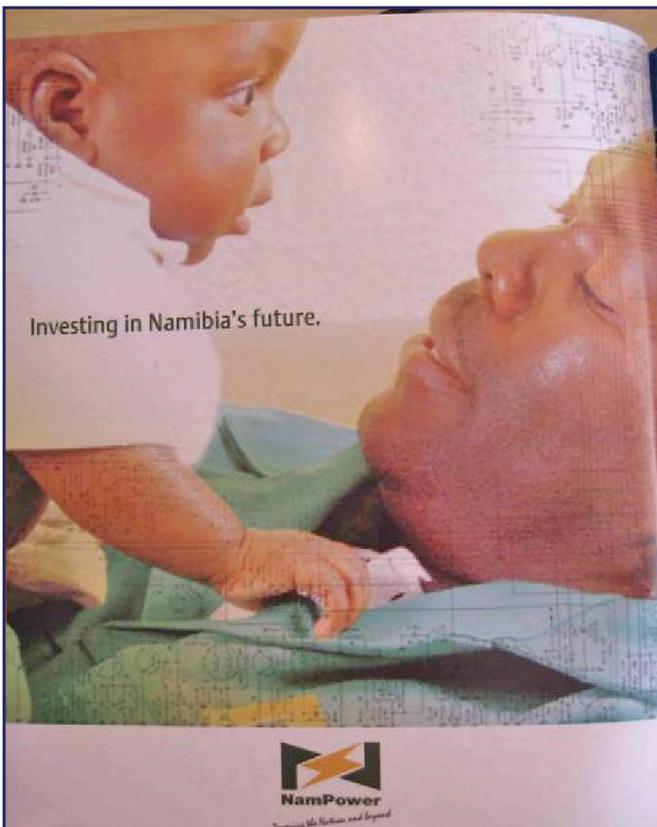
1. What messages does this image ("Investing in Namibia's future") send out?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In what ways does this challenge gender stereotypes?

_____

_____

_____

_____

E. Lessons

1. From this exercise what do you understand by gender mainstreaming? Is it important in your area of work?

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_____

2. Summarise the key gender issues in your sector

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_____

Exercise 36: Finding gender in information, communication and media

Go through the planning documents for the sector and answer the following questions

1. Is there explicit reference to the key gender equality issues you identified in the pervious exercise?

_____

_____

_____

2. If yes, where, is this adequate in line with requirement for gender mainstreaming?

_____

_____

_____

3. Would you describe Administration and Human Resources policies and procedures plans as gender blind, gender neutral or gender aware?

_____

_____

_____

4. What steps can be taken to ensure that these are gender aware?

_____

_____

_____

Notes

A review of the 40 interventions that make up the SADC Communication Programme of Action, none refers to the need to address gender equality issues including positive imaging of the roles of men and women in achieving the SADC common agenda. There is reference to the need to produce messages and themes which 'should be guided by SADC positions on various issues', including gender equality and development. There is no apparent evidence of this throughout the strategy. A review of some of the outputs, for example the SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review 2007/8's section on Directorate Reports, the Gender and Development section has images that do not necessarily depict progress and achievements. There is need to strengthen synergy between the GU and CC, as this relationship is critical in terms of sensitively communicating gender issues internally and externally. There are opportunities pointed out by the CC that the GU and other Units/Directorates can take advantage of that are not being creatively utilised, for example, a standing column for SADC news in the Southern Times, a widely circulating regional newspaper.

Exercise 37: Finding information, communication and media in gender instruments

Go through the instruments listed below and any others that you may regard as relevant. What provisions are made that are relevant to your sector?

Instrument	Relevant provisions for gender mainstreaming
Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals – Goal 1 and 3 (2000)	
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)	
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (adopted 2003)	
SADC Protocol on Information	
Draft Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Disadvantaged People in the Information and Communications Sector	
SADC Regional Gender Policy	
SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997)	
Draft SADC Protocol on Gender and Development	
Other legal or policy instruments relevant to the sector	

Action planning

Exercise 38: Go through the work plan of the communications sector in SADC. Identify key gender issues and propose at least one action in each case.

| AREA OF WORK	GENDER ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTIONS
Coordinating media coverage during SADC meetings		
Liaising with SADC media coordinators		
Coordinating SADC Media awards		
Special dates eg SADC Day; International Women's Day		
Periodic briefing documents		
SADC annual reports; SADC Brochure; SADC calendar and other documents relating to SADC work Radio programmes of SADC – Channel Africa		
Links with SABA		
SADC Schools Essay competition		
ICT and website		
Other		

ⓘ Fact sheet 21: Gender and the media

The Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted by Gender Links (GL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2003 showed that women constitute 17 percent of news sources. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) of 2005 showed that this had increased by a mere two percent to 19 percent, but with significant gains in countries where there has been concerted gender and media activism, such as in South Africa where the proportion of women sources reached 26%.

The graph below from the GMBS highlights the proportion of women and men sources in different topic categories.

Regional analysis of topic & sex - % of individual topics

Legend: ■ Regional female ■ Regional male

% show the split of F & M where idendified - any 'unknown' have been included in the % calculation for each topic
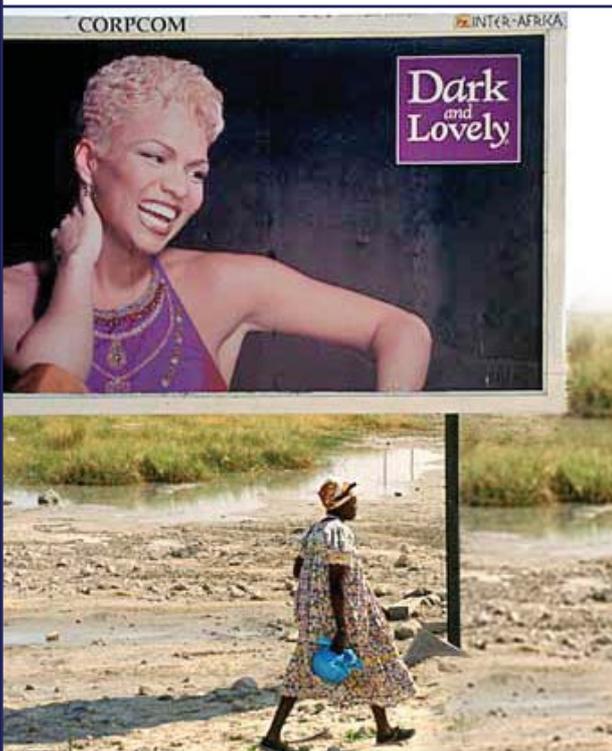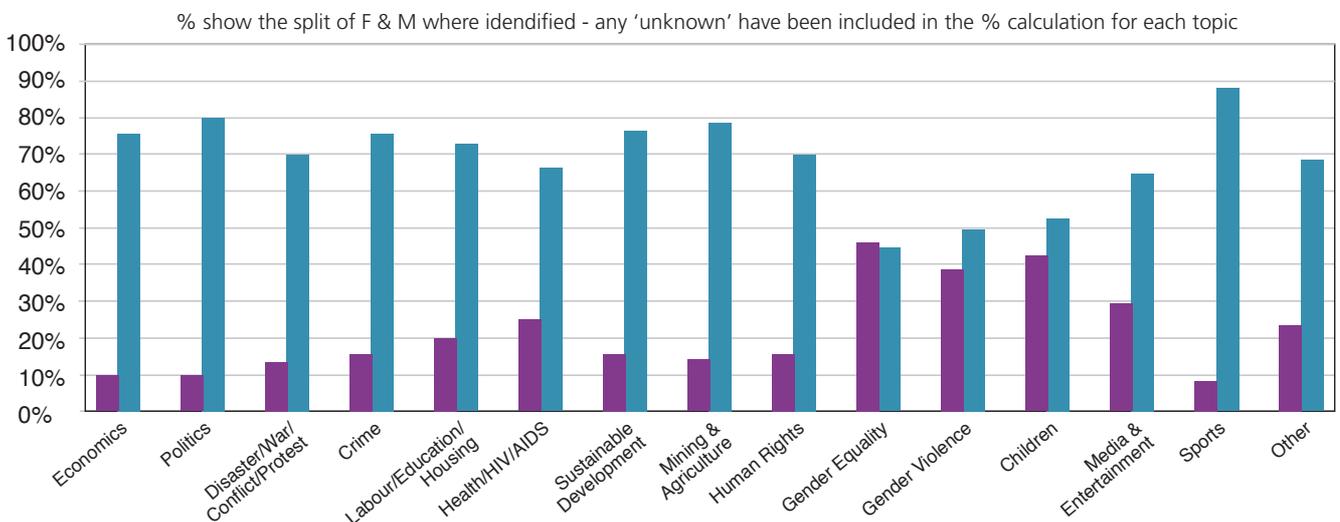
The role of the media in perpetuating stereotyping is revealed in this graph with women's voices the least visible in the issues traditionally associated with men, such as economic, politics, and sports. On the other hand women's opinions and voices become more visible in the traditionally 'female' issues, such as gender equality, gender violence and children.

The GMBS showed that women are portrayed in a limited range of roles, most often as sex objects or victims of violence, while men are portrayed in a wide range of roles. Often the roles in which women are portrayed bear little resemblance to their every day reality as captured in the adjacent photo by Trevor Davies.

Promoting gender equality in and through the media has gained greater prominence in recent years. This has been largely due to civil society activism. Gender and the media has not been high on the agenda of governments, and

key international women's rights instruments are either silent or provide weak provisions in this area.

More strategic approaches by gender activists towards working with the media have resulted in greater coverage of important campaigns such as the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence. Simple tools such as directories of women sources and resources are helping to ensure more varied and progressive content.

Gender and media activists are becoming more adept at using new information and communication technologies, as witnessed by the cyber dialogue initiative launched by women from the region during the ten year review of the Beijing conference. Gender and media networking is stronger than ever before and this has demonstrated the power of the media and of communications as a force for change.

In spite of this progress, women are still woefully under represented in all areas of the media, except as TV presenters, and especially in decision-making structures. There appears to be little pressure on media decision-makers to take corrective action, except through Employment Equity laws, where these exist. Media regulatory authorities are male-dominated and they have not integrated gender criteria into licensing and other mechanisms at their disposal for making the media (especially the public media) more accountable to the public on their gender practices.

Only a small proportion of media houses have adopted gender policies, including the public media. Gender mainstreaming among media training institutions, many of which are government funded, remains ad hoc. With the exception of South Africa, none of the information and communication ministries in the region have gender units nor have they mainstreamed gender considerations into information and communication policies. The several ICT policies that are being generated in the region as part of the fervor to join the "information society" are gender blind and carry the risk of women being marginalised even further within the digital divide.

Legislative and policy frameworks in the region require much stronger provisions on the media, including the need to redress gender inequalities and bias both within the media and in editorial content. Making use of the mechanisms that the state has access to, such as licensing agreements is a key strategy to oblige greater gender accountability on the part of the media. Mainstreaming gender in information and communication policies accompanied by targeted implementation is likely to yield positive benefits, and supporting the work of civil society organisations involved in gender and media work is a necessary strategy to achieve progress in this complex area.

Source: Gender Links

☑ **Checklist**

Core issues

✓ Is freedom of expression a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution and does this explicitly include the right of women and men, in all their diversity, to be given equal opportunity to air their views?

✓ Is universal access to information, for women and men, regarded as a fundamental right? Where and in what way is this expressed?

✓ Are there gender gaps in literacy and what is being done to redress this?

✓ What proportion of boys and girls are in primary, secondary and tertiary education? What is being done to address the imbalances?

✓ What proportion of girls and boys are in the arts and sciences? What is being done to redress the imbalance through career guidance, incentives and other schemes?

✓ What proportion of men and women are in information, communication and media-related jobs? At what level in which areas are they? What is being done to redress the imbalance?

✓ Are the views of all citizens, women and men, consulted in policy formulation?

Information services

✓ Is there a gender analysis of, and are there gender-disaggregated statistics on, access to information and the content of information that is produced and disseminated by the government?

✓ Is there a gender unit in the ministry of information and communication?

✓ What measures are in place to ensure that information reaches women and men equally, especially in remote areas? For example, are print publications written in local languages? To the extent that literacy is a constraint, are there alternatives, such as radio programmes and/ or literacy classes?

✓ Does the content of government information target the concerns of both women and men?

✓ Does promotional information on the country, in print and electronic formats, highlight the enterprise and achievements of women? Does this include gender disaggregated statistics and information on women in decision-making, including in parliament?

✓ To the extent that government information to the public is disseminated verbally (for example through community agents and/or visits by decision-makers) are such teams gender balanced; do they target both women and men and is there an effort to ensure that women participate effectively in discussions?

ICTs

Access

✓ At what stage is the deregulation of the telecommunications sector? What are the potential benefits for citizens, and especially for women who tend to be marginalised in privatisation deals, especially those of a technical nature? How can women be assisted to participate more effectively in these processes?

✓ What is the pricing structure for telecommunications services and equipment? To what extent is this a barrier to access for the poor and for women? How can these costs be reduced to facilitate greater access?

✓ Is there a universal access policy in place? Are its provisions sufficient? Is access by women specifically recognised in the policy?

✓ Are partnerships being established between government, the private sector and civil society that maximise the possibilities of access, and specifically access for women?

✓ What plans are in place to extend ICT access through schools, and to ensure that girl children benefit equally from such initiatives?

✓ What technical options are being explored for making ICTs more accessible to remote areas and specifically to women in remote areas?

✓ What options other than the written word, eg touch screens, are being explored?

✓ To the extent that there are telecentres in the country, is there gender disaggregated statistics on their usage and what is being done to bridge the gender gaps?

Applications

✓ How are ICTs being applied to advance gender equality? Are there more strategic ways in which they could be employed for this purpose, for example in conducting campaigns and disseminating information on women's rights?

✓ Are ICTs being applied to benefit the economic empowerment of women?

✓ Are ICTs being used to improve women's access to social services, such as education and health? Is there scope for ICT access to be linked to literacy classes?

✓ Are ICTs being used in the HIV/AIDS campaign and in ameliorating the devastating effects of this pandemic on women?

✓ Are ICTs being used to enhance women's access to decision-making, and to making governance more responsive to the needs of women?

Content development

✓ Are there policies in place to encourage citizens, and especially women whose views are most under-represented on the Internet, to create and share content for the Internet?

✓ To what extent is language a disempowering factor? What is being done to address this? Is sufficient attention being given to the creation of content in African languages?

✓ How can the rich oral traditions and wisdom of women in the region be translated into content for the Internet?

✓ How can women become more involved in software development? How can this be used to raise the profile and voice of African women on the Internet?

Capacity building

✓ Have gender considerations, eg socialisation, been built into the design of ICT training?

✓ Have the needs of older women been taken into account?

✓ Does the training go beyond the basics to incorporate information and knowledge creation and management?

✓ Does it include an understanding of policy issues?
Is gender training being offered to male decision makers in the ICT sector?

Media

Regulatory authorities

✓ Is there gender balance in the composition of media regulatory authorities and if not can this be required by the law establishing such bodies?

✓ Do regulatory authorities require, through licensing conditions, that media houses demonstrate or set targets for achieving diversity in ownership, employment and content consistent with the demographics of the country? Are media houses required or encouraged to have gender policies?

✓ Do regulatory authorities receive complaints from the public? Is the public encouraged to submit gender-related complaints, for example the way that women are objectified in the media and in advertising? Are such complaints acted upon?

✓ Do media regulatory authorities include gender considerations in their public education and awareness programmes.

✓ To the extent that there are self-regulatory bodies for advertising and the media, are these encouraged or required to mainstream gender in their work?

✓ Are best practices on gender mainstreaming in the media and advertising acknowledged and rewarded?

✓ Is community radio supported and facilitated? Are gender considerations built into programming? Are women encouraged to run their own community radio stations?

Media training institutions

✓ To what extent does the government in your country support media training institutions?

✓ Is there gender disaggregated data on those providing and those receiving training?

✓ Is gender mainstreamed into the training curricula?

State-owned/public media

✓ Are gender considerations mainstreamed into the statutes that govern state-owned/public media?

✓ Is there gender balance in the composition and content of such media? What information and research exists on this?

✓ Do state-owned/public media have gender policies? Do these cover employment issues as well as editorial content?

✓ What is being to ensure greater public engagement by state-owned/public media eg through talk sows?

✓ Are women and men given equal voice in such programmes?

Monitoring and evaluation:

✓ With reference to all the above what gender indicators and structures have been established?

✓ How are these monitored?

Additional Resources

Lowe Morna, C (Ed) (2002) Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) www.genderlinks.org.za
Made, P and Lowe Morna, C (2007) Diversity in Action: HIV and AIDS and Gender Policies in Newsrooms
Media Action Plan Handbook 2nd Edition. Gender Links and MMP
Gender Links: www.genderlinks.org.za
Feminists for Freedom of Expression:
http://www.ffeusa.org
FEMNET: http://www.femnet.africaonline.co.ke
Women's International News Gathering Service:
http://www.amazoncityradio.com
Women'sNet: http://www.womensnet.org.za
World Association for Christian Communication:
http://www.wacc.org.uk