



Thematic Session
Role of Media in the building of a feminist agenda

Concept Note
29th March, 2021

10:00 – 11:20 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)

19:00 – 20:20 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)

Background

In 1995, the most visionary agenda for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was created by 189 governments and thousands of activists worldwide: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As a defining framework for change, the Platform for Action made comprehensive commitments under 12 critical areas of concern, being the promotion and protection of the human rights of women one of such priorities. In 2021, 26 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, not a single country has achieved gender equality, and the human rights of women and girls are still constantly threatened.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) has been the road map for the improvement of gender equality in and through the media and digital technologies, both internationally and at national level with two strategic objectives: a) Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication; and b) Promote a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media.

When it comes to equality between women and men in the news media, progress has virtually grounded to a halt. According to the Global Media Monitoring Project 2015, the largest study on the portrayal, participation, and representation of women in the news media spanning 20 years and 114 countries, only 24 per cent of the people heard, read about, or seen in newspaper, television and radio news are women. A glass ceiling also exists for women news reporters in newspaper bylines and newscast reports, with 37 per cent of stories reported by women as of 2015, showing no change over the course of a decade.

Despite the democratizing promise of digital media, women's poor representation in traditional news media is also reflected in digital news, with women making up only 26 per cent of the people in Internet news stories and media news tweets. Only 4



per cent of traditional news and digital news stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes; and only six of the 100 largest international media corporations in the world have women CEOs (Chief Executive Officer) in 2017. Among other factors, stereotypes, and the significant underrepresentation of women in the media play a significant role in shaping harmful attitudes of disrespect and violence towards women.

Media today, from traditional legacy media to online media, still hugely influence our perceptions and ideas about the role of girls and women in society. We strongly believe in the transformative role media can play in achieving gender equality in societies. By creating gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content and breaking gender stereotypes. By challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes regarding gender perceptions both in content and in the media houses. By showing women in leadership roles and as experts on a diversity of topics daily, not as an exception.

Today, it is important to note that new concerns have emerged regarding the role of media that back in 1995 might not have been as concerning, however, 26 years later have a significant impact, for example, violence. Not only violence within the media, but the diverse types of violence that women face within the media, exercising journalism and using technologies such as social networks.

According to UNESCO's 2020 Global Survey on Online Violence against Women Journalists 73% of women journalists had experienced online violence in the course of their work; 25% had received threats of physical violence; 18% had been threatened with sexual violence and 20% reported being attacked offline in connection with online violence they had experienced. These dynamics are amplified in crisis and context settings. For example, although men make up the majority of journalists reporting in conflict settings, as of 2015, 64% of women journalists killed worldwide died while working in conflict countries, as compared with 54% in the case of male journalist deaths. Moreover, 70% of women killed in conflict settings were murdered (compared with 62% of men) and 53% of the perpetrators of murders of women in conflict settings enjoy full or partial impunity.¹ This makes reporting in conflict and crisis situations particularly dangerous for women and violence against journalists—male and female—remains un-prosecuted.

¹ Global Study on 1325 (2015), pg. 296.



Digital media and communication can transform society and some of the most critical areas of work of the Beijing Platform regarding women and girls, are being reconfigured by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to communication and media must have a component included in the Action Coalitions, to have a targeted set of concrete, ambitious and immediate actions within the period of 2020-2025 to deliver tangible impact on gender equality and girls' and women's human rights.

General Objective

The Generation Equality Forum is the occasion to have a multi stakeholder approach - the UN (United Nations) system, States, media and digital communication companies, and civil society organizations- to support the inclusion of **a new gender approach in media and digital communications** as part of Beijing +25 deliberations and outcomes.

Specific Objectives

- The session is intended to question existing norms and rules; exploring the gaps in regulatory mechanisms - particularly in respect of social media's cross border jurisdiction and role in shaping national public spheres; and reinforcing global to local mechanisms for promoting gender equality within the media and digital sectors and tackling gender stereotypes in the media.

Participants

- Civil society organizations
- UN Agencies
- Media Agencies
- Private Sector
- Governments

Format

This virtual dialogue will be held on March 29 from 10:00 – 11:30 am (MEX time) and in the evening 19:00 – 20:30 (MEX time). The discussion will be driven by an experienced feminist moderator who will direct the conversation between nine different stakeholders and the audience to ensure a diversity of views. The audience will be able to interact by using the chat on the platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

Suggested time	Proposed activity
10:00 – 10:05 19:00 – 19:05	Welcome remarks
10:05 – 10:45 19:05 – 19:45	<p>Moderated discussion with the panelists. Participants have between 3-4 minutes to answer each question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think has been the progress made in the role of women in the media and that do you think are the setbacks and challenges to be approached in the coming years? - What needs to be done by governments to guarantee gender equality in the media? - What do you think is the role of the media to tackle gender stereotypes? - What would be your recommendations to comply with what was established in the Beijing Platform in the GEF and with the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation?
10:45 – 11:15 19:45 – 20:15	Q&A session. The Moderator reads selected questions from the chat.
11:15 – 11:20 20:15 – 20:20	Closing: moderator thanks participants and audience.