



Statement of Commitment for Gender Equality in South African Media

The stories we hear and the images we see not only reflect our society, but they explain, shape and influence its future. This **Statement of Commitment for Gender Equality in South African Media** is meant to be a document that motivates South African news and entertainment media to reflect and take on the roles and responsibilities that come with this influence. It is meant to guide the way for signatories to become a positive force in this country's struggle with gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV).

The statement was developed as part of the *Step It Up for Gender Equality in South African Media* (Step It Up) project, a partnership initiative of the UN Women South Africa Multi-Country Office and Partnerships for Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in Southern Africa Programme (PfP) financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in 2018. The Statement of Commitment forms part of the Step It Up project and was jointly drafted by media organizations and practitioners, the government institutions regulating the sector and civil society. It is directed at companies and individuals working in the South African news and entertainment broadcast media including radio, television and community media.

The challenges in South African broadcast media are twofold: On the one hand we are missing voices of women in the media, some of the reporting on GBV is harmful rather than sensitive and gender stereotyping is still persistent.¹ On the other hand, gender inequality, discrimination and violence also occurs within the media organisations.² This 'Statement of Commitment' therefore addresses critical changes along three key themes:

Gender-Sensitive Reporting – including commitments around language, voices and coverage in news media, especially relating to GBV.

Un-stereotyping Entertainment and Storytelling – including commitments around writing, producing and commissioning of stories that can positively effect norms and challenge stereotypes of gender, masculinity and relationships.

¹ Gender Links, 2019. Gender, Diversity and GBV in South African Television. Can be found at: <https://partnershipsforprevention.org/resource-view/gender-diversity-and-gbv-in-south-african-television-8>

² Ibid as well as: Gender Links, 2018. Glass Ceiling: Women in South African Media Houses; Media Monitoring Africa. Various articles under Gender and the Media; the NFVF and SWIFT, 2018. Gender Matters in the South African Film Industry; and SWIFT, 2018. A SWIFT Mission: Tackling the Gender Disparities in South Africa's film and television industry.

Creating a Safe and Equal Space “Behind the Scenes” – including commitments to promote safety and equality in the production environment, on set, in the studio and in the newsrooms.

The Statement of Commitment for Gender Equality in South African Media is a voluntary platform intended to create awareness, self-accountability and a recognition of the responsibility held by the signing companies and individual practitioners. It should be seen as building on and in support of decades worth of work of South African civil society fighting inequality and GBV, promoting gender aware media as well as the recent efforts by the South African government in the form of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide, which mentions media explicitly.

Through the work of its Advisory Group the Step It Up project and this ‘Statement of Commitment’ received invaluable support, guidance and expertise from: the South African National Editors Forum, the South African Guild of Actors, the WITS Radio Academy, the KZN Film Commission, the Film and Publication Board, the National Film and Video Foundation, the Media Development and Diversity Agency, the Commission for Gender Equality, Gender Links, the Soul City Institute, Sonke Gender Justice, Media Monitoring Africa, Sisters Working in Film and Television, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and the Government Communication Systems





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..... at support the voluntary commitments mentioned in the *Step It Up – Statement of Commitment for Gender Equality in South African Media* under the headings 1) Gender-Sensitive Reporting; 2) Un-Stereotyping Entertainment and Storytelling and 3) Creating an Equal and Safe Space Behind the Scenes. The will work towards complete fulfilment of those commitments relevant to its work and do the best to support employees in adhering to these commitments.

Date/Place

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