



CEDAW Committee - Ninth periodic report of Mexico July 2018

Shadow Report on "Violence against women and gender inequality in and through the Media and ICT in Mexico"

REPORT

The publication of this report to the CEDAW Committee is authorized.

This Shadow Report has been prepared by Dr. Aimée Vega Montiel, researcher at Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities (CEIICH) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM¹), on behalf of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG). The Alliance was launched in 2013 by UNESCO and more than 500 organizations, whose mission is to promote gender equality in and through the media and ICT.

The aim of this report is to provide a background which shows the prevalence of the gender inequality and violence against women in and through the media and ICT in Mexico. Too, to suggest a list of recommendations for the Mexican government and propose questions to be asked.

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Mexican government published the National Program for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women PROIGUALDAD 2013-2018, which identifies the gender equality policies central for the current

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government. The Program includes a series of lines of action that involve the responsibility of media and ICT².

Notwithstanding the Program, as observed in this report, little is recorded in the level of policies and mechanisms to eliminate VAW in media and ICT. The most meaningful advance has been made at the legislative level, within the context of the new Law of Telecommunications and Broadcasting - this was published in 2014. The participation of both feminist academics and NGOs was crucial to ensure the adoption of gender principles in different areas. Testimony of this is given by the book *The Gender Perspective in the Telecommunications and Broadcasting Reform*, published by the Senate of the Republic in 2014, which gathers the proposals and experience in the construction of synergies between the legislative body and the UNAM-CEIICH. As a result of this synergy, the Law includes nine articles that promote gender equality in different areas, such as: public service, radio and television frequencies for community and indigenous groups, both audience and users of telecommunications rights, advertising and contents.

Likewise, there are numerous initiatives and projects (research, reports, publications, forums, campaigns, courses and training programs for media professionals), driven mainly by both feminist academics and NGOs.

A strategic initiative of the Ministry of the Interior was the signing in 2016 of the Agreement for Gender Equality and the Fighting against Violence against Women in the Media, with the Chamber of the Radio and Television Industry (CIRT). The agreement includes three fundamental actions to be promoted by these sectors: information strategy and awareness in the media about gender equality and combating violence against women, production of guides for the production of non-sexist and inclusive content and the full inclusion of the gender perspective in the codes of ethics of private media, in addition to the awareness of the workforce in this perspective³. However, the CIRT has not carried yet its commitments forward.

A recent milestone is the partnership between the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) and the Mexican government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and the National Institute of Women (Inmujeres) before the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 62, in March, 2018. The result of this

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<http://www.inmujeres.cdmx.gob.mx/storage/app/uploads/public/594/98d/0d8/59498d0d8784c152211482.pdf>

³ https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/112384/Convenio_de_Concertaci_n_SEGOB-CONAVIM-CIRT_firmado_11-Jun-16_.pdf



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collaboration was the influence in the Agreed Conclusions, which includes eight recommendations related to media and ICT⁴.

Research documents the incipient advances, and in some cases the backlash related to Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action and its two strategic objectives. One of the main obstacles is the resistance of media and ICT companies to promote gender equality. As this report shows, the representation of sexist stereotypes and violence against women in media content has spread to digital platforms. Likewise, the marginal access of women to decision-making positions in the media and ICT, the precariousness of their working conditions and the increasing violence against women journalists, are symptomatic of that resistance.

Another obstacle we identify, is the instrumental vision on media and ICT. These are usually seen as tools for the economic empowerment of women, because they can make them more profitable for the market, but not as instruments for the achievement of women's human rights.

On the occasion of the Ninth Report of Mexico before the CEDAW Committee, the Mexican State has the opportunity to mark a new route, taking media and ICT to the center of debates on women's human rights and the fight against violence of gender. Also, by promoting a holistic perspective on gender and communication that addresses its different dimensions -contents, access and participation of women in media and ICT industries, participation of women in decision-making positions, access and use of ICT, security conditions for women journalists, audience rights, education for media and ICT with a gender perspective, access of women and girls to STEM careers and gender, media and ICT policies.

It is impossible dismantling the culture of violence against women and girls, without considering the responsibility of media and new technologies.

BACKGROUND

Media contents

According to the research "Representation of violence against women and girls in the media agenda in Mexico," chaired by Dr. Aimée Vega Montiel, at UNAM-CEIICH, violence against women in media contents is structural, since all television, radio and press content in Mexico, including advertising, reproduces

⁴ <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/62/outcome/csw62-agreed-conclusions-advanced-unedited-version-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3837>



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sexist stereotypes that promote gender violence. Media normalizes violence against women, without representing it as an attack on their human rights. In one week, 10 thousand types and modalities of violence against women are represented in the main radio and television stations, as well in news media - types and modalities include physical, sexual, psychological, economic and femicide violence, in the familiar, labor, educational, institutional and community spheres - (Vega Montiel, 2011). Advertising is the genre that mostly represents VAW, followed by soap operas. Music is another format which reproduces sexist stereotypes through genres such as reggaeton, grupera, ranchera and. Women are subject to discrimination in the news: they are only 24% of news sources in newspapers and television and radio news programs (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015).

Gender inequality in media structure

In Mexico, there is no policy that promotes equal access and participation of women in the media and ICT industries, nor their participation in decision making positions. According to a research conducted by Dr. Aimée Vega Montiel (Vega Montiel, 2014), the access and participation of women in the radio and television industries, do not reach parity at any level:

- The ownership of private television and radio companies is concentrated in men: less than 5 percent of television owners are women, and 10% in radio.
- The boards of private media and telecommunications companies marginalize the participation of women.
- The public television is made up of 67% men and 33% women. The management level includes 27% women and 73% men.
- The private television includes 60% of men and 40% of women in the workforce.
- In public radio, 62% of workers are male, and 70% in the private.
- The sexual division of labor marginalizes the participation of women in areas such as production, management and technical assistance -camera operation, lighting, editing, etc.-. In the technical area of public television, women make up 21% of the workforce and 31% of private television; in both public and private radio, male participation reaches almost 70% and female is 30%.
- Women who have reached decision-making positions on radio and television, identify the prevalence of gender inequality, which is evident in practices such as the masculinisation of work routines, wage inequality and recognition; the glass ceiling; and the marginalization of women from male bargaining spaces.
- Private media unions do not promote gender equality policies. They only recognize those which are included in the law - maternity leave.



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- 12% of public media unions promote the production of audiovisual contents with a gender perspective. Less than 10% have promoted workshops on gender equality and violence against women. None promotes inclusive language.

Ciber-violence against women

One of the key problems that has increased in recent years, is cyber-violence against women. The INEGI points out that 9 million women aged 12 and over have been victims of online violence in Mexico. According to the NGO Luchadoras, in the report online *Cyberviolence against women in Mexico* (2018), the most vulnerable are women between 20 and 29 years old, as well as women human rights defenders and journalists.

Even thousands of women have used social networks to report having been victims of sexual violence, through the hashtags "My First Harassment" or "MeToo", the responses of the aggressors are increasingly violent, to the extent of perpetrating threats of death and of rape.

Violence against women journalists

One of the problems that have worsened in recent years in Mexico, is violence against women journalists. According to the NGO CIMAC, from 2002 to 2013, 184 women journalists were victims of gender violence. Only between 2014 and 2015, the figure rose to 147. 15 of them have been victims of femicide. However, violence against women journalists is not visible given the increase of murders and acts of violence against male journalists. According to CIMAC, women face obstacles in their profession linked to their gender condition, which male journalists do not face. The main types of gender-based violence against women journalists are: psychological, physical, sexual -including harassment and rape-, economic - theft and precariousness of working conditions-, patrimonial - theft of work materials and personal objects, and forced entry to their homes- and institutional - omissions and impunity-.

Legal framework

As stated in the introduction, the legal framework on women's human rights in media and ICT shows significant progress. The pending issue is to promote the policies and mechanisms necessary to make these law effective.

Self-regulation



Although one of the commitments assumed by the CIRT in the agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, was the promotion of self-regulation codes to eradicate sexist stereotypes in content and to promote access of women in the radio and television industries, these have remained at a superficial level without any real impact.

According to Adriana Labardini, ex-commissioner of the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT), there is a real absence of a gender perspective in the codes of ethics of the audiovisual industry. The CIRT developed a code of ethics that applies to 2 thousand broadcasters that does not address the key problem..

Data and Indicators

As it has been shown, the available data come from academic research and NGO reports. There is no a national policy on indicators for the monitoring of media and ICT to verify the progress of these sectors in the eradication of violence against women. There are some research initiatives, such as that headed by the CONAVIM, of the Ministry of the Interior, which analyzes gender violence on the Internet. However, this is not part of a comprehensive media and Internet monitoring policy.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

- Promote laws, regulations and policies on gender equality in and through media and ICT, with a rights-based approach that promotes: eliminating gender stereotypes in media content and advertising; promote access and participation of women in these sectors, including the regulatory body, IFT; to guarantee the safety of women journalists and their labor rights; to guarantee of freedom of expression and women's access to information; and to eradicate violence against women online and offline.
- Ensure that digital and radio and television policies and regulations support women's media networks, particularly community and indigenous networks, as well as young women, in order to close the gap in women's content. media.
- Guarantee that women have the same rights to economic resources, access and control over ownership of the media and ownership of ICT.
- Implement policies for algorithmic transparency on the Internet.
- Make specific references to the role of the media and ICT within the general national strategies of gender equality; as well as a specific commitment to gender equality in national media policies and digital strategies.



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- Produce regular data based on gender indicators, to inform about the different dimensions of the gender, media and ICT agenda.
- Promote media and digital literacy programs with a gender perspective that focuses on marginalized women and girls, encouraging the efforts of women's organizations in the use of digital media and online spaces to amplify their stories.
- Promote curricula in the journalism and communication careers of the universities, so that they incorporate the gender perspective.
- Promote the incorporation of girls and young women into STEM careers.
- Eradicate violence against women and girls from media and ICT contents.
- Promote self-regulation codes that guarantee: equal access of women in the workforce, equal pay, full labor rights, safety conditions for women media professionals and policies to combat violence against women.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS

What measures the Mexican State must take to eliminate violence against women and girls from media and ICT contents (Internet and social networks), in the absence of actions by the CIRT?

What measures is the Mexican State implementing to guarantee equal access for women in the workplaces of media and ICT, their equal pay, full labor rights, safety conditions for women journalists and policies to combat violence?

What actions is the Mexican State taking to monitor the fight against gender violence in the media and ICT?