



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR
ON WOMEN RIGHTS

Remarks by Hon Harriette Chiggai at the Launch of the State of Women in Media on Friday, 1st March 2024 at the Aga Khan University

1. Dr. Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice President, Academic Aga Khan University
2. Prof Nancy Booker, Dean, Graduate School of Media and Communications
3. Prof. Lukoye Atwoli, Dean Medical College
4. Mr Kennedy Chande- The Agakhan Foundation
5. Rosalia Omungo, CEO Editors Guild,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning

1. Members of the fourth estate, if you must write today's story ensure it has the women photos and the correct ones
2. It gives me so much pleasure to be part of this day where we look at **research** that speaks to a subject close to my heart - **the framing of women in the media** - both traditional and digital media.
3. Provost said we look at how women are framed within the media and it made me think of have we as Kenyans appreciated how women are framed in this government.

4. I am more interested in how the media handles issues relating to GBV , we have tech ass GBV,I want to add communication assisted GBV
5. Every five years since 1995, the Global Media Monitoring Project has evaluated the world's print and broadcast media for its **representation of women**. Its 2015 report stated '**women make 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news, exactly as they did in 2010**'. I am wondering this morning as we look at these results how far have we moved in terms of women's representation and framing in the media?
6. For far too long, women and girls have been **misrepresented** or **completely left out from data**. And if **data** is being used to guide the **creation of policies and programmes**, and that data is missing half the population, those policies and programmes will not meet the unique needs of that missing population. This is a problem. I say this to underscore the research that has been done to help us see where the women are in the media and how they are represented. This is the canvas that will bring us to a place where we correct and fill in the gaps.
7. My office was created with the canvas of '**missing**' women in politics, '**missing**' women in the economy, '**missing**' women in Engineering, '**missing**' women in data... the list of sectors is endless. We are here today looking at the 'missing' women in the media. **Unless we deliberately look for the 'missing' women**, we will continue making assumptions. I am therefore very pleased at what Aga Khan University's graduate School of Media and Communication has done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. Let me remind us today that **unless we spotlight women's rights** issues no one will take us (women) seriously nor will they pay attention. I want to challenge the researchers in the room to consider also **reviewing the books that our children read**. How are women framed and how does that impact and shape some of the challenges - specifically stereotypes - that we face today?
9. My office is working with our partners to ensure that **gender statistics** is recognised as a key **enabler for gender equality**. And that real commitments are made to its advancements within government and across sectors.
10. I am looking forward to partnering with data producers, specifically academia such as the Aga Khan University. This is to **strengthen data collection**, data analysis and experimenting with new data sources **to improve insights on women and girls**. So as to drive positive change in our country. By shining a light on the issue of how the media frames women, it helps us to see the gaps and push for better representation. May I also add that it **inspires policy makers** like myself to keep pushing for women and girls empowerment.
11. Therefore, we need to differentiate between **stories with data** and **stories about data**. Journalists should, of course, continue to tell stories with data and incorporate gender statistics and visualizations that make readers better understand and relate to their topics.
12. But we also need journalists to **tell stories about data – and about the lack of data**. This will keep society on its toes. I see this research as **a wake up call** to create change in the media industry. Why would Tanzania have more women in leadership positions in media than Kenya? What are they doing differently?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. This research is a good start. Let's continue interrogating the framing beyond coverage. Let's **interrogate how women leaders are portrayed** in the media and how that has an impact on their **representation**. Let's further interrogate how **women are framed on matters Intimate Partner Violence**. As we continue asking ourselves these questions through research, we will better showcase the gaps that exist and challenge ourselves to do better for women and girls.
14. I am looking forward to seeing more women in media coverage. But, we must ensure **quality coverage that shapes** and **advances** more **positive engagement** among Kenyans. The media is in a perfect position to do exactly that.
15. As I close, let me share a story about **Sheryl Sandberg**, the former Chief Operating Officer of Facebook until 2022. When Sheryl got pregnant for the first time she was working for Google. 'My pregnancy was not easy,' she wrote in her bestselling book *Lean in*. She had morning sickness for the whole 9 months. It was 2014 and Google was already a huge company. As the pregnancy made her feet swollen she increasingly found it difficult to walk from the very large parking space to the office. She went to one of the Google Founders with her challenge. It was later announced that there was a need for '**pregnancy parking**' at the front of the building. Sheryl was embarrassed that being a woman she had never thought of the special parking until she herself became pregnant and experienced 'aching feet'.
16. What women in Google then had suffered from until Sheryl Sandberg became pregnant, was a **data gap**: neither Google's Founders nor Sheryl had ever been pregnant before. As soon as one of them did get pregnant, that **data gap** was filled and all the women who got pregnant at the company after that benefited from it.

17. It shouldn't have taken a senior woman getting pregnant for Google to fill this **data gap**. There had been pregnant women before. The company should have **been proactive in searching the data out**. But sadly the reality is that it usually takes a senior woman for problems to be fixed.
18. Ladies and gentlemen the research that is being launched must have taken some senior women to interrogate, and to fill the data gap around the framing of women. It is up to all of us senior women to find the gaps and fill them. I will do my part, I urge you to do your part.

Thank you.

Hon. Harriette Chiggai,
President's Advisor on Women Rights