

# **CHARTER OF GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA AND JOURNALISM**

## **Adopted at the Gender Equity in Media Summit**

**Kathmandu, November 15-16, 2006**

This charter sets out the minimum standards, principles and actions needed to underpin gender equity in media in Nepal and outlines a practical program of action to support the achievement of equality in media workplaces, journalists organizations and the media itself

The participants at the Gender Equity in Media Summit declare their endorsement of this charter for gender equity and strongly urge all journalists; media unions/associations/federations; media institutes; media houses (government, private and community); government media bodies and specially constituted Commissions to adopt and support the following actions.

### **1. Fundamental Principles**

To create equality throughout society it is essential that the media promote and protect gender equality, both within the working environment and in a balanced representation of women. It is the responsibility of media to encourage open debate and discussion of these issues, to better inform society and to break down the limitations of gender stereotypes.

Gender equity in the media workplace is central to any discussion about gender equality in media.

All journalists and media staff, regardless of gender, have the right to expect equal access and no discrimination in:

- appointment and recruitment,
- payment of salaries and allowances,
- opportunities for professional assignments including training and exposure trips, or
- opportunities for promotion and advancement.

Media can play a central role in promoting women's rights. It is vital that journalists recognize their responsibility to represent men and women in an equitable way so that media images do not reflect or reinforce stereotypes about men and women and the relations

between them that replicate inequalities traditionally unfavourable to women.

## **2. Equality of opportunity**

All media --public and private-- must uphold the principles of gender equity in the media workplace by committing to:

- Time-bound affirmative action to encourage increased participation of women in the media;
- Special attention must be paid to include women from Dalit, indigenous and other marginalized groups;
- The use of transparent and unbiased recruitment and promotion procedures based on merit i.e. qualifications and experience, not gender or favouritism;
- Implementation of the government declaration of at least one-third representation of women at all levels, including decision-making;
- The introduction and promotion of clear anti-discrimination policies that encourage selection of women for decision-making positions;
- The removal of job segregation, allowing equal access to all assignments/beats and resisting traditional gender allocations, and encouraging increased participation of women in technical field of news production;
- Equal pay for work of equal value;
- The introduction of policies and clear guidelines to rid the workplace of all forms of sexual harassment and outlining disciplinary procedures for inappropriate behaviour and provision of adequate safety for women journalists;
- Provide safe working environment and adequate night transport facilities for women journalists, especially in the districts;
- Provide facilities such as separate rest rooms for women;
- Special policies to limit the use of insecure employment practices and protect those doing freelance, casual and contract work.

## **3. Equal Rights for journalists as parents**

Journalists who are also parents have special needs and responsibilities. Since the bulk of the childcare often falls to the woman, creating pressure and conflicting demands with work, special

provisions need to be made to both parents to allow their full participation at work.

All media houses and journalists organisations must address the under-representation of women both in journalism generally and in senior decision-making roles within media institutes and organisations particularly by promoting:

- Flexible working hours that accommodate family commitments;
- Adequate maternity and paternity leave in keeping with international standards;
- The availability of nursing rooms and child-care services at the workplace.

#### **4. Portrayal of women in media**

Everybody involved in the media has a responsibility to strive for fair and inclusive gender representation. Media should avoid the commodification of women's bodies as well as reinforcing traditionally unfavourable images of women, but rather promote a balanced, non-stereotyped portrayal of women and girls and their multiple roles.

Journalists and media should make special effort to ensure a diverse range of gender perspectives are included in all stories, including politics, defence, economics and conflict.

Responsibility for ethical conduct in journalism rests with media professionals, including the drafting, implementation and monitoring of guidelines to promote gender sensitive reporting and credible and accountable systems of self-regulation.

#### **5. Gender equity and participation in unions and associations.**

Journalists' organisations recognise they have a responsibility themselves to adopt a policy of gender equality and to take up the concerns of women and principles of gender equity and incorporate them into their policy and action frameworks through measures including:

- Demanding equal opportunity (including supporting measures for affirmative action) in appointment, recruitment, promotion and advancement in journalism;
- Demanding equal pay and allowances;

- Best-practice surveys that encourage workplace policies that promote gender equality; and work practices that ease the burden on working parents and promote more compatible work and family responsibilities;
- Increasing representation of women in journalist's organisations, and in their decision-making structures will contribute to a mainstreaming of gender equity issues. Journalists' organisations see this as a goal and commit themselves to working with women journalists on practical programs to encourage better representation of women.
- To hold union meetings at a time and place convenient to women members.
- Journalists organisations encourage and support the development of a national\_network for women journalists to share their experiences and support one another while also advocating for gender equity in media.
- Explore the possibility of hosting awards to create incentives for journalists to report on gender issues as well as recognising special contribution of women in media.
- To open discussions with media houses to develop policies and proposals to ensure that internal regulations to promote gender equality are put in place in all media throughout the country.
- The journalists organisations understand the importance of internal policies that reflect gender equality by adopting the following actions:
  - The development of a Gender Committee that specifically focuses upon producing campaigns related to gender issues;
  - The introduction of a quota of women representatives, particularly on the decision-making body;
  - The encouragement of family-friendly meetings.

Charter endorsed by participants at the Gender Equity in Media Summit, Kathmandu, 16 November, 2006. The participants resolved to submit this Charter for endorsement at a National

Convention on Gender Equity, to be held within a stipulated time frame.

The Summit, organised by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) in partnership with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), had the financial support of the European Union.