



REPORT OF CONFERENCE ON GENDER AND MEDIA JUSTICE

ON THE THEME:

“Enhancing Opportunities for Female Media Practitioners”

Buea, 18th April 2008 at the Fako Ship Plaza

Organised by Nkong Hill Top Buea

Sponsored by : World Association For Christian Communication(WACC) Canada

Introduction:

The conference began at about 3:00 pm with a welcome address by the Delegate of Nkong Hill Top, Mr. Folefac Vincent Anu, who introduced the project to the participants. In his self introduction, he cautioned that the term "Delegate" should not be mistaken for Government Delegate or Provincial/Divisional Delegate. He went further to talk about some of Nkong projects like WEEP which was represented by Rev. Mary Kinge. He also made mention of a drama staged by Nkong Women's group known as "Sarah Politik" all in a bid to empower women. This fortified the women in their operation "Quantum Leap" aimed at having 100 female Mayors and 50 Parliamentarians. He further acknowledged the support Nkong is receiving from WACC. The Project is designed to promote gender justice in media houses. It is a very Sensitive profession as the least error is broadcast in market places. He also announced an advocacy training planned for female media practitioners in the course of the project execution.

In his conclusion, he appealed that the media should investigate a little more and project civil society as well as develop gender policy for media houses.

The chair person of the Round Table Conference in the person of Mr. Nkong Makoge (South West Provincial Delegate for Communication) was introduced by the Delegate of Nkong Hill Top.

The chair person then saluted those present and was happy to reveal that the name of the organiser bears part of his name "Nkong". He was impressed with Nkong Hill Top's Gender Sensitive nature in their empowerment of the woman, lauding the context as he stated that the South West Province now has important journalists and leaders of key organisations such as Cameroon Association of English Speaking Journalists (CAMASEJ).

Officially declaring open the round table conference at exactly 3:15pm, he commended that Journalism should know no sex and other barriers.

The project coordinator in the person of Nti Gospel introduced Anne Munjong as Moderator of the conference.

On her part, the moderator gave a brief background of the three main speakers of the day in the following order: Susan Nan Mbua, Rev. Achowah Umenei and Anne Munjong.

The first speaker, Susanne Mbua, made a 15 minutes presentation on the theme: "**Communicating Gender, a challenge for Cameroon's Media**" (see Annex).

Similarly, the second Speaker, Rev. Achowah Umenei, a seasoned Preacher and Broadcaster since 1977, gave a presentation on the theme: **the Image of the woman as portrayed by the media** making reference to Genesis 26: 27

The 3rd Speaker, Anne Munjong, a media practitioner for over twenty years, talked on **the difficulties/Challenges of female journalists in Cameroon** and proposed possible solutions (see annex).

At the end of the paper presentations was a question-answer session as follows:

Questions: Nana Walter Wilson: American Media doesn't portray tenable image; what way forward?

Answer: Illustration: Guinness is good for you" is Guinness really good for you? These products are made for the market and not as a standard.

Question: Rev. Mary Kinge: What advise to poor dressing of females (especially) media professionals?

Answer 1: Dress well to tell your audience you are out for business, you require information and not promiscuity.

Answer 2: Umenei: Female media practitioners should erect dressing codes just like the traditional bankers who are always well knotted.

Contributions: Matute Menyoli CRTV journalists

Few women follow up activities of the print media, rather they herd towards broadcasting and entertainment and few go in for sports. They are encouraged to go more professional.

Contribution: Bhuddi Adams of The SUN newspaper:

- Wrote an article which guided Dorothy Njeuma to introduce dressing code in UB yet, the women insulted Bhuddi most.
- Poor articulation by even the women e.g "The Chairman of this occasion must be a woman."

Contribution: Dominic Ngwese (Nature Cameroon- NGO)

Women and men are both in trouble. Culture is getting eroded, hence both must be careful. There are two categories of men: liking sexy dressing for women and others liking cultured dressing: Hence, both should have the fear of the Lord in them (men & women)

What really is the problem for marginalisation and what solution

Answer: Suzanne Mbua

- Problem is evolutionary women went to school late

Question: Atabong George (Nkong Jurist)

- Has your organisation an ethic code, ie NAPMEW
- Answer: Anne Munjong

We are constructing a code of conduct which will be disseminated to the media in a few days to come, as well as solutions to harassment.

Answer: Umenei

- Initiative (Sexual harassment) can be taken by man and triggered by girls dressing.
- Anne Munjong: Dressing contributes a lot

Mbua: Men have sold their consciences

Question: What then do you think female media practitioners can do to seek senior position in the media house?

Anne Munjong answers: Training is one of the things. Go to school and it will give you some backings. Many women's problems is family responsibility but when you are through with this can still go back to school.

A. Journalism is not only reading but writing but women prefer only reading. If you read messages around, it will give us some inspiration.

Question: Problem lay with gender i.e using gender which is a new concept to deconstruct some for these issues. Have you been having any training or you are just using your experiences.

Anne: Those who pass through the University of Buea had the opportunity to minor in Gender and if not there are a lot of workshops on Gender which one can attend and have experience. Do not only attend a workshop because you want them to pay you but go there just to get information.

Question: How do you feel if you have to present a paper and you don't research how do you think your audience will feel.. My young women what do you do with your life? Read! If I had to be a journalist I will be a good one because I read 4, 5 and 6 hours a day.

Question: How many women watch news in this country just to find out?

Answer: There are women who are career women but I am not saying that they should go out there and report on women who are not career women. A journalist is some one whose mind is creative like investigative journalism. Encourage women to be media practitioners. Women are more retentive than men. Women keep facts on their heads than men. Women are very cheerful in the newsroom if more women are recruited the news room will be lively. But I want to remind the women don't always think you are beautiful women should learn to dress properly and prepare to move at any time.

Contribution: before encouraging women we need to know the strength. If we look at BBC, CNN, we may find just one female but they don't consider it bias. We should try to find out why women don't present hard news. What is the way forward?

Answer Rev Umenei: FCC in USA make laws like don't want to see a woman's nipple on TV and it stands. If any media goes contrary the states hold it responsible.

Comment: Women are not ambitious. Women do not like to work forward. The women have their own problems. I am proposing that women should come out of that spirit (stereotype). i.e what the society thinks) No body considers women at the kitchen but they themselves.

Delegate of Communication

Have learnt that women face a lot of difficulties in their profession. But I will stress on professionalism and assertiveness. If you employ this, you will gain a lot of credibility. Journalism is a profession which does not hide talent. When you are good every body knows you cannot light a lamp and then cover it. Journalism is essentially news and to be able to make news you need to be assertive, news reporting is essentially facts.