

FINAL STATEMENT

PENDING ISSUES AND URGENT ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: 25 YEARS FROM CHAPTER J OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Mexico City, March 26, 2021

Twenty-five years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, on March 25 and 26, 2021, academics, defenders, feminists, journalists, and communicators met virtually to evaluate progress and pending issues in Chapter J: Women and the media.

After two days of dialog, we identified urgent actions for the future, in a Post- Beijing political agenda.

We acknowledge

The valuable work women perform inside and outside the media as journalists, communicators, radio hosts, reporters, bloggers, announcers, photographers, camera operators, photojournalists, filmmakers, documentalists, editors, columnists, analysts, and producers.

Incorporating a feminist perspective in the media has favored the opening of spaces for women, for innovative approaches to reporting, the creation of new media and initiatives like gender editors as a as a means of democratizing them and transforming journalism in line with new realities where women are protagonists of history.

The forms of gender-based violence women journalists face in practicing their profession, and the disproportionate impact of certain forms of discrimination in the workplace. (Special Rapporteur, OAS, 2018) They work under conditions of risk and constant threats both in and outside press rooms. Women journalists have the right to practice journalism free of gender-based discrimination and violence.

Legal and political measures to achieve this goal should be part of a broader framework of strategies designed to guarantee freedom of speech and involve not only action by states but cooperation from the media, online platforms, civil society, and all other stakeholders. (Special Rapporteur, OAS, 2018)

Women journalists work under conditions of risk and constant threats both in and outside press rooms. Internally, they face unequal conditions, the gender wage gap, and violence including stalking and sexual harassment.

In the field, violence seeks to silence critical voices, with public officials as the primary aggressors. Whether direct or, as seen increasingly in recent years, virtual, such acts and omissions seek to annul or stifle free expression, the dissemination of journalists' opinions, and access to information.

Violence is augmented in settings where state leaders criminalize journalism, ignore the unique risks women journalists face, and lead slander campaigns attempting to silence them. Such actions are further exacerbated by law enforcement systems that revictimize victims and provide impunity for perpetrators.

The inequalities women face in the media have been deepened in the context of a pandemic which has produced even greater marginalization and impediments to informative work, because the actions taken to address the health crisis have failed to include concrete actions for more than half of the population.

We declare

- Freedom of expression is a source of power for women.
- We see ourselves as defenders of women's human rights.
- Our work not only describes reality, in discussing women's needs and the problems we face. It also seeks to further the full exercise of our human rights.
- Feminist journalism is professional and necessary to achieve informative plurality.
- Together we are stronger, and for that reason we call on journalists, communicators, media outlets, organizations dedicated to the defense of human rights, and members of civil society to adhere to the following Post-Beijing agenda.

We reaffirm

The objectives of Chapter J Women and the media of the Beijing Platform (1995):

1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.
2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.
3. Eradicate violence against women journalists and communicators.

And we add:

Post-Beijing Agenda

States

1. Strengthen penal systems in favor of gender justice in attacks on women journalists, giving them sufficient resources and personnel to receive, process, and judge different types of attacks on women journalists including cyberbullying.
2. Ensure that investigations are diligent, impartial, and with a gender perspective, and prosecute and punish the material and intellectual perpetrators of crimes against journalists.
3. Create legal frameworks to protect opinions that promote dialog and dissent with governments, to prevent at all costs misogynist, stereotyped, and discriminatory discourse passing as advocacy for freedom of speech.
4. Create policies to eliminate content that foments gender violence as a demand and not an alternative which can be evaded with economic sanctions.
5. Incorporate a gender perspective in programs and actions to provide protection for journalists.
6. Strengthen coordination between personnel of the institutions involved in preventing attacks on the press, implement measures to protect journalists at risk, investigate aggressions, and punish all crimes related to freedom of spec and journalists' right to communicate.
7. Establish the conditions necessary to permit the return of displaced journalists, provide dignified conditions for their relocation, or guarantee their integration and access to rights in the places where they settle.
8. Comply with the recommendations of international organizations in matters of freedom of speech and protection of journalists, joining the calls of the CEDAW Committee, the Taskforce on the Universal Periodic Examination, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and the IACHR and UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Speech.

9. Publicly recognize the importance of journalists' work in strengthening a democratic state.

International organizations:

1. Promote mechanisms to finance feminist investigative journalism.
2. Observe compliance with recommendations on violence against women journalists.
3. Strengthen networks of women journalists.
4. Promote the exchange of experiences among organizations, academia, media outlets, and civil society organizations involved in freedom of speech and gender.

Media companies:

1. Promote women's leadership in the media and reinforce their presence on editorial teams.
2. Construct policies of inclusive employment with a gender perspective.
3. Guarantee equitable compensation and employment rights.
4. Equitably distribute tasks and functions in editorial staffs.
5. Implement measures that foster professional growth and flexibility, facilitate the system of care and the personal lives of communicators.
6. Increase availability of breastfeeding rooms and/or daycare centers for women colleagues.
7. Implement institutional campaigns of recognition and awareness building to eradicate violence for reasons of gender.
8. Construct protocols, guidelines for action, and support materials for the prevention of workplace and gender violence in the media.
9. Promote content that shows different contexts to draw attention to the plurality of women in the world and position them as sources of information to diversify opinions and perspectives in different areas.
10. Guarantee violence-free spaces for women and support colleagues who are victims of violence when practicing their profession.
11. Create codes of ethics that consider the safety of journalists and comprehensive, respectful accompaniment of journalists when they are victims of violence.

12. Establish internal mechanisms to handle emergencies, such as security protocols and support systems for women who are victims of any form of violence.
13. Implement permanent training to incorporate a gender perspective in journalistic and communications work in favor of eradicating symbolic violence in accordance with the General Law on Access for Women to a Life free of Violence.
14. Foment the production and dissemination of media content with a gender perspective.
15. Promote the use of inclusive language in the production and dissemination of media content.
16. Implement actions for the prevention of symbolic and media violence in the production and dissemination of content and messages and form a commission for oversight and compliance in communication and information in favor of women's human rights.

Internet companies

1. Guarantee the right to freedom of speech and a life free of violence in cyberspace.
2. Develop campaigns to guarantee the use of platforms as spaces free of violence against women and journalists.
3. Create a warning center to identify online threats and attacks against women journalists, promoting preventive actions and assist authorities conducting investigations of systematic attacks against journalists and communicators.
4. Create policies of service that counter campaigns of selective harassment against women journalists and communicators by identifying systematized accounts and permanent closing of accounts that threaten the life and safety of women.

Universities and journalism schools:

1. Incorporate the perspective of gender equality in journalism programs and degree programs related to production of communications content.
2. Foment research in the areas of freedom of speech and gender.
3. foster research journalism with a gender perspective.
4. Promote the formation of critical audiences with a feminist perspective.

Civil society organizations:

1. Continue to monitor media content to ensure that media outlets eradicate sexist portrayals, with emphasis on local media which are closest to society.
2. Share in national efforts to eradicate sexist portrayals in media like the Hall of Communication and media oversight bodies.

Regarding the Forum “*Generación Igualdad*”:

1. Include Chapter J Women and the media in all actions to revise the Beijing Platform for Action.
2. Include the participation of journalists, communicators, civil society, and academia in the forums organized.
3. Publish progress reports on the revision of Chapter J of the Beijing Platform for Action.
4. Maintain an advisory committee with journalists, communicators, and members of civil society.
5. Recover the recommendations of the IACHR and UN Rapporteurs on Freedom of Speech and Violence against Women regarding addressing attacks on journalists.

Declare,

**Communication and Information for Women A.C.
International Network of Journalists with a Vision of Gender**

***For any additional information on the document and the forum, write to: libertadexpresion@cimac.org.mx.