

# gender, elections and media

## FACT SHEET



### SADC GENDER PROTOCOL AND THE MEDIA

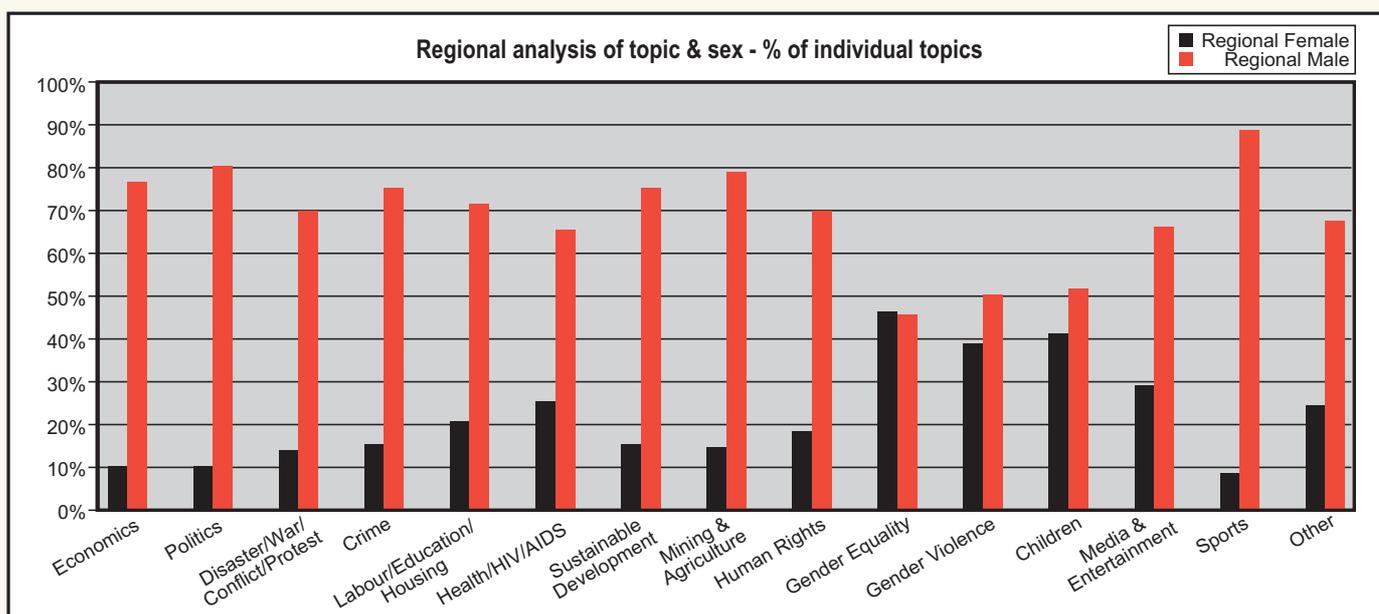


#### Key Provisions of the SADC Protocol

- Gender is to be mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training in accordance with the protocol on Culture, Information and Sport and other regional and international commitments by member states on issues relating to media, information and communication.
- Media and media-related bodies are to mainstream gender in their codes of conduct, policies and procedures, and adopt and implement gender aware ethical principles, codes of practice and policies in accordance with the protocol on Culture, Information and Sport.
- Measures are to be taken to promote the equal representation of women in the ownership of, and decision making structures of the media in line with Article 12.1 that provides for equal representation of women in decision making positions by 2015.
  - Measures are taken to discourage the media from:
    - Promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children
    - Depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse;
    - Degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and
    - Reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes.
  - Media are to give equal voice to women and men in all areas of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender specific topics and that challenge gender stereotypes.
  - States parties are to take appropriate measures to encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender based violence by adopting guidelines which ensure gender sensitive coverage.



#### Key issues



Source: Gender and Media Baseline Study (2003)

# If the Iron Lady mantle fits, wear it, Geraldine

Fraser-Moleketi proves she's no soft touch

Michael Schmidt

**B**ighaired, bespectacled and with the hectoring style of a schoolmistress, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi may be one of the youngest of South Africa's old leftie politicians, but her attempt to crush the public sector strike has invited comparisons between herself and a conservative icon, Britain's Margaret Thatcher.

Like Britain's Iron Lady, who took on - and beat - the might of the miners, led by National Union of Mineworkers leader Arthur Scargill, our minister of public service and administration has faced down Cosatu leader Zwelinzima Vavi.

Back in 1985, when Fraser-Moleketi was still a frilly-blossomed communist, her wild locks and open face made her a media darling, a genuine *méduse*.

But today her hair has become a helmet, her clothing corporate, often favouring a twin-set-and-pearls look, and she long ago tip-toed away from the Communist Party to join the inner circle of power.

Labour analyst Terry Bell says Fraser-Moleketi's policies are indeed Thatcherite. "But she's not really the Thatcher, she's fronting for the cabinet. The real power behind the decisions would be Trevor Manuel, as he holds the purse-strings," says Bell.

Celebrated cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro, better known as Zapiro, says the minister's union-breaking attitude over the past month tempted him to portray her in the guise of Thatcher - "If I hadn't done Manuel as Maggie so many times already over the past 11 years". Shapiro says that despite the several physical similarities between Fraser-Moleketi and Thatcher - the bouffant hair and the tendency to peer sternly over their glasses at their adversaries while reading the riot act - it is simply far more fun to ink Manuel into a frock.

Trevor doesn't look remotely Thatcherite, but the metaphor is more fun to have him in the dress with the Maggie wig and the handling. With Geraldine it would be less outrageous, even though her



Comparisons between Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi are inevitable.

Graphic: Sibusiso Dubazina

policies are looking a little too close to Thatcherism for comfort."

The cartoonist says it is often a sore point for politicians from a liberation movement background when he depicts them as *uaBenzis*, living a life of Riley in stark contrast to their struggle origins.

"Geraldine, who used the 'strike the woman, you strike a rock' slogan in the old days... well, today in a sense she has become that [immovable] rock," he adds.

Further back, in the halcyon days of the 1980s struggle, the pretty young woman from the Western Cape had demonstrated she was made of stern stuff, having spent three weeks in guerrilla bootcamp in Angola - where she met her future husband Jabu Moleketi, now Manuel's deputy. This was followed by an officer's course in the Soviet Union in 1982 and then by specialised military training in Cuba.

Fraser-Moleketi signed up with the ANC during a trip to Zimbabwe in 1980, returning in mid-1980 to set up the newly unnamed SACP's internal structures. So she remains a bit of an enigma.

Still, despite the mettle Fraser-Moleketi's military training instilled, it seems cruel to compare her to the "Iron Lady". After all, she was reduced to tears by strikers who crudely slagged off her ma and pa.

And of course, the two women were born into totally different worlds, in different eras. Thatcher in 1925 into the genteel lower middle-class Methodist environment of the town of Grantham, where her father balanced his life as a grocer with his work as a Tory town councillor.

By contrast, Fraser, as she was then, was born in 1960 into a working-class coloured life in Lansdowne, where her father worked as a schoolteacher and her mother as a factory worker.

In private life, she and Moleketi - an ANC intellectual heavyweight who would spend precious time together pouncing the pavements as sweetly loggers.

And she is sometimes to be seen at the Eastgate mall, doggedly steering her children in her shopping trolley through the crowds. Not necessarily a woman of the people, but among them nonetheless.

- On average, women constituted 17% of the news sources in the Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) conducted by GL and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2003. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) two years later put this figure at 19% compared to a global average of 21%.
- As illustrated in the graph from the GMBS, women's views and voices are under represented in all topic categories except for gender equality. Women's views are especially under-represented in the economic, politics and sports categories. Blatant and more subtle stereotypes abound: 17% women in Southern Africa are likely to be identified as victims compared to 7% men. Women in politics are often characterized as being "honourary men" and out of place.
- The GMMP found that in Southern Africa 22% women are identified according to their family status compared to 6% men.
- Gender still hardly features as a topic: In both the regional and global findings of the GMMP, stories focusing on gender equality (and lack of it) constituted a mere 4% of the total compared to 2% to the GMBS.
- Women are still more likely to be presenters than reporters of news. In Southern Africa, women constitute 49.7 percent of news presenters, but only 31% of reporters.
- Women journalists are more likely to consult female views: The GMMP 2005 shows that in Southern Africa women sources constituted 28% of the total sources consulted by women journalists compared to 19% of the sources referred to by male journalists (compared to 25% for women and 20% for men in the global findings).
- Gender equality is hardly considered newsworthy. There is still a tendency to see gender aware reporting as stories about successful women, rather than seeking out gender angles, perspectives and sources in all beats and stories.

## Action points

- The Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and gender co-ordinated by the Southern African Editors Forum (SAEF) is assisting newsrooms to develop diversity policies. GL is responsible for the policy arm of MAP; MISA the ethics arm and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network for the advocacy arm.
- The Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC) hosted by Gender Links brings together knowledge institutions and media development NGOs to promote gender balance and sensitivity in the SADC region.
- GL, GEMSA and MISA collaborate in the Gender and Media Awards that take place every two years.
- GL runs an Opinion and Commentary service that promotes gender aware coverage (for more information contact: [editor@genderlinks.org.za](mailto:editor@genderlinks.org.za)).
- Elections provide an excellent opportunity for giving equal voice to women and men: as candidates; voters; officials and experts.



## Key questions for discussion

- How will SADC countries ensure that media houses are complying with the provisions of the Protocol?
- What monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to ensure this?

## Key contacts

For more information go to [www.genderlinks.org.za](http://www.genderlinks.org.za) or contact +27 (0)11 622 2877 or email [training@genderlinks.co.za](mailto:training@genderlinks.co.za); or [governance@genderlinks.org.za](mailto:governance@genderlinks.org.za).