



Sub-editors at the Daily Mail design pages in the newsroom in Lusaka, Zambia on 27 August 2010.

Photo: Thabani Mpofu

# GENDER IN THE MEDIA

The 2003 GMBS revealed that women comprised 17% of news sources in the region and 13% in Zambia. Women were portrayed in a limited range of roles, most often as sex objects or as victims of violence. Women were more likely to be seen than heard. In Zambia, women were more likely to be tagged as wife, daughter or mother than a man is likely to be identified as husband, son or father. Gender-specific news items did not feature highly in the Zambian media.

This chapter will explore how much progress has been made since the GMBS. It analyses whether women and men are equitably represented in the news, looking at the gender, topics, age, function and occupation of sources and images in news stories. The chapter is about the sins of omission: women's views and voices that are left out and where opportunities to incorporate them have been missed.

### Gender-blindness

Gender gaps in the editorial content of the media concern what is and what is not included in the news and as news. The sins of omission or "gender blindness" are reflected in multiple ways in which women's views are ignored.

### Sources by sex overall

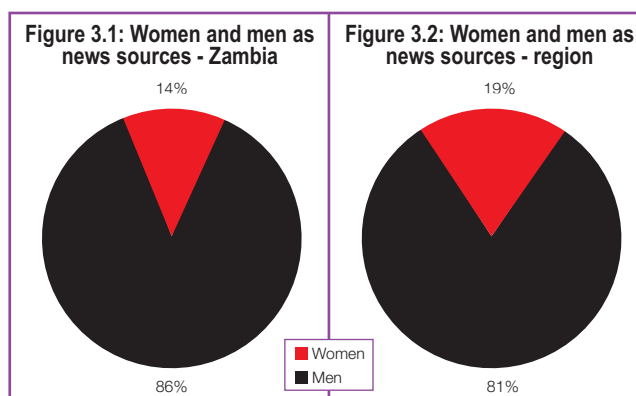


Figure 3.1 shows that women constitute 14% of news sources in Zambia, compared with 19% in the region (figure 3.2). The regional average is lower than the findings in the GMMP, which found that, across the globe, women constitute 24% of media sources (19% for the whole of Africa, which is very similar to the Southern African findings of the GMPS). Qualitative monitoring in Zambia revealed examples of missed opportunities where women should have been contacted as news sources. Even in issues that directly affect women, their voices are often absent.

### Omission: missed opportunities

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THE POST, Thursday November 12, 2009

## Constitutionalise right to food, NGO urges African govts

By Kabanda Chulu  
**RAPDA coordinator Hugguetie Dossa has challenged Zambia and other African governments to include the right to food in their national constitutions.**

During the regional training of trainers' workshop for peasant farmers on the right to food in Lusaka, Dossa said providing for the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to protect vulnerable groups from hunger is a question of international law that should be respected by all countries.

"The right to enough food will be achieved when each man, woman and child alone or

in a community have physically and economically access at all times to quality food in a sufficient amount to means of getting it, said Dossa. "Unfortunately, though signatories to food agriculture and organisation voluntary guidelines, most African countries have not seen to it that the right to food is included in their constitutions."

RAPDA is a continental organisation that coordinates the African Network on the right to food.

And RAPDA deputy coordinator Sheikh Lewis yesterday challenged African governments to create enabling environments for civil society organisations to work with peasant farmers in attaining the right to food.

Lewis said there was need to represent the silent majority and the voiceless on issues relating

to food availability and best methods of farming.

"African civil society organisations have therefore an important responsibility of spreading, popularising and promoting the right to food, particularly among the most vulnerable groups hence governments should provide for an enabling environment for the civil society to work with peasant farmers in attaining the right to food," Lewis said.

He said the organisation was established in 33 African countries covering all regions and that plans were under way to include all countries by 2012.

Lewis said the aim of the Lusaka workshop was to prepare national focal leaders whose training would in turn filter down to other peasant farmers.

An example of gender-blind reporting is the story entitled

"Constitutionalise right to food, NGO urges African governments" which was published by *The Post* on 12 November 2009. Written following a workshop on regional training of peasant farmers on the right to food, the article talks about the necessity of making food a right for all human beings. The article calls on African countries to include this right in their constitutions. However, the story is gender-blind in that it does not explore the gender dimensions of food needs, bearing in mind that this situation affects women and

men differently. The sources in the story are men. In addition, it does not capture the voices of the small-scale farmers, where women predominate. Though the journalist uses two sources, the article does not capture the voices of those most affected by food insecurity. Thus the article speaks more to a high level people (who are generally men) than at the grassroots level. Value would have been added to the story had the voices of the farmers attending the workshop been captured. While the theme on the right to food is welcome, the reporter does not explore the gender dimensions of food insecurity. These are important in that differential effects can influence the passing of gender-sensitive legislation. Women, and particularly the many women with children, bear the brunt of food insecurity and such policies should take this into consideration. The writer fails to give additional information on who is worst affected by food issues and how access to food adds to women's unpaid care of others.

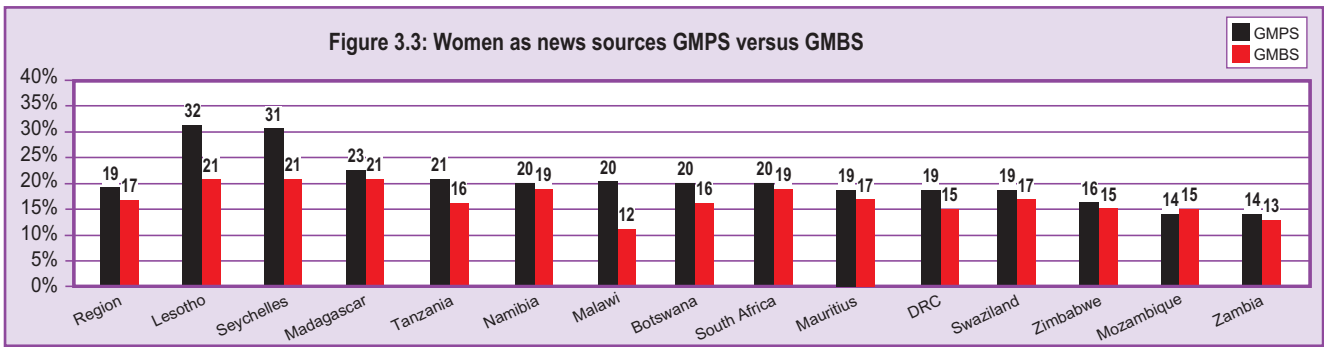


Figure 3.3 compares performance by country between the GMBS and GMPS. There has been a minimal increase in the proportion of women sources in Zambia over the seven years from 13% in the GMBS to 14% in the GMPS. Across the region, women sources increased from 17% in the GMBS to 19% in the GMPS. Only Mozam-

bique recorded a negligible decline in women sources, from 15% to 14%. The highest increases are Seychelles (25% to 31%); Lesotho (21% to 32%); Malawi, (12% to 20%); and Tanzania (16% to 21%). Zambia and Mozambique, both at 14%, are the worst performers against this criterion.

### Sources by sex per media house

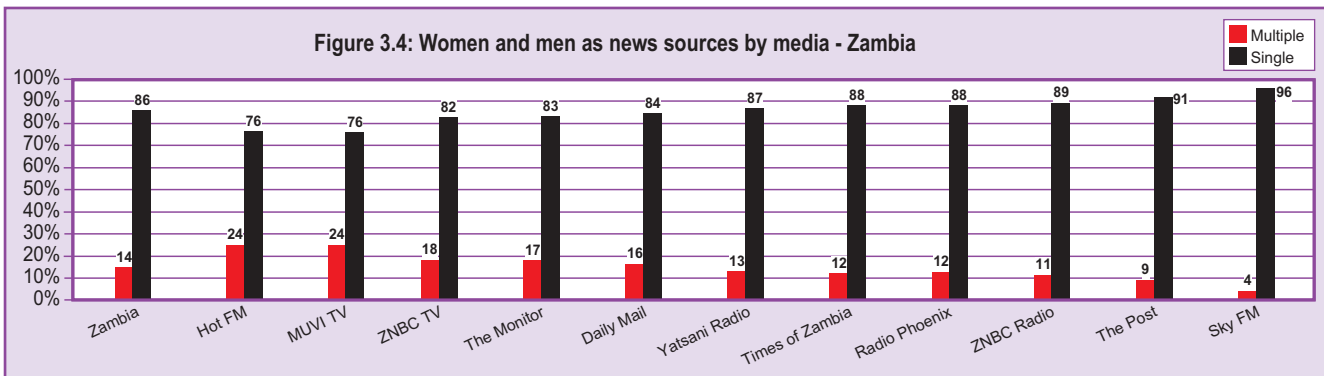


Figure 3.4 shows that there are variations across media houses. *Hot FM* and *MUVI TV*, which are private media have the highest women sources at 24% each. This indicates improvement in the private media sector, which is often seen as sexist and uses coverage that perpetuates gender stereotypes for commercial benefits and thus could be expected to have very few female voices. *Sky FM*, at 4% women sources, is the worst performer.

### Sources by sex by media owner

Figure 3.5 shows there is an equal number of women sources in the public and private media (14%) but they are not visible at all in the Zambian community media. This is a lost opportunity for women (and the media) who are the main sources for community news in other countries.

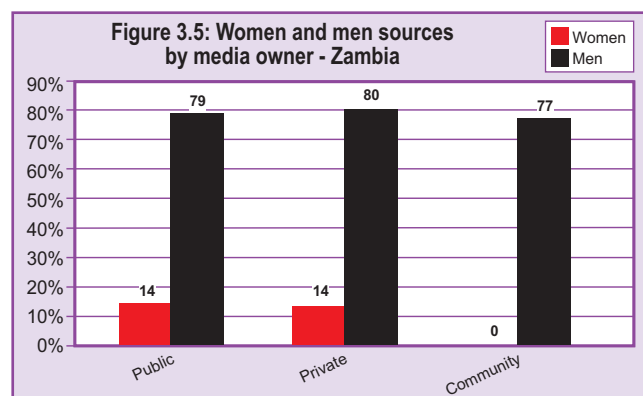
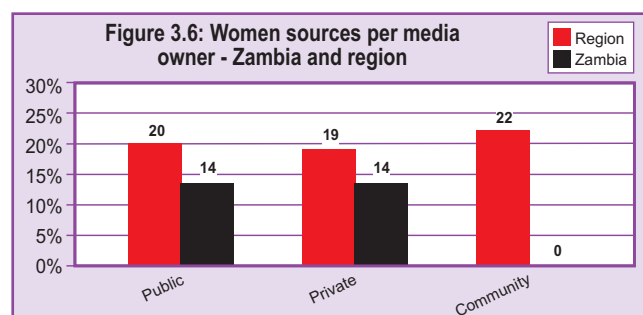


Figure 3.6 shows that community media has the highest proportion of women sources in the region at 22%, followed by public media at 20% and private media at 19%.



## Who speaks on what?

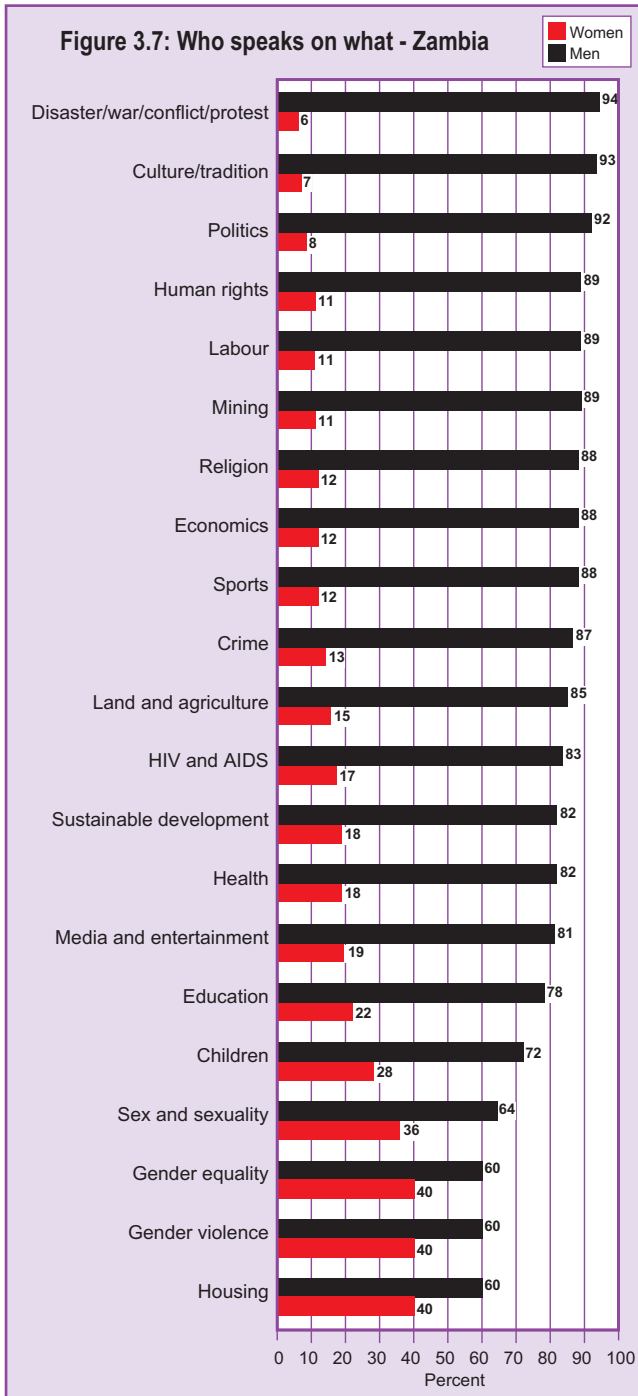
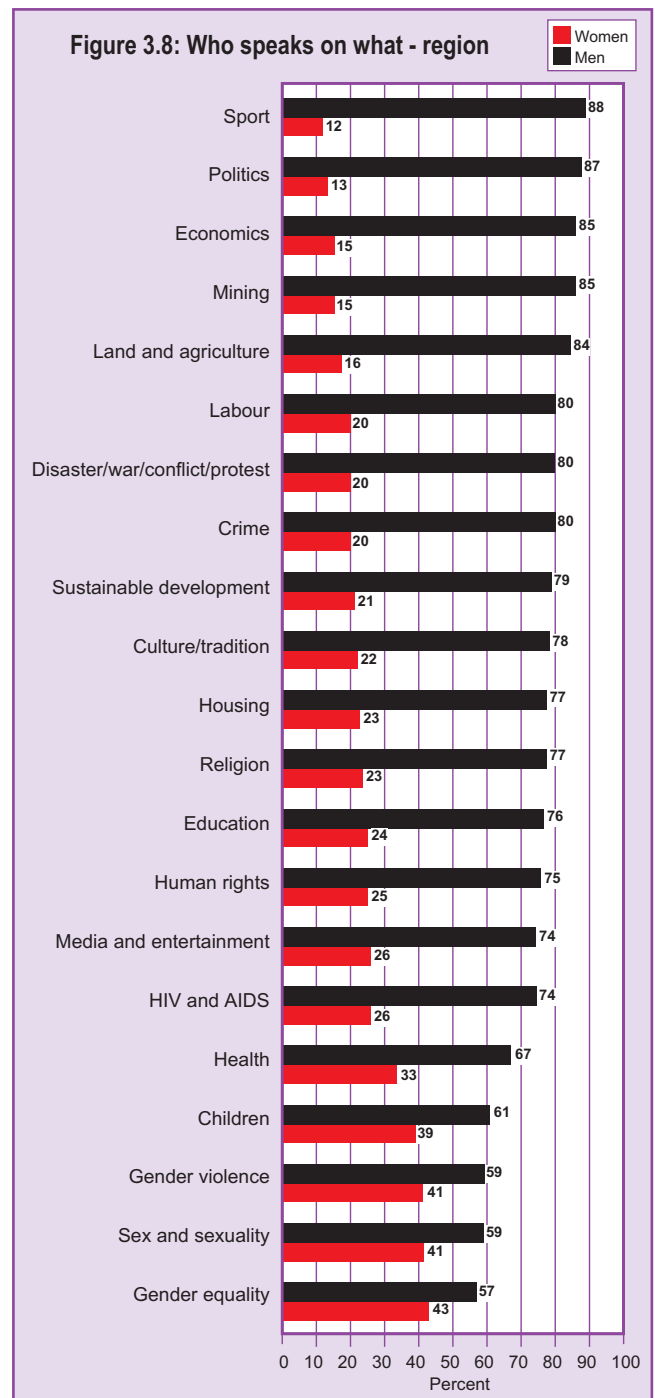


Figure 3.7 is a gender breakdown of sources by topic in Zambia, while figure 3.8 does the same for the region.

Figure 3.7 shows that women's voices are mostly heard and read on topics that are considered "women's issues" or soft beats. These include gender



equality (40%), gender violence (40%), housing (40%), and sex and sexuality (36%). These findings are similar to the regional average shown in figure 3.8, where women speak more on gender equality, gender based violence and children. On the other hand, men predominate in beats such as politics, economics and sport.

## Sources by sex and age

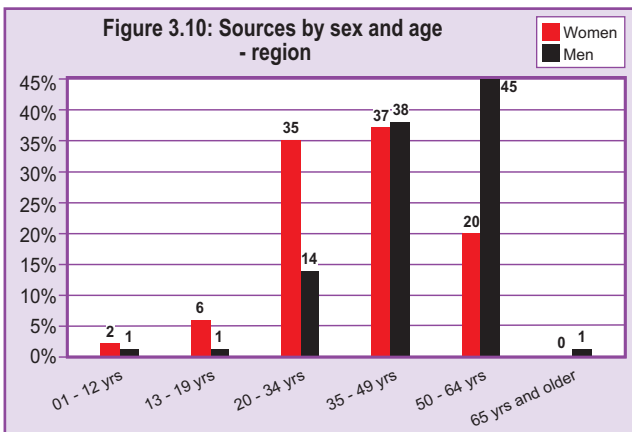
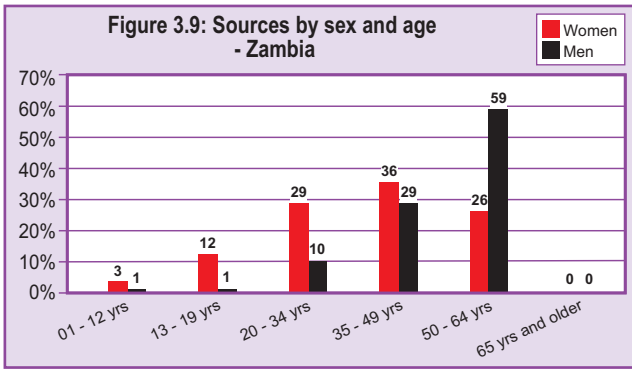
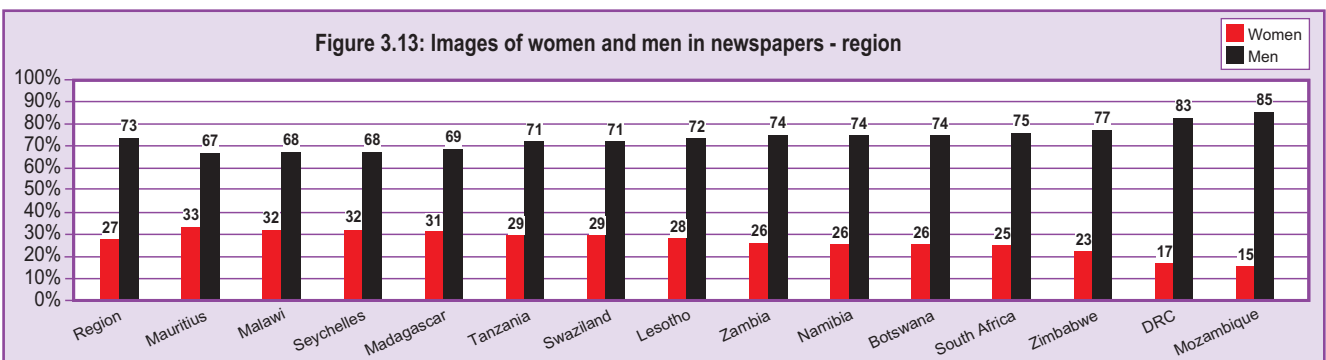


Figure 3.9 shows the representation of women and men in different age categories in Zambia, and figure 3.10 illustrates the comparative figures for the region. In instances, women and men 65 years and older are virtually absent from the news. However, men in Zambia make up 59% of those in the age category of 50 - 64 years and 45% in the region, compared with less than half of that for women in both cases.

## Subtle stereotypes

Stereotypes are expressed in both subtle and blatant ways. Subtle forms include the stories and

## Seen but not heard?



ways in which the domestic and traditional “soft” roles of women are reflected and normalised in the media, as highlighted in the examples that follow.

## Who speaks where?

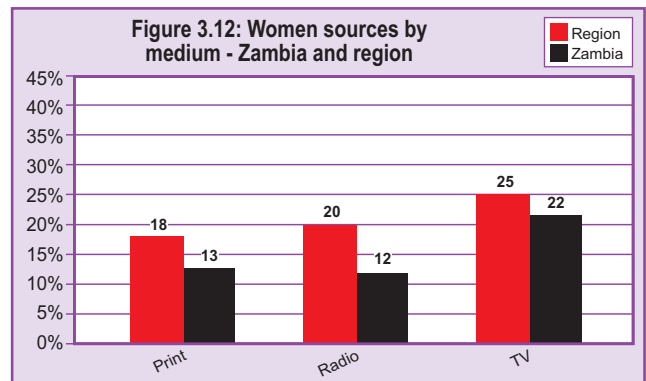
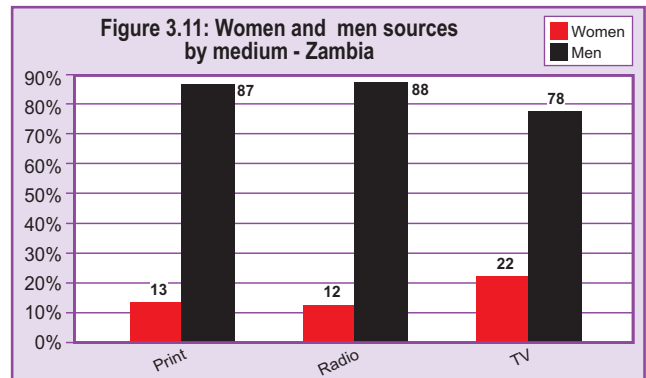


Figure 3.11 shows that while women's voices are under-represented across all media in Zambia, women are best represented in television (22%), a visual medium, compared with print (13%) and radio (12%).

Figure 3.12 shows that the regional results of TV reflect the same pattern as that in Zambia: regionally women constitute 25% of TV sources. However, unlike Zambia where print is ranked second, regionally women sources are fractionally higher in radio than in print.

Figure 3.13, which depicts the proportion of images of women and men in print media reveals that women are more likely to be seen than heard. At 26%, the proportion of images of women is higher than their proportion as news sources in

Zambia. The regional average of images of women is 27%, compared with 19% as news sources. Qualitative monitoring in Zambia yielded examples of women seen in media images but not heard.

### Seen but not heard



3 THERE GOES MY SON...Zambia's songbird Angela stands outside the Kitwe local courtroom after the case was dismissed yesterday.

## Angela Nyirenda sobs as she watches son being 'abducted'

**By Times Reporter**  
ZAMBIA's songbird Angela Nyirenda, yesterday wept at the Kitwe local court after her eight-year-old son was allegedly abducted by her former lover, Masautso Banda, who is the father of the boy. Angela and Banda appeared in the Kitwe local court yesterday over the custody of the child. Banda, a Kitwe businessperson, took his son by force from unsuspecting Nyirenda after Kitwe local court senior presiding justice, Rodney Kasoka,

dismissed the case, saying the matter he heard in Lusaka where the defendant (Angela) was residing. Banda had taken Angela to court after she failed to release the boy, who had gone to visit her for holidays in Lusaka. However, justice Kasoka, who was sitting with justices Ignatius Masupelo and Alice Obe, said in dismissing the case that the court could not handle the matter because it had no jurisdiction over it.

He said the court had considered the case carefully and resolved that since the mother and child in question were Lusaka residents, the matter be heard in Lusaka. In his testimony, Banda told the court that he was in fact keeping the child in Kitwe and that the boy had merely travelled to Lusaka to see his mother who he alleged failed to release him. Mr Kasoka advised the two to appeal within 30 days if they were not pleased with the outcome

of the case or sue afresh in Lusaka. But shortly after coming out of court, Banda got the boy amid protestations from the child and drove off in his Honda CVR registration number ACK 7406. The boy, who was crying, tried to jump out of the vehicle through the window. Banda stopped the car, closed the windows while a shocked and sobbing Nyirenda rushed to the court justices to report the incident.

And Nyirenda's uncle, Stanley Mushange, said the family had allowed Banda to keep his son on condition that he visited the mother during holidays. Mr Mushange alleged Banda, who took the child a year ago, had never taken him to see his mother in Lusaka. He disclosed that Nyirenda's family had gone to the victim support unit so that they could resolve the matter amicably but Banda refused and instead took the matter to court.

liamentary seat fell vacant after the death of Local Government and Housing minister, Benny Tetamashimba on September 5 and the Electoral Commission of Zambia has set November 19 for the by-election. Mr Mulongoti said after undertaking a democratic selection process, Mr Chifita was found to have been the most suitable candidate who would be easy to sell to the electorate. He said during the process by the lower organs of the

Mr Chirita, a teacher by profession once served as assistant secretary in the Ministry of Defence before he was seconded to the then Mulungushi Textiles of Zambia (MTZ). Mr Chifita was MMD Central Province vice-chairperson until his appointment as Solwezi DC. MMD deputy national secretary Jeff Kaande said that the party had all the confidence in Mr Chifita and could not doubt his political performance.

## Zambian Airways application tossed out

By Times Reporter

THE Lusaka High Court has granted National Airports Corporation (NAC) an interim order of attachment to restrict Zambian Airways from accessing, interfering with or disposing of its specified assets.

Zambian Airways had applied to the court to stay the execution of the order on grounds that since the airline was under receivership from April, its assets did not belong to the airline but to the receiver.

Lusaka High Court Judge Prisca Phiri tossed out the application by the defunct airline saying the assets, which were included in the attachment, did not fall under the custody of the receiver.

This is in a matter in which NAC is claiming over US\$2 million from the defunct airline for various services provided.

Ms Justice Phiri said the receiver was appointed after an interim attachment order was granted to NAC in March.

NAC's lawyers from Sam Chisulo and Company submitted that there was nothing on record to support the application for a stay, as Zambian Airways was not on record.

The lawyers submitted further that the interim order by the court over specified assets of Zambian Airways was for all intents and purposes effective until discharged by the court.

The story "Angela Nyirenda sobs as she watches son being 'abducted'", *The Times of Zambia* (27 October 2009) serves as a good example. The story is about a celebrity female musician whose child is taken away by his father in the midst of a custody battle. The father snatches the boy by force, leaving the mother crying at the court. In the entire story the mother apparently does not say anything. The story portrays the mother of the child as a helpless victim, desperate and with no solution to the problem. This helpless victim portrayal is reinforced by the image of the woman sobbing as her son was snatched. The photographer missed the real drama of the father snatching the child who was crying and trying to jump from a moving vehicle and chose to focus on the woman, thereby stereotyping her as an undeserving mother.

## Older women disappear

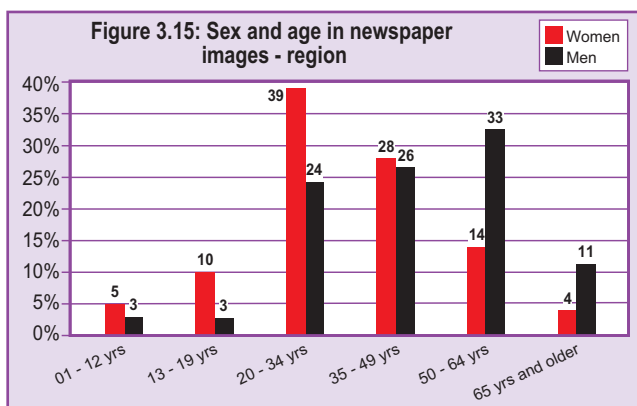
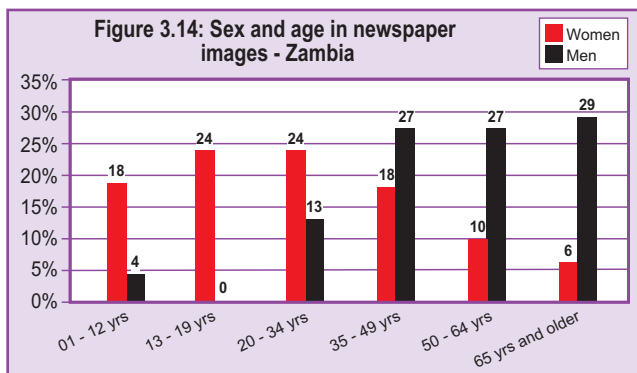


Figure 3.14 (Zambia) and figure 3.15 (region) show that images of older women in the media are significantly lower than those of younger women, particularly those in the 20- to 34-year bracket. Conversely, the highest proportion of men in Zambia, at 29%, is in the 65 years and older category, while in the region it is in the 50 to 64 years age group.

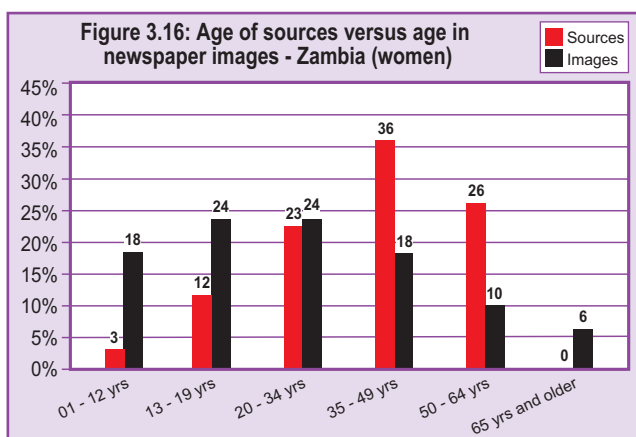
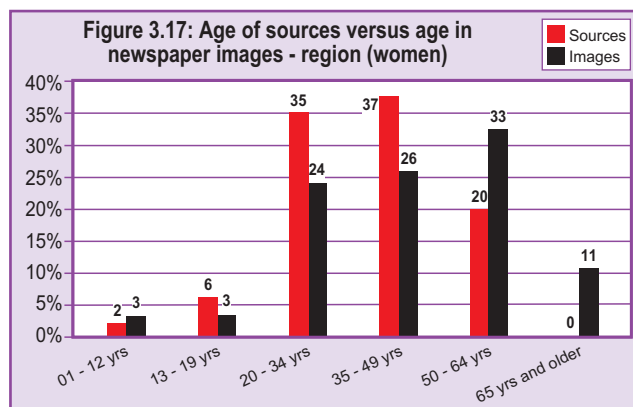


Figure 3.16 compares women sources in different age groups in Zambia with images of women, while figure 3.17 does the same for the region. The regional results show very similar trends, with



women in Zambia mostly seen but not heard in the age group 35 to 49 years, and in the age group 20 to 34 years in the region.

## Function

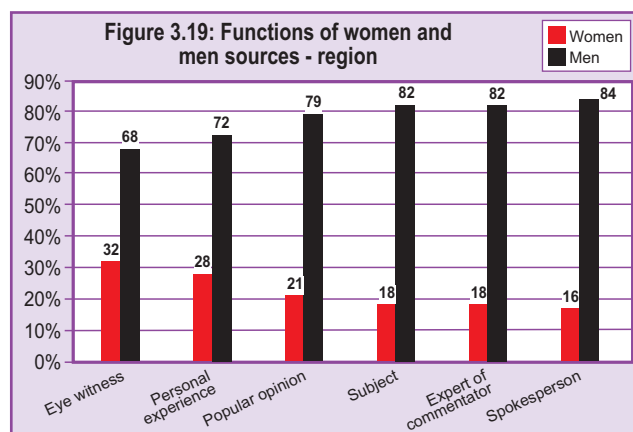
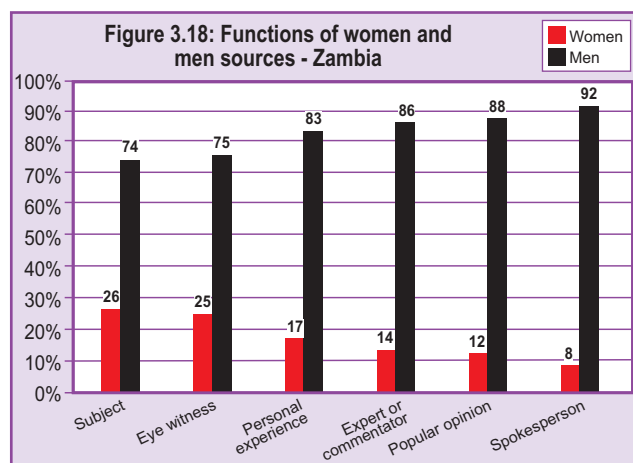


Figure 3.18 disaggregates function of sources by gender in Zambia while figure 3.19 does the same for the region. The graphs show that both in Zambia and in the region women are best represented as eyewitnesses and through personal experience or popular opinion rather than as experts, commentators or spokespersons. However, these sources represent a significantly lower proportion of the total.

## Occupation

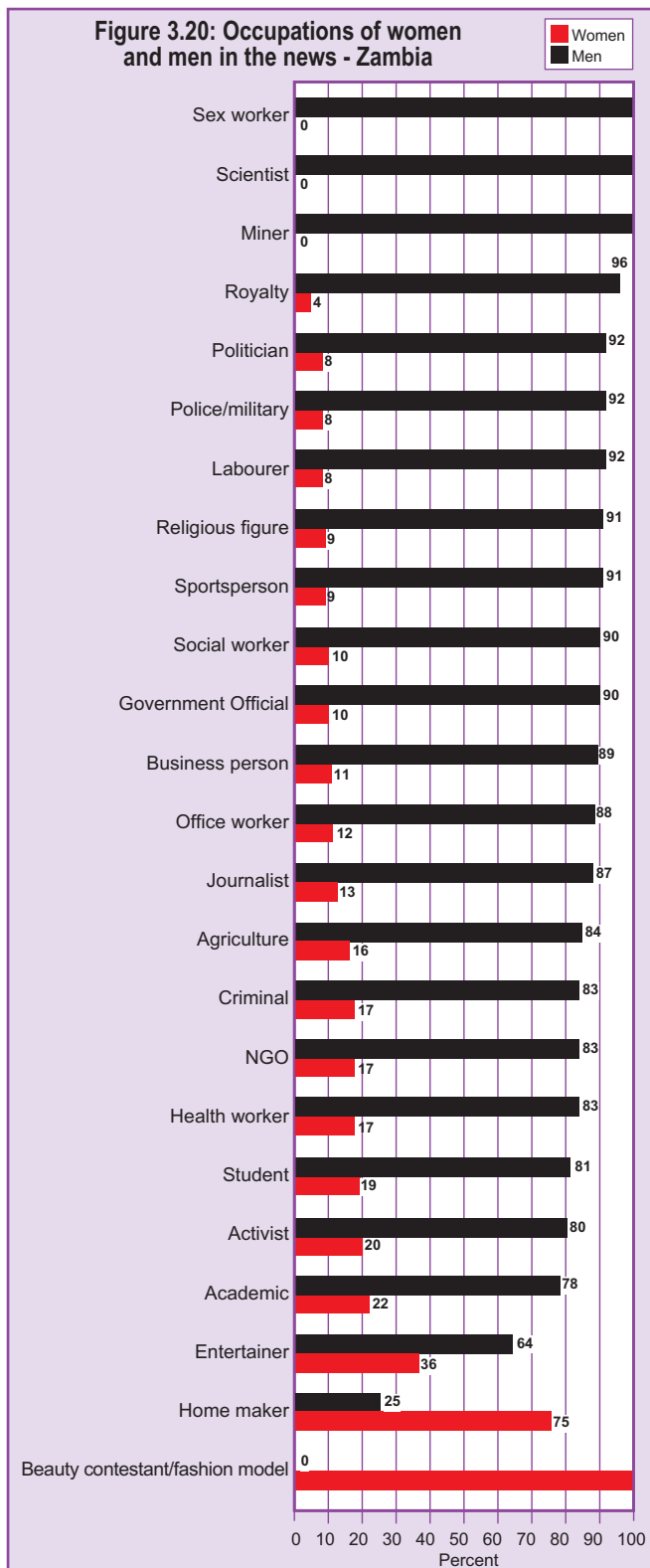
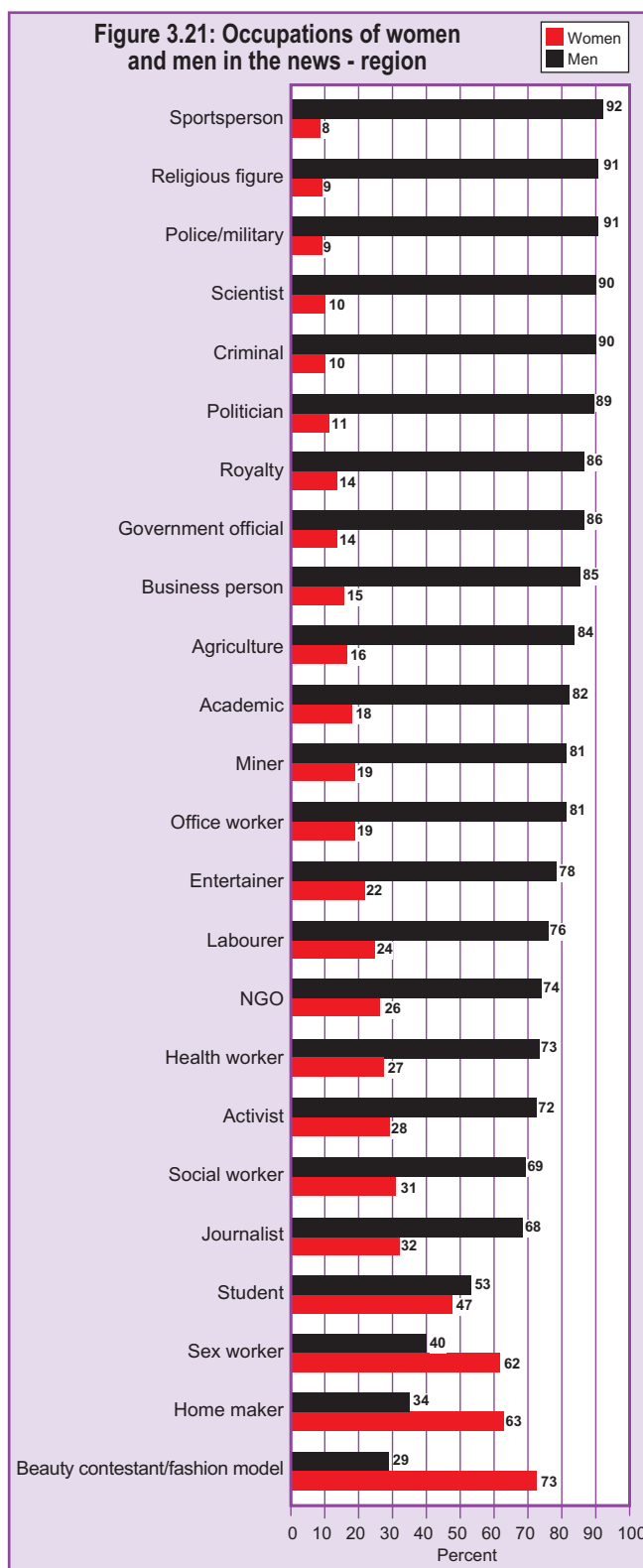


Figure 3.20 shows the occupational categories of women and men sources in Zambia, while figure 3.21 provides comparative data from the region. Women in Zambia make up 100% of those in the beauty contestant category compared to 73% in the region. No women are portrayed as miners and



scientists. Interestingly, no women are portrayed as sex workers in Zambia. There was only one male sex worker quoted during the monitoring period. However, the narrow range of roles in which women are portrayed in the media fails to take cognisance of the reality in Zambia, where women have moved into male-dominated areas and men have taken up occupations previously regarded as women's.



**Progress over time**

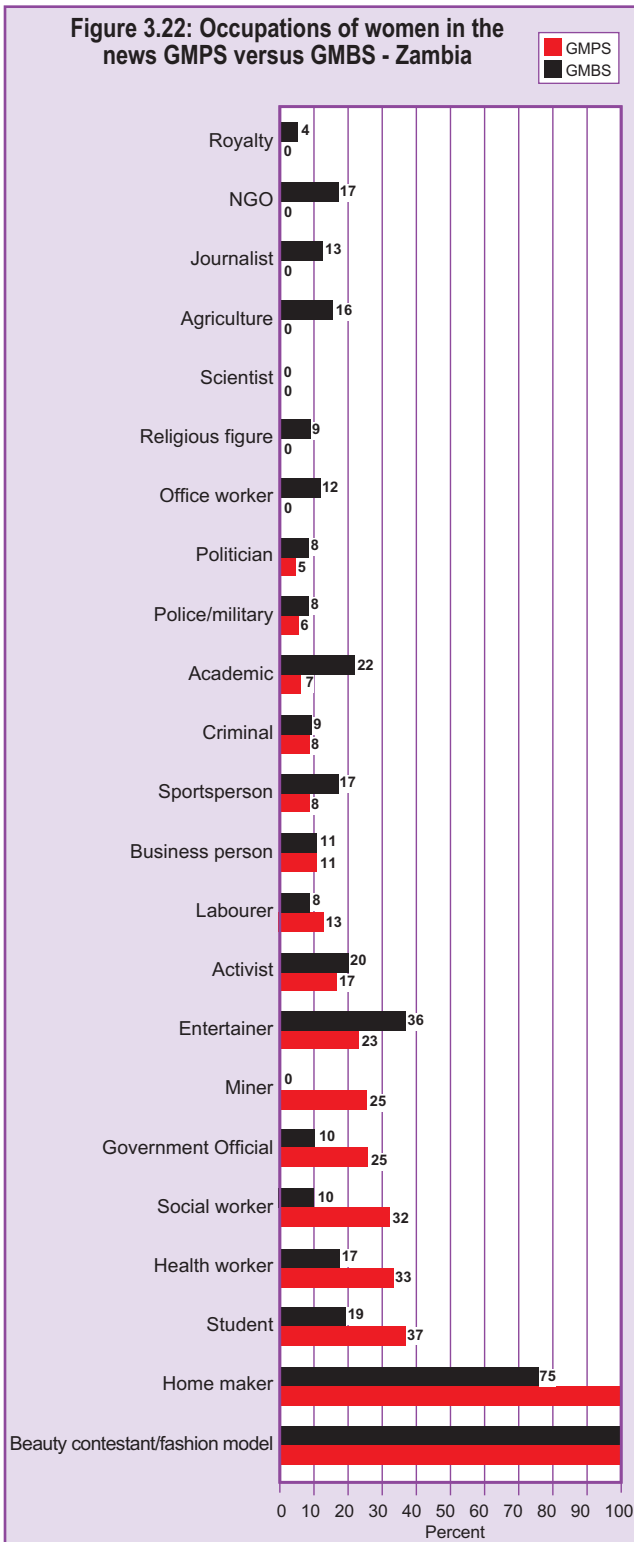


Figure 3.22 shows that compared to the GMBS, women have progressed in Zambia in some instances as news sources, especially in areas where they were virtually absent in the previous study. They progressed in NGOs from 0% to 17%, agriculture from 0% to 16% and as academics from 7% to 22%. However, no change can be noted in

their occupations as fashion models. Women in science still do not appear as news sources even though there are women scientists in the country. Women who are government officials have declined over the past seven years. There are still gender biases in roles: for example, women made up 100% of beauty contestants in the GMBS, the same as in the GMPS. On the other hand, the proportion of women miners has dropped from 25% to no representation at all in GMPS.

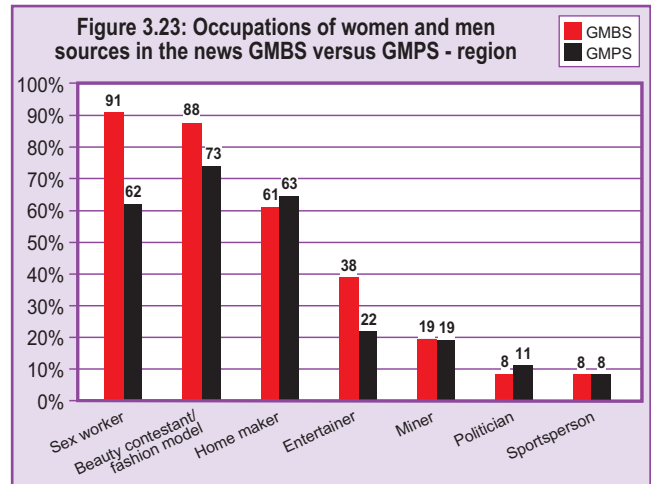


Figure 3.23 shows that across the region women are not quite as dominant in the categories of sex workers, beauty contestants and entertainers as they were in 2003. The proportion of female politicians in the media increased from 8% to 11%. However, the proportion of women homemakers (61% in the GMBS and 63% in the GMPS) has remained virtually the same. Women still also constitute a mere 8% of those in sport. Likewise, their representation as miners has remained at 19%. The overall conclusion in Zambia and the region is that while there are some gender anomalies, the traditional roles of women and men in society are changing very slowly.

**Personal tag**

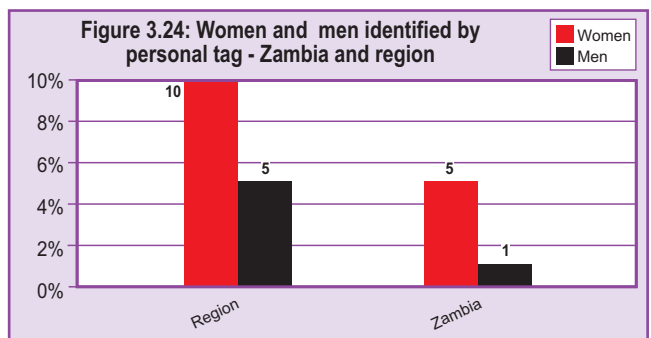


Figure 3.24 shows that 5% of women sources in Zambia (compared to 10% in SADC region) are identified by a personal tag such as mother, daughter or wife. Somewhat lower, 1% of men in Zambia and 5% in the region are identified as husband, son or father.

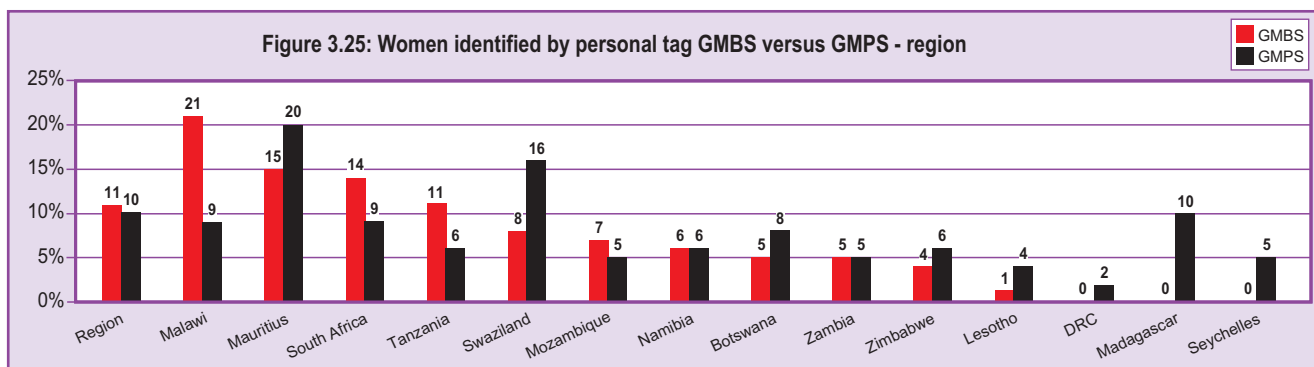


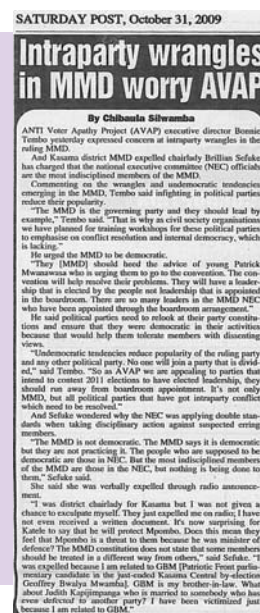
Figure 3.25 shows that there has been a drop regionally in the proportion of women identified by personal tags from 11% in the GMBS to 10% percent in the GMPS. In some cases this decrease has been quite dramatic (for example, from 21% to 9% in Malawi). In the case of Zambia, there has not been any change in the proportion of women identified by personal tag, which has remained constant at 5%.

## Gender-aware reporting

Monitoring yielded examples of gender-aware reporting. For example, the story “Intraparty wrangles in MMD worry AVAP” by the *Saturday Post* (31 October 2009). The article is about intraparty wrangles in the MMD which resulted in the expulsion of Kasama District chairlady Brillian Sefuke. The story highlighted the participation of women leaders in political processes and how power relations play in intra-party conflicts.

The story is gender aware in that it gives agency to the woman leader who has been expelled from the MMD. The woman openly challenges the national executive committee and also the MMD to be democratic and treat politicians both women and men fairly.

This is a good example of women who have been empowered to occupy positions in politics, a sphere predominated by men. Her challenging the expulsion is encouraging to women politicians to participate in party politics, as there are few woman political leaders in Africa.



## Conclusions

During the consultative workshop, participants were worried about the findings on media content, particularly the slight increase of the proportion of women as news sources from 13% to 14%. Participants noted that a lot needs to be done within the next five years if Zambia were to achieve the 50/50 target by 2015 set in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

Rosemary Nyondo, a lecturer from the University of Zambia, observed that journalists have the power to change the cultural and attitudinal beliefs that men are the head of the family and hence have the

authority to speak for women. “Journalists have the power to change society but they are not positively using that power. Women shy away from speaking to the press because the media have a bad reputation. The starting point is for the media to be ethical in its reporting in order to gain trust of women sources,” she said.

Participants concurred with Nyondo and made suggestions on how the media can increase the participation of women in the news. The suggestions included changing the way the media approach women when soliciting for comments or views and going out to gather news as opposed to practicing “desk journalism”.