

**WHO
MAKES THE
NEWS?**



United Arab Emirates

Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report



Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2010 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2010 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



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Global Context

- 10 November 2009 was an ordinary day at work for newsroom staff around the world. It was however a special day for groups in more than 100 countries who gathered to monitor their news media. After months of planning, preparations and training, they brought the Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to life.
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [was] more often being presented by women but it [was] still rarely about women.'¹
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subject were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.²
- The Third GMMP in 2005 attracted the participation of 76 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident. 21% of news subjects were female. This 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant. However, the overwhelming finding was women's continued near invisibility in the news. Very little news – just under 10% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. Expert opinion was overwhelmingly male with women comprising only 17% of experts who appeared in news stories. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The third GMMP found that the sex of the journalist made a difference in whether or not women made the news: there were more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).
- The First GMMP, and as will be seen, the Fourth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Overall, news stories were twice as likely to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than challenging them. News stories on gender (in)equality were almost non-existent.

¹ *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

² Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. with additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2000

National context

- This is the first time the UAE has participated in the GMMP research. It is a relatively young country, 38 years old, and has experienced a rapid growth in population, infrastructure, social development and commercial industries. The population of the country is cosmopolitan, with 20% UAE nationals, 55% South Asian, 15% East Asian, and 8% Westerners. Arabic is the official language and English is widely used in the country.
- The media too is very young. There are many newspapers and magazines, and nine major daily newspapers that are published in Arabic and English. Abu Dhabi-based Arabic language daily Al Ittihad, is the oldest at only 40 years old, and the major English language daily, Dubai-based Gulf News, is 31 years old. Moreover, radio stations operating in the country broadcast in Arabic, English and several other languages, mainly Asian. Many international media (BBC, CNN, Sky, Reuters, etc) locate their Middle East headquarters in UAE. For example, the Arabic TV news channel Al Arabiya, and the established satellite broadcaster, Saudi-owned MBC, operate from Dubai Media City. Territorial broadcasting companies include Dubai Media Incorporated, Abu Dhabi Media Company, Ajman TV and Sharjah TV. The scope of TV broadcasting is both local and international, using satellite technology.
- Media education is also relatively young in the country. The first national university was opened in the 1970s. Today, many public and private universities and colleges offer degrees in Communication and Media. Most of the workforce is expatriate but more and more UAE nationals are entering the media job market. Some media organizations offer in-house training, especially for new recruits.
- From a gender perspective, the federal government follows a traditional patriarchal leadership model. Over the past few years it has put major effort into encouraging women into leadership roles, including appointing four women as cabinet ministers. In addition, several women occupy leadership positions in the Federal National Assembly, local government departments and enterprises and in various professions. The government website reports that the “UAE has become a model for Arab women in all fields”.³
- The UAE is also unique in having a population with significantly higher percentage of males. At the last census the population was 67% male to 33% female⁴. If the media should reflect its community these figures need to be factored in.
- Media use in the UAE is prolific, helped by a combination of factors including high literacy rates, the presence of public and private media industries, the widespread use of technology, a large expatriate workforce, the presence of strong and active advertising and public relations industries, favourable economic conditions and other factors. However, media alone do not cover the full range of communication in the country. The UAE has had traditionally strong group and interpersonal communication networks which have preceded the advent of modern media and which continue to be efficient communication contexts.
- News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens’ aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed

³ UAE Interact, 24, November, 2009

http://uaeinteract.com/docs/Foreign_media_delegation_visits_GWU/38528.htm

⁴ http://www.barclays.com/latitudeclub/er_uae_poln_demo.html

matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are reinforced through the media.

Executive Summary

- Women were not very visible as newsmakers in the UAE news media on the day of this study. Only 12% of those quoted or featured in news stories were women, compared to 24% globally.
- Women were missing even more so in news media photographs. Only 4% of stories about a woman include a picture of her, compared to 28% globally.
- Women were not used as “sources” in news items about Politics and Economy, which are the most popular topics in the media. However women were used as “sources” in stories about Consumer issues, Health, and Religious celebrations and traditions.
- Looking at the other side of the news industry, about one-third of those who wrote and produced the stories were women (32%). Female journalists authored news stories on Environment issues and Crime stories, but only one story on the “hot topic” of Economy, and no stories on Consumer issues, Transport, Education, or Religion.
- Despite the UAE media featuring few women on the day selected for this study, the stories that they did run on women tended to be encouraging to gender diversity. In fact there were no examples of local media running stories or pictures that denigrated women or that stereotyped gender issues.
 - There were two examples of stories that stereotype gender, and they both were from overseas news agencies and ran in English-language newspaper.
 - There were six examples on the monitoring day of newspaper articles that depicted women achieving successful positions or projects. Some of the articles carried large pictures of the featured women.
 - But gender is not just female perspective, and on the monitoring day there was a positive example challenging stereotypes in an article showing men closely involved in child rearing.
- An interesting finding was that the news items that did feature women newsmakers tended to be written by male journalists.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

10 November 2009. The major news event covered prominently by all the news media on the monitoring day was the UAE Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai reaffirming unity between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which included his picture in all except one of the news outlets. The other main news story used by the majority of the media was the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which included a photograph of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Other news items shared by several media were the swine flu preparations for Haj, UAE taking over command of an international naval task force, announcement of the public holidays for Eid, and a Saudi Arabian army assault on Yemeni rebels.

THE CONTEXT

Methodology:

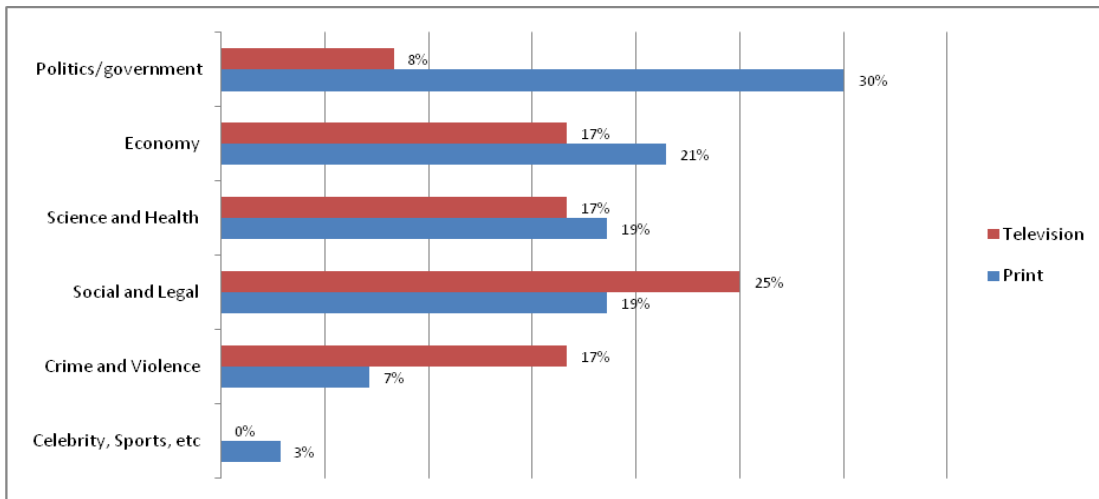
- The sample of media monitored on November 10, 2009 was the daily television news program “Emirates Today” on Dubai One TV; three English language newspapers; Gulf News, The National, and Khaleej Times; and two Arabic language newspapers Al Attihad and Al Khaleej.
- Inter-coder reliability was measured in the first instance at 85% and in the second coding at 96%. The coding teams consisted of two or three trained coders, monitoring the news items together. At least 20% of the sample was coded concurrently by a second team, which resulted in the 85% agreement. Subsequently a third coder reviewed 100 percent of the sample, resulting in the 96% agreement.
- The research team was from Zayed University, Dubai campus, comprised 26 communication research students (all UAE nationals), and managed by three professors from the College of Communication and Media Sciences.
- The UAE volunteer coordinators for the research project were Catherine Strong (principal researcher) and Dr. Badran Badran, both faculty members at Zayed University.

Sample:

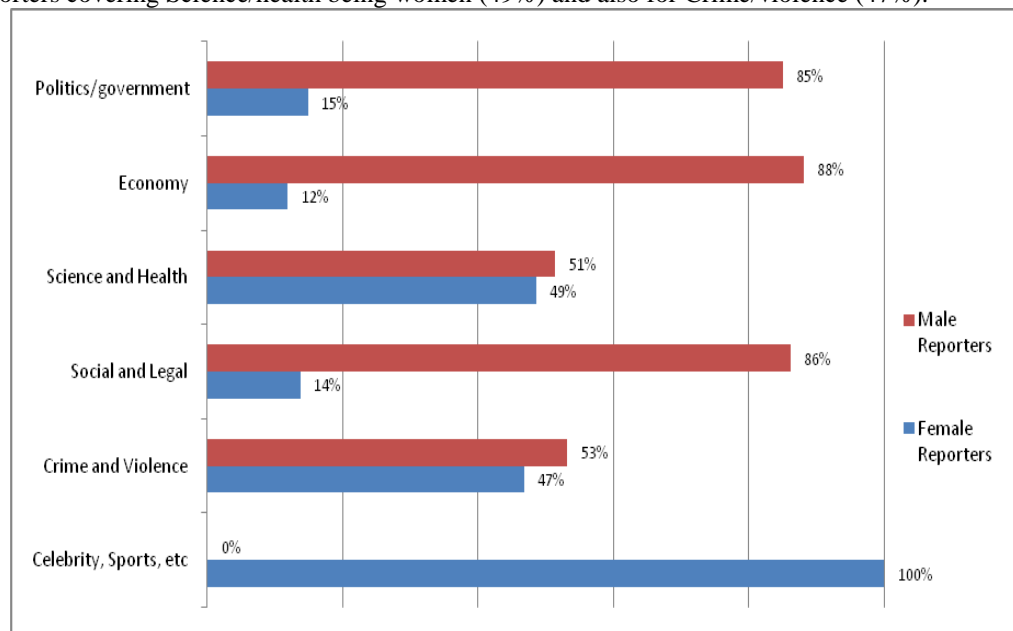
- In keeping with the project’s methodology, the content analysis covered all news items in the television news program, and at least 12 articles in the main news segment of each of the five daily newspapers.
- The number of individual entries was 251, based on the number of people appearing IN the news.
- Note that the television news has a sole anchor, rotating each day of the week between a male and a female. On the monitoring day it happened to be the turn of the male anchor.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

- The GMMP methodology classifies news stories under seven major topic areas: Politics/government, Economy, Science/health, Crime/violence, Celebrity/Arts/Media/Sports, and the girl-child. In the UAE on this day more than half of the stories were about Politics/government and Economy (27% articles on Government/politics and 21% articles on Economy). Only 9% of articles were on violence.

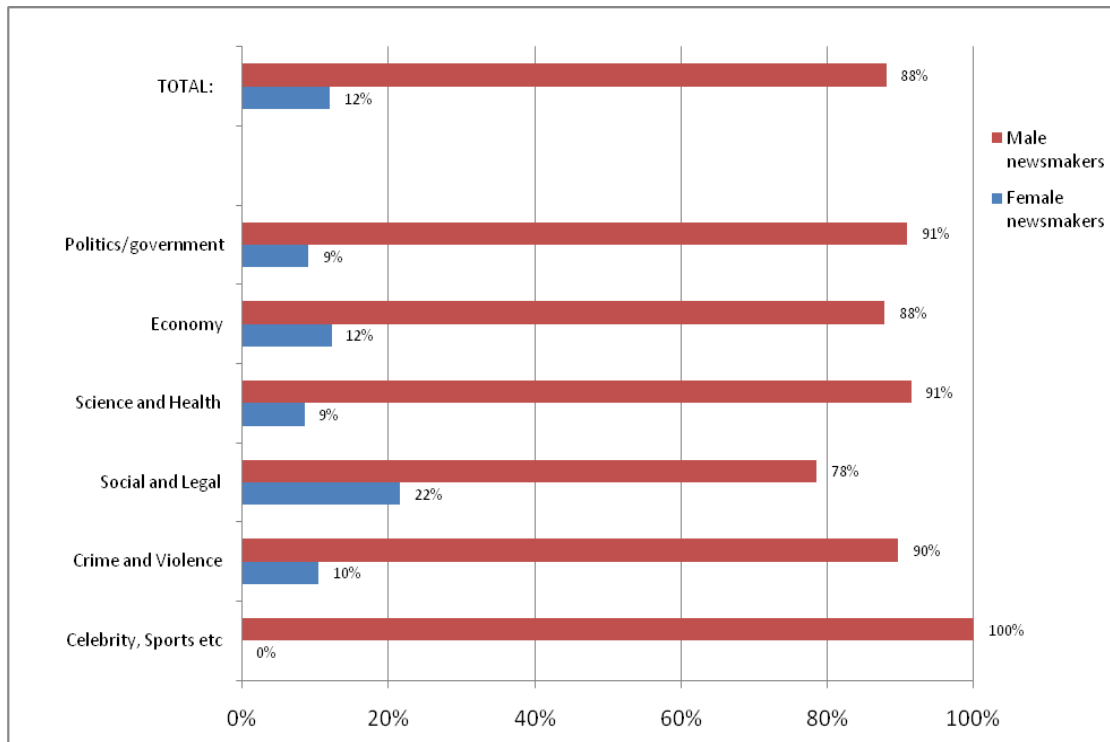


- Looking at the gender of the journalists reporting these news items, only 15% of the journalists covering the big topics of Politics/government were women, and only 12% of those covering Economy were women. However other news topics were more balanced, with almost half of the reporters covering Science/health being women (49%) and also for Crime/violence (47%).



THE NEWS

- **Overall presence of women and men in the news in UAE as news subjects:** Of all people quoted or featured in the news stories on the monitoring day, 12% were women, 88% men. This compares to women representing 24% of news items globally, in all 130 countries monitored.



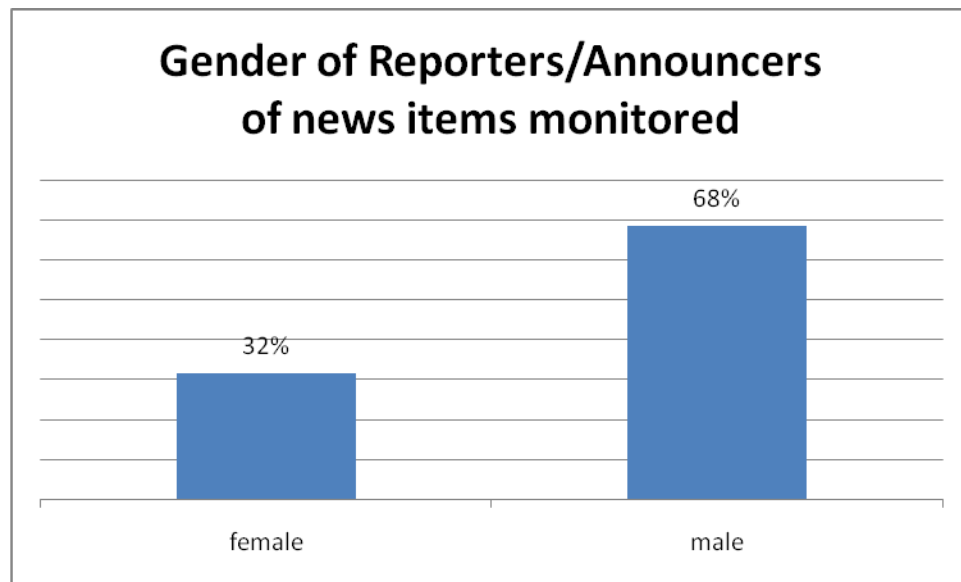
- Although the media covered a large number of stories on the topic of Politics/government and Economy, only 9% of people in Politics/government stories were women, and only 12% of people in Economy stories were women.
- The majority of women featured in UAE media were in “Social or Legal” news items.
- Looking at the different media, newspapers featured women in 12 % news stories while television featured women in 16% of their stories.
- Women were quoted slightly more often in local stories (19% women compared to 81% men) rather than international stories (5% women compared to 95% men).
- Only men were in stories about the Economic Crisis and about Environment, which were topics that made up a large number of stories on the monitoring day. Women were quoted or used as sources in some stories about Consumer issues; Health, and Religions celebrations and traditions.
- **Who are the newsmakers?** The majority of people in the news were royalty (i.e., Sheikhs) or government officials and employees. These made up 60% of all people in the news. These were mostly men (98% of royalty were men, 86% Government officials, and 82% government

employees). The next most popular group of people that the media reported about was business people, of whom 24% were women and 76% men.

- In UAE, as similar to other countries, government officials were the main newsmakers in the media. In the UAE 14% of government officials in the news were women, compared to globally 17% of government officials in the news were women.
- **Images in the news:** Only 4% of women in a news story are also photographed, compared to 28% of men. This is quite different from other countries, with the global figures showing that 26% of women in the news being photographed compared to 17% men. In the case of UAE national women, local traditions prohibit them from being photographed by the news media. But exceptions do exist.

WHO DELIVERS THE NEWS?

- **Overall Presenters.** The percentage of news stories (across all media) presented by women was 32%, versus the percentage of news stories presented by men which was 68%. This means that about two-thirds of articles in newspaper and television were reported by men.



- **In newspapers** 37 % of the articles were written by women. This compares to the global average of 42%. This is the first time the UAE has been involved in this study so it is impossible to compare to previous years and measure improvements. However, based on global figures, the proportion of female journalists producing newspaper news has increased steadily over the five-yearly monitors. This could indicate that UAE may grow at the same rate, albeit five years slower, and be much higher in the next monitor five years in the future.
- **In television** only 8% of the news items were presented by female reporters. This is rather low by global standards. This is not a representative statistic; however, as only one television news program was monitored. Also the program rotates two presenters, a female on one day and a male on the other day. It was just a coincidence that the male was the presenter on the GMMP monitoring day. Therefore, this result should be read with the caveat that in local TV news programs the participation of female reporters is in most probability higher if monitored over a longer period..

- Female journalists tended to cover a narrow range of stories on the monitoring day. Only one of the 17 news stories on the “hot topic” of the Economy was written by a female journalist. None of the stories on Consumer issues, Transport, Education or Religion were written by female journalists. However more female journalists, compared to male journalists, covered Environment issues and Crime stories.
- The GMMP study looked at whether female journalists tended to use female newsmakers more often than male journalists did. Globally there was a slight correlation, with female journalists writing 42% of the stories featuring female newsmakers. In the UAE however, there was almost a reverse correlation: although there were very few women newsmakers featured in the media, 78% of them were in stories prepared by male journalists (only 22% by female journalists). On the surface this could look as though male journalists were more sensitive than female journalists to try to include the viewpoint of women in stories; however with the very small number of articles using female sources this cannot be substantiated.

GENDER AND THE NEWS

- Of the 82 news stories examined by this study, only 10 stories had women as the central focus of the topic.
- Half of the stories that featured women as a central focus were Celebrity news or Fashion items.
- On this day there were no stories that raised the topic of gender equality or inequality

JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

- A qualitative analysis of the media in UAE on the monitoring day showed that there were no local stories that would be considered blatantly stereotypes. These are the stories that portray men or women in general gendered ways without considering the characteristics of the individual.

There were, however, two international stories that depicted women and men in stereotype positions. One showed a group of Yemeni refugees fleeing Yemen on their way to Saudi Arabia. What is interesting about this photo is that it shows the men riding on donkeys carrying their children while women are walking on foot.

The second example from hurricane damage in San Salvador showed a mother who had to identify the body of her son, with a man holding her from behind to console her, a woman facing her also trying to console her, and a security man taking notes and not being involved in the emotions. The local coder who chose this story said that the woman is crying and one man is taking care of her and another is busy working. It is a stereotype of women as the griever after the action, and men strong and ‘doing something’.

Both of these stories were provided by foreign news agencies and published in English-language newspapers.

- On the other hand, there were eight articles that were positive of women participation in key positions, challenging stereotypes. All except one were in Arabic-language newspapers.

One example was a feature on a UAE national woman who works as director of art centres in the eastern region of the Emirate of Sharjah in the UAE.

A second example featured four female university students who produced short videos that can be exchanged via Bluetooth. The interview highlighted the difficulties facing UAE women who choose a career in the media, partly because of society's perceived negative view of television as a working environment for UAE women.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- Overall women newsmakers were not very visible in the UAE media on the monitoring day. Only 12% of those quoted or featured in news items are women. Women also are rarely the central focus of a news story, only eight out of the 82 stories monitored.
- The media tended to source their stories from royalty and government officials and employees – 60% of all stories. The next most popular source for news was businessmen (a further 8%). These were mostly men, being 129 of the 145 newsmakers in these topics (89%).
- The most popular topic for UAE media on the monitoring day were Politics/government issues. Newspapers in particular focused on this issue -- more than half the newspapers' stories were on Politics/government and the Economy. Television, however, broadcast more variety of topics -- very few Politics/government stories, but an even-spread of stories on Social Issues, Economy, Science/health, and Crime.
- Women also do not feature very much in photographs in the media, compared to men.
- Although female newsmakers are not particularly visible in the media, female journalists are much more visible. About one-third of the news items were produced by female journalists. In the newspaper industry, female journalists produced 37% of news items. In television female journalists or presenters produced only 8% of the new items, although this may have been much higher on another day of the week.
- Female journalists, however, did not produce many news items in the most popular topics of Economy and Politics/government.
- Although these figures may look unbalanced by global figures, it is important to note that the media is meant to reflect society, and in the UAE the gender ratio is significantly more male, at the last census two male for every female (33% female).

Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, and radio and television newscasts to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure that global results would reliably reflect the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Internet news was included for the first time in the global monitoring on a pilot basis in a few countries selected on the basis of the importance of the Internet as a news source for local news consumers.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for the quantitative analysis.

An in-depth and more nuanced analysis of selected news stories examined the means, themes and patterns of gender in the news. This qualitative analysis took into account the role of story angle, language and visual representations in constructing and sustaining or challenging gender stereotypes.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*.

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