

# HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

- HELP DRAW UP GENDER POLICY FOR THE MEDIA
- DON'T GIVE ABUSERS YOUR VOTE
- INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS IN CAPE TOWN

## DON'T GIVE ABUSERS YOUR VOTE

The majority of South Africans voted into power the African National Congress whose vision for the future of South Africa is non-racist and non-sexist.

Violence against women has reached epidemic proportions in South Africa and, in recognition of the enormity of the problem the ANC has made violence against women a national priority crime. There is a multi-pronged strategy to tackle the issue at all levels.

One of the levels at which the abuse of women is an international issue is in the corridors of power - witness recent charges of sexual abuse against Bill Clinton. Most of it goes unreported and it takes a very brave woman to challenge a system where all the odds are weighted against her.

We have no doubt that it is happening in other political parties - hopefully women will come forward with their stories if an atmosphere of support is created in place of the current hostile environment.

In 1997 Thandeka Gqubule laid a charge of assault against ANC MP, Siyabonga Cwele and the story was reported in the press. Members of the public looked to see what the ANC would do to swiftly investigate the matter and inform us of what disciplinary action would be taken against Cwele.

There were calls from within Parliament that

he should be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. Next there were rumours that pressure was being put on the complainant to withdraw the charge. Further searching revealed that it was not the first time that women had found this man abusive. The media went silent on the issue and suddenly there was no more story.

Now, 5 months later, Mr Cwele remains an MP and remains a committee Chair in the NCOP.

We believe that the inaction in this case shows the lack of commitment and political will to end violence against women, both within and outside the ranks of parliament. When a powerful male parliamentarian can get away with abusing women this sends a message that all men can get away with abusing women.

To put the story back into the news and to popularise the proposal for legislation to prevent abusers getting into power in the run-up to the 1999 elections, the Women's Media Watch and crisis organisations and members of the community held a creative protest at the Opening of Parliament.

Women and children demonstrated with mops, buckets, brooms and scrubbing brushes and made a noise by banging pots and pans. Placards read:

Don't sweep abuse under the red carpet  
Can a man beat his wife in this House?  
Clean abuse out of Parliament (with a graphic of a mop and bucket), NB MPs Domestic Violence is not a domestic affair, No abusers in power, Discipline Cwele, Men in power lead by example, Start at the top stop abuse

Fliers were handed out that outlined the story for Cwele and demanded that all political parties ensure that men who batter and rape women or abuse children are not allowed to hold positions of power within their parties

Women in South Africa now expect our government to find ways to implement its stated vision. At the very least, we expect that within the ranks of the ruling party a good example will be set to other parties and to the man and woman on the street.

### Legislation in El Salvador Sets A Good Example

In El Salvador legislation was passed in 1997 that insists on compulsory screening of men going into positions of power. As a measure to

promote and endorse gender equality at all levels, starting in Parliament, this proposal is now being made in South Africa. It has been adopted by a wide range of organisations, as one of the key demands of the International Women's Day March for 1998.

It was presented as a proposal at the ANC National Conference in Mafikeng at the end of 1997 by MPPregs Govender.

**In view of the appalling level of crime against women and children, we propose that men who stand for public office should not be allowed into positions of power if they fall into any of the three categories below:**

- 1) They have peace interdicts against them because of abusing women.
- 2) They have been accused and convicted of child abuse.
- 3) They have outstanding maintenance payments for their children.

**Men standing for public office should have to sign a legal document that states that they are not in any of the above three categories. If they are, then they should not be allowed to stand for public office. There will be a procedure to verify the truth of their statement.**

**This procedure should also be used to screen present members of Parliament and Cabinet and men who have a history of being abusive should go through a process of rehabilitation through counselling. Outstanding maintenance payments should be paid immediately or they should stand down.**

**This would send a clear message to all the people of South Africa that the ANC takes its vision of a non-sexist future seriously and is willing to stand by the principles described in the Freedom Charter subsequently in the Constitution of South Africa.**



**WOMEN'S MEDIA WATCH**  
NEWSLETTER

Editor: Gabrielle Le Roux  
Design and Layout: Mediaworks  
Please address articles/letters to the editor at:  
Women's Media Watch  
P.O. Box 10229, Caledon Square, 7905, Cape Town, SA  
E-mail: mediawat@iafrica.com  
Tel: +27 (21) - 461 0368/9 Fax: 27 (21) - 461 0385



## DRAWING UP GENDER POLICY FOR THE MEDIA

The mini Workshop on Violence against Women in the Media was the first of a series to draw together sympathetic journalists, crisis workers and survivors of abuse to look at how they perceive the current representation of violence against women in the media and what changes they would like to see.

## PROPOSED GUIDELINES ON THE COVERAGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

NB: These guidelines are a work in progress and this is the first step, they are being worked on and could best be used as a starting point for further discussion.

1. Journalists and editors should have Gender training to sensitise them to the importance of reporting in a more sympathetic way about violence against women.
2. Relationships should be nurtured between media workers, the Police and NGOs so that they can understand each other better and collaborate effectively to transform the reporting on violence against women.
3. The social and economic costs of allowing violence against women to continue should be investigated and reported on regularly.
4. Perpetrators of violence against women and children should be named, photographed and stigmatised by the media.
5. Survivors of rape or other gender-based violence should be treated with respect by the media. Their feelings should be reported on sympathetically.
6. Rape myths should be debunked not endorsed by the media.
7. Stories of women who have survived violence against them and grown stronger should be sought and published instead of the continued portrayal of women as victims.
8. Stories about successful strategies to combat violence against women and children should be sought and shared in the media so that others can learn from them.
9. Information about services available and where and how to get help should be published and broadcast regularly.

10. Media producers should monitor themselves on an ongoing basis with regard to the portrayal of women and publish and broadcast the results so that the public can see that they are taking the challenge to transform seriously.

11. A system of awards and disgrace awards for media producers should be started. The giving of these awards should be sufficiently publicised and high profile to make it a real stigma to win the "Most Sexist Media" disgrace award.

12. To avoid sexist advertising there should be certain gender-sensitive criteria which would determine whether advertisements were accepted or rejected.

13. Sexist language should not be used and the media needs to be provided with comprehensive guidelines on language.

14. Media monitoring that considers whose stories get told in terms of race and class as well as gender should be undertaken regularly and the results published and broadcast.

women and men and if women want to access the social, political and economic aspects enshrined in our new constitution. We believe it is time that women be in the forefront of the campaign and struggle around basic needs and gender equality.

**Date:** 7 March 1998

**Time:** 09.00 - 20.00

**Venue:** St Francis Hall, Langa

The programme includes a cultural activity, a group discussion to identify key issues/challenges/campaigns, an input on how to build the women's movement, a marimba band, elections of officials. The function ends with dinner and music.

For more details contact Hazel at 021 6853033.

## WOMEN'S DAY MASS MARCH 9 March

This mass march has been planned by NICRO Women's Support Centre and will be attended by a great number of organisations and groups. Men, women and children are invited and it promises to be an exciting event.

The decision to undertake a large-scale march was made largely in response to the murder of five women by their spouses in Khayelitsha over the holiday season. These murders were completely ignored by mainstream print and television media in the Western Cape, which is of serious concern to the NWSC. Clearly, much work needs to be done in order to create a culture of non-tolerance of all forms of violence against women in South Africa, and to inform women of organisations which exist to provide support and assistance.

Trade Unions, religious organisations, government departments, grassroots organisations, government departments, grassroots organisations and schools have also been invited. Transport by way of buses and trains has been arranged to bring people in free of

charge from some areas.

## MARCH PROGRAMME

**Venue:** The event will begin at Cape Technikon on Keizergracht in Cape Town (District Six area) and will end up outside Parliament.

**Time:** 11.00hrs - 12.00 Events (see below)

12.00 March till Parliament

### Events before the march

- \* Dizu Dancers - Marimba Dance Groups
- \* Opening and Welcome
- \* The Honourable Mayor
- \* Survivor Speak Out
- \* Dr F Esack - Commission on Gender Equality
- \* Music - women drumming
- \* Ms Phumla Gobodo - TRC Gender Dept
- \* Survivor Speak Out
- \* Story by Maria Mar - Puerto Rican story-teller and shaman
- \* Ms Gloria Steinem - Pioneer feminist and founder of MS Magazine

The march will begin at 12 noon with people singing and chanting through the streets of Cape Town to the gates of Parliament. There will be interdenominational prayers outside Parliament.

There will be a moment of silence which will be broken by Blowing the Whistle to Break the Silence around Violence against Women.

Contact NICRO ph: 221 690



Die Burger 25 February 1998

## Uitbeelding van vroue bekyk

KAAPSTAD. - Die media het 'n verantwoordelike rol om meer gereeld en met groter omsigtigheid oor die voorkoms van geweld teen vroue verslag te doen. Dit is die mening van verteenwoordigers van verskeie Kaapse non-organisasies.

Die Women's Media Watch, 'n drukgroep wat hom beywer teen seksisme in die media, het gister 'n werksessie aangebied om verskillende rolspelers met mekaar in aanraking te bring vir die neerle van riglyne om beriggewing oor vroue te verbeter.

Verteenwoordigers van organisasies wat aan slagoffers van geweld hulp verleen, het saam met verslaggewers die wyse waarop vroue in die media uitgebeeld word - veral vroulike slagoffers van verkragting, geweld en moord - bespreek.

Verteenwoordigers van organisasies soos Swent (Sex Workers Education Advisory Task Force), Rape Crisis, Nicro en Triangle was dit eens

dat berigte van geweld teen vroue dikwels ondergeskik is - en minder publisiteit kry - as ander verslae van misdade.

Van die voorloopte riglyne waarop besluit is, sluit die volgende in:

□ Inligting moet meer gereedlik beskikbaar gestel word. Beter kommunikasie tussen hulporganisasies, die Polisie en die media moet bewerkstellig word.

□ Manlike media besluitnemers moet bearbei word om meer sensitief en simpatiek te wees teenoor berigte van geweld teen vroue.

□ Verkragters en ander geweldenaars moet in die media ontmasker en gestigmatiseer word.

□ Vroue moet minder as slagoffers uitgebeeld word en meer as bevestigdes.

Volgens Gabriëlle le Roux, koördinerder van die Women's Media Watch, was die werksessie 'n groot sukses. Voorstelle sal nou aan die Gedagskommissie voorgelê word.

## WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS

### Launch of The New Women's Movement - 7 March

The New Women's Movement invites you to attend its launch which is intended to consolidate 18 months of organising amongst grassroots women which started with the Child Maintenance Campaign.

For the NWM UNITY AND SOLIDARITY amongst working women, unemployed women and the rural poor are essential if we are to achieve equality between

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