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Published on *Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle* (<https://www.haca.ma>)

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## Signature at the HACA of a convention for culture of gender equality in media

29 Mar 2017













HACA, UN-Women and UNESCO signed, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at the High Authority's headquarters in Rabat, a convention to promote the culture of men-women equality in and through the audiovisual media.

The agreement, signed by President of the High Authority of Audiovisual Communication Ms. Amina Lemrini Elouahabi, Representative of UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Maghreb Ms. Leila Rhiwi and UNESCO Country Representative Mr. Salah Khaled, provides a framework for cooperation and facilitates collaborative work between signatory Parties, on a non-exclusive basis, in fields of mutual interests.

In her opening address, Ms. Lemrini El Ouahabi particularly highlighted the normative framework to combat gender-based stereotypes in media, which is based on two interrelated principles, consistent with indivisibility of Human Rights, that is to say, the Right of operators to freely practice their

activities on audiovisual communication field and women's Right not to be discriminated. President of the HACA added that this reminder illustrates the mission of the Regulator, which is to ensure that operators respect their obligations in terms of promoting equality, at the core of the implementation of article 19 of the Constitution.

According to Ms. Rhiwi, "even if media reflect the reality of the society, they have a duty to exercise their influence at the service of gender equality, in order to contribute to the development of societies". "We don't have a choice anymore, if we all aspire to egalitarian societies, we need to mobilize and act together to put an end to broadcasted sexist images and stereotypes", she added.

For his part, Mr. Salah underlined that the UNESCO in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and other partners, implemented specific tools: Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM). Thus, an implementation and integration process of the GSIM started in many countries, such as Morocco, where the support and involvement of the HACA was significant.

This event was also marked by the presentation of the new legal framework for the promotion of men-women parity and equality in audiovisual media, as well as the role of the HACA. In effect, Member of the Higher Council of the Audiovisual Communication (CSCA) Ms. Rabha Zeidguy recalled HACA's activities, which are included in a new approach: an approach of "right". She added that through this approach, the subject of women would not be perceived in a reduced level anymore, but in a wider normative scale, which concerns human rights. Finally, it is important to place alongside principles with equal normative and ethical value: freedom of expression/ editorial freedom and every person's right not to be discriminated. The role of the regulator is to ensure a balance between these two important principles.

In her presentation, Unit Coordinator at HACA's IT Department Ms. Houda Filali Nachit brought forward synthesis report on "who makes the info", elaborated by the HACA within the framework of GMMP 2015 project (Global Media Monitoring Project). The report shows that the number of reports covered by women around themes of gender equality and inequality is higher the percentage of the ones covered by men. In fact, men evoke such topics only when latter represent the main subject of the report (example: a report on human rights).

Initiatives of audiovisual operators in terms of promoting parity and equality have been discussed by President of Gender Committee at 2M Ms. Khadija Boujanoui, and Coordinator of Parity and Monitoring Committee at SNRT Ms. Amina Gharib. Ms. Boujanoui noted that "Parity and Women's empowerment Committee", established in 2013, conducted an environmental scan on woman's image in media, after which "2M Chart for woman's empowerment" started in 2014. Its main objective is to work on the empowerment of woman, by including a gender approach in the channel's specification, avoiding redundant stereotypes in in-house programs, and raising the awareness of external service providers on gender issues.

As for Ms. Gharib, she noted that at the SNRT, "we aspire to reinforce our advertising spots detection tools when it comes to anything that could obstruct the promotion of the right image of woman, and also strengthen our control mechanisms regarding HR policy's respect of equality and performance in terms of parity". She added that after the chart, the next project would be to create a website that would aim to empowerment of SNRT commitments regarding the enhancement of the culture of

parity and equality, and the promotion of an image worthy of the woman within our enterprise and our contents.”

The convention focuses on framing the partnership between the HACA, the UN-Women and the UNESCO, for the purpose of promoting the fight against gender-based stereotypes in media content, and the culture of men-women equality through the audiovisual media, with a right-based approach premised upon human rights, knowing full well that the right to freedom of expression and the right to gender equality are, like all human rights, universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent.

By these means, UN-Women and UNESCO commit themselves to accompany the HACA for the implementation of axes of its action strategy, particularly in the field on combatting gender-based stereotypes and promoting the culture of equality in Moroccan audiovisual sector.

The convention lays down many cooperation domains, such as the sharing and the exchange of information, documentation, and relevant good practices in this field, the production of practical tools to accompany operators and the awareness of audiovisual sector’s professionals in Morocco.

It is also important to optimize a monitoring and warning system to track down gender-based stereotypes in Moroccan audiovisual context, mobilize technical expertise in jointly identified domains, and implement joint activities, which may help achieve the convention’s goal.

Representatives of the audiovisual operators and other media professionals including parliamentarians and representatives of many ministerial departments concerned attended this meeting. It is also important to mention that on the HACA’s side, besides the presence Ms. Ziedguy, the event was attended by Members of the Higher Council of the Audiovisual Communication (CSCA), Ms. Khadija El Gour, Mrs. Mohammed Abderrahim, BouchaïbOuabbi, TalaaSaoud Al Atlassi, FaouziSkalli, as well as Director-General of the HACA, Mr. Jamal EddineNaji.

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