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## WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

### Background

Kenya's technological and media industry has grown exponentially the last two decades with women playing a significant contribution through their gradual venture with key challenges, notwithstanding.

### Women in Technology

Of more than 3 billion internet users in the globe, 25% fewer women than men use the internet, while women in developing countries such as Kenya are 21% less likely to own a mobile phone. This clearly indicates that women are missing out on the digital revolution. Currently an estimated 90% of formal employment across all sectors require technological skills, hence women's lack of ICT literacy is likely to lead to a reinforcement of gender inequalities.

Notably, fewer women access ICT due to their unfavorable conditions with respect to employment, education and income as most of them have fewer hours to get acquainted with technology owing to their long working hours in domestic and care work as well as other unfavorable social norms. Yet, under similar conditions as men, women tend to be more active ICT users and embrace technological innovations at an equal or even faster speed.

### Women in Media

Statistics from various studies indicate that women are underrepresented in the media industry in Kenya, yet there is no shortage of competitive women in the field; four out of every five graduates from journalism or media faculties are in fact women. This underrepresentation is even more evident in senior management and governance positions as the ratio of women to men is 2:1, and the largest two media houses have never had a woman CEO.

While several Kenya News Companies have reported to have adopted various policies favorable to women's presence and advancement, barriers limiting women's participation and mobility in the newsrooms remain very pronounced.

## **Conclusion**

Needless to say, women need technology for the same reason as men: to develop their marketable skills, enhance their economic opportunities, participate in informed decision-making, network, promote themselves as individuals. Women therefore need technology to participate in the modern world as equals.

Additionally, structured and sustained efforts are required to transform the media sector into a woman-friendly environment. In that regard, women, media houses, policy makers such as the Media Council of Kenya, and the government must work towards addressing the systemic issues disadvantaging women media professionals.