

Are we on track for 50/50 by 2020?

 By Leigh Andrews

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With gender equality more under the spotlight last year than ever before, many in the marketing and entertainment industry pledged '50/50 by 2020'. With just six months to go before 2020 is a reality and no longer a mythical spot in the future, are those goals on track? Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, head of UN Women, shared insights at the recent Women Deliver conference.



Spotlight on the 50/50 by 2020 initiative and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka's insights at the Women Deliver conference.

When many in the global entertainment industry spoke of the possibility of '[50/50 by 2020](#)', we were years from reaching that futuristic goal.

But there's a reason for the 2020 goalpost, as [News Trust](#) reports that next year marks the 25th anniversary of a landmark women's rights conference, when 189 countries signed the Beijing Declaration calling for gender parity on decision-making bodies.

[The Wrap](#) reports that we were finally spurred to take action when there were widespread calls for a change to the corporate culture that has allowed widespread cases of sexual harassment cases like those involving Harvey Weinstein.



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And so, one of the first global events that sets the tone of gender equality talks on the calendar is the Academy Awards, set to take place again on 9 February 2020.



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The 'Oscars' being criticised for its lack of diversity over the years is hopefully now a thing of the past, as [Elle](#) reports that the Oscars will be a more woman-friendly in 2020. That's because 842 new members are set to join the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science, 50% of which are women and 29% people of colour.



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This includes the likes of Lady Gaga, Adele and Letitia Wright. A good move as this is the body which decides which actors, actresses, films, directors and more take home Oscars.

Taking a global cue from the Cannes Film Festival and Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity

Yes, young, diverse audiences demand fresh, diverse content, but it's not just a case of wanting to see more women on screen.

Today's woke audience is attuned to tokenism and quick to comment when they feel something's being done just for the sake of meeting a quota – both behind and in front of the lens.



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Cannes is as good a place to start on the map as any, as the annual Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity is preceded by the Cannes Film Festival, where diversity has also taken a front row seat of late.



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And SA's voice is strong in this call, as former deputy president of the country Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, now head of UN Women, was awarded the Cannes LionHeart at the most recent Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, in recognition of her advocacy for women, human rights and social justice throughout the world, and for her leadership of the industry-wide diversity initiative, The Unstereotype Alliance.

Women Deliver: All eyes on Africa



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka to be awarded Cannes LionHeart

30 Apr 2019



Shifting focus from big screens to big business, the [Thomson Reuters Foundation interviewed Mlambo-Ngcuka](#) at Women Deliver, the world's biggest gender equality conference, on her drive to double-gender equal cabinets by 2020.

“ Mlambo-Ngcuka says balanced cabinets make better decisions not just for women, but for broader society and economies, and provide role models for the next generation. ”

But are we on track to make that a reality by 2020?

Mlambo-Ngcuka said that many countries had passed laws on gender equality and created gender ministries but progress was slow.

Despite this, she told the [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#) that there's definitely momentum in Africa for 50:50 cabinets.

Several sub-Saharan countries already have a greater proportion of female lawmakers than wealthier countries and women currently comprise 61% of parliament in Rwanda, 46% in Namibia and 42% in South Africa and Senegal.

That's definitely a step in the right direction.



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With a revised call for 'Planet 50-50 by 2030', which ties in with the 2030 goal for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), let's see if the rest of the world follows suit...

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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