



It's Past Time: TV and Film Industry Must Address Gender Inequality

Toronto — Oct. 3, 2014. Women have the talent, experience and ambition to participate as equals in every aspect of the film and television industry. What stands in the way is institutional gender bias.

Yesterday, at the World Conference of Screenwriters held in Warsaw, Poland, member guilds of the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds (IAWG) as well as members of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe, passed a resolution to call on the television and film industry to directly address the issue of gender inequality in the industry. The resolution asks industry members to set a goal of having 50% of scripts across genres and at every budget level written by women. Jill Golick, president of the Writers Guild of Canada, and outgoing chair of the IAWG's policy and research group, presented the resolution to the assembly, where it was adopted unanimously.

The 30 guilds and writers organizations present at the World Conference of Screenwriters, held in conjunction with IAWG meetings, represent 56,000 male and female screenwriters. Collectively they call upon commissioners, funders, studios, networks and broadcasters to set this 50% goal in active recognition of the fact that women writers are underemployed.

As statistics from writers' organizations around the world clearly show, women write fewer scripts, receive fewer commissions, have shorter careers, and earn less money for their work than their male colleagues. As a report titled *Focus on Women (2013)* by Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen notes, in Canadian television alone 21 live-action programs receiving significant levels of funding from the Canada Media Fund (2010-11) were written by 65% male screenwriters, 35% female. In Ireland, to cite another example, a 2013 study of 473 drama productions in theatre, film, radio, and television, showed that 37% were written by women.

It's past time that film and television reflects gender equality back to the audience, giving the new generations of viewers worlds in which men and women are truly equal. A big step in that direction will come when the creators — screenwriters — are equals in writing the scripts that portray those worlds.

The full resolution follows:

"Statistics from writers' organizations around the world show clearly that women writers are under employed. We write fewer scripts, receive fewer commissions, have shorter careers and earn less than our male colleagues.

Women have the talent, experience and ambition to participate as equals in every aspect of the industry. What stands in our way is institutional gender bias.

We the 30 guilds and writers organizations present at the Warsaw Conference of Screenwriters 2014 representing 56,000 male and female screenwriters, call upon our commissioners, funders, studios, networks and broadcasters to set the goal of having 50% of scripts across genres and at every budget level written by women.

Let us reflect back to our audiences, and especially our children, worlds in which men and women are truly equal."

Moved by Tom Fontana, USA
Seconded by Leora Kamenetzky, Israel
Carried unanimously
Warsaw, Thursday October 2, 2014

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents 2,200 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, and digital platforms.

The International Affiliation of Writers Guilds (IAWG) is an international body representing guilds of professional screenwriters. It works to further the cause of screenwriters worldwide.

The Federation of Screenwriters in Europe initiated the first ever European-wide scriptwriters and scriptwriting festival, leading to the World Conference of Screenwriters, 2014.