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World Telecommunication and Information Society Award 2012



From left to right: Houlin Zhao, Deputy Secretary-General of ITU; Sun Yafang, Chairman of Huawei; Amodo Boudou, Vice-President of the Argentine Republic, on behalf of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner; Dr Hamadou Touré, Secretary-General of ITU; Geena Davis, Founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media; François Rancy, Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau; and Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

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Cristina Fernández de Kirchner

President of Argentina

■ Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was elected President of Argentina in October 2007 and took office on 10 December 2007. She was re-elected in October 2011. From 2005 to 2007, she represented the Province of Buenos Aires as National Senator and was Chairwoman of the Senate Constitutional Affairs Committee. Earlier, from 1997 to 2001, she was a Congresswoman, representing the Province of Santa Cruz and Vice Chair of the Education Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. From 2001 to 2005, she represented the Province of Santa Cruz as National Senator.

Under her leadership, telecommunication development has made great strides in Argentina. The National Telecommunication Plan, pushed by Executive Power through the Ministry of Federal Planning and Public Investment Services, has taken far-reaching steps to connect the people of Argentina to information and communication technologies.

President Cristina Fernández is committed to the defence of human rights, and has been a staunch supporter of the *Movimiento Justicialista*. ■

Argentina's spectacular growth in mobile

Welcoming Vice-President Amado Boudou of the Argentine Republic, who attended the ceremony of the 2012 World Telecommunication and Information Society Award on behalf of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the ITU Secretary-General recalled that during her first term in office, from 2007 to 2011, mobile connectivity in Argentina more than doubled from around 23 million mobile cellular subscriptions to over 55 million, giving a penetration rate of over 140 per cent, compared with an average of 94.5 per cent in the Americas region as a whole. The progress is even more striking if we look back to 2003 when there were fewer than 8 million mobile cellular subscriptions in the country.

Highlighting these developments, Dr Touré said Argentina is well placed to show the world that women and girls have an important leadership role to play in the growth and development of information and communication technologies.

Vice-President Amado Boudou shares a message of hope for the future

The Argentine Government accords overriding importance to its policies against all kinds of discrimination, and for human rights and justice. The Argentine Government not only combats discrimination against women, but the combat itself is led by a woman — a clear proof that Argentina takes the fight against gender discrimination seriously. This woman has presided over the country for four years, and been re-elected by her people to carry the country's aspirations forward in the coming four years.



Govt. of Argentina

Ending discrimination

Beyond fine words and visionary statements, the Argentine Government fully understands that turning its policies into reality means backing them up with resources. Otherwise, the ideas expressed will remain a dead letter. We know that it is crucial to transform ideas and aspirations into practical actions — in other words, to turn policies into realities that transform the daily lives of our citizens. This is the key to winning the fight against discrimination in the Argentine Republic — the ability to transform the lives of the women and men who live in our country.

Amodo Boudou, Vice-President of Argentina, who attended the ceremony on behalf of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, receiving the 2012 award from Dr Hamadoun Touré, ITU Secretary-General



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Equality in connecting to information

A particular aspect of discrimination arises in regard to information and telecommunications. Here the keyword is accessibility — a concept that in our modern world has everything to do with equal opportunity. In this context, accessibility of course means democratic accessibility: a level playing field that offers access to each and every one of our planet's inhabitants. There must be equal access for women and men. In Argentina — with its huge rural population and vast territory — the opportunities for accessing connectivity must also be ubiquitous, without distinction as to economic status or social group. It has to be possible for each and every citizen to access information services.

Fibre-optic network

A number of programmes have led to our being honoured with this award. The first is the Federal Fibre-Optic Programme, under which all areas of our country are served by a public fibre-optic network. The State invested in this network so as to ensure that all citizens can access broadband services in any corner of our

country — a territory that extends all the way from a tropical region in the north right down to the area known as Ushuaia, close to Antarctica, and regarded by many — thanks to the famous tales of Jules Verne — as the end of the world. To achieve this ubiquitous fibre-optic coverage clearly reflects a major effort on the part of our government.

Open digital television

The second programme is Open Digital Television. The fact that cable television is a commercial system and that there used to be no public service catering to all the country's inhabitants created a divide between those who could afford television and those who could not.

Today, the open digital television system enables 40 million Argentines to receive television services free of charge. This open system covers not only the technical side of television broadcasting, but also generating content and creating non-commercial, cultural and educational programmes. And by educational programmes we mean not only conventional education, but also

value-based education, focusing on such vital subjects as non-discrimination, non-violence, equal rights before the law, and equal opportunities.

Free laptops

The programme closest to our hearts, and the one that we in the government most cherish, is the one known as the Equal Connect Programme. Through this programme, three million Argentine children attend free public schools (set up essentially for lower-income families), and receive laptops for their personal use. The children keep the laptops when they finish their schooling.

The Equal Connect Programme is undoubtedly the best way of making progress towards equal opportunities in the area of new technologies. Not only do these children find themselves on a level with others whose parents can afford to buy them computers, but the programme also opens up equal access to future employment. This narrows the digital divide, because connectivity and accessibility are synonymous with democracy as far as information technology is concerned. The narrowing of the divide between different population groups will be seen in the training of human resources and the resulting opportunities for equal access to more and better jobs.

The Equal Connect Programme is the one we most wanted to share with you, because it involves not only the allocation of resources for purchasing laptops, but also the associated logistics and distribution, and the generation of special software to support the educational content. In short, this is an ongoing major effort on the part of the Argentine Government to enhance equality among all the different population groups within our country.

Managing resources wisely and equitably

Governing has everything to do with taking decisions about the allocation of resources — not always an easy task, given that

directing resources towards one activity means withholding them from another. At this time of international crisis, far from shying away from the approach we have been taking, we need to strengthen and develop it further.

The State through its public policies will play a major role in fostering an increasingly egalitarian society within its boundaries. As this happens, equality will begin to emerge between countries, enhancing the prospects for a world that is safer and rich in opportunities for all.

A further illustration of Argentina's successful implementation of its development programmes is the fact that, until 2003, our country was using 5 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to pay off foreign debt, while only 2 per cent of GDP was being invested in the educational system. Since 2003, however, with a new political orientation, we have been able to reverse that situation to the extent that, by 2011, the Argentine Government was putting only 2 per cent of GDP into foreign debt repayments, and 6.5 per cent into the educational system.

Greater equality, brighter prospects

All of these measures are enabling us to bring about greater equality, not only in regard to gender, but also in terms of equal opportunities for all social groups. This is why it is such a great honour for me to represent my President and share with you, in these difficult, crisis-ridden times, a message of hope for the future that has everything to do with this award and the opportunities it recognizes. These opportunities include the opportunity to look at ourselves and share our experiences of what our lives are all about, wherever and in whatever context those lives are being lived.

If we are able to see each other as equal in our differences, together we will be able to do what it takes to make the world safer and more equal, with more opportunities and, above all, brighter prospects for our sons and daughters.



Huawei

Sun Yafang

Chairman of Huawei

■ Sun Yafang is Chairman of Huawei, a position she has held since 1999. Ms Yafang's leadership has transformed Huawei from a small local enterprise to a global giant providing innovative technologies and tailored solutions and services to leading telecommunication operators worldwide. She is credited as being the key contributor to the establishment and development of Huawei's marketing and sales division and human resources leadership development. Ms Yafang has spearheaded management reforms that have helped to turn Huawei into a multi-national

corporation that is seen as a leading vendor in the telecommunication industry.

As Chairman, Ms Yafang represents Huawei in the business community, and communicates Huawei's overseas development and corporate commitments to government officials and State dignitaries around the globe. She is also actively involved in a variety of corporate responsibility programmes as well as philanthropic activities.

Sun Yafang is an active member of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development. ■

Sun Yafang outlines her vision

This World Telecommunication and Information Society Award is a great turning point for me. I realize that, as women, we can learn how to appreciate ourselves for what we do in this industry. I really deeply appreciate ITU for paying great attention to women and girls in ICT. Women and girls in ICT are simple words, but I do believe that in the next 20 to 30 years great changes will be made.

Women hold up half the sky

Chinese people know that, when the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, Mao Zedong said that "women hold up half the sky". I think these words have been quite influential for several generations, not only for women, but also for men.

In China, we women believe we should have jobs and education. My mum's generation, mine, and the next generation — all of us women think that we should have jobs.

I believe that, by choosing this topic of women and girls in ICT, ITU has set in train great changes that will come to fruition in the future.

A fulfilling career in Huawei

I have worked in Huawei for 23 years and I have held the chairmanship position since 1999. In these past 23 years I have experienced great changes in ICT.

I remember when I worked in the company in basic engineering. At that time the network equipment was quite expensive, at



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about USD 300 per line for the switch. This compares with about USD 2 per line now. There were no mobile phones 30 years ago, but now there are 6 billion mobile cellular subscriptions globally. So the industry has changed a lot.

In our company, we have 30 000 females, representing 20 per cent of the workforce, working in 140 countries, to support more than 3 billion people in their daily communication needs through our solutions and products.

Our company's policy of equal opportunity is reflected in our recruitment, promotion, and compensation, among other aspects. It stipulates that there should be no discrimination in terms of "race, gender, region, nationality, age, pregnancy, or disability."

I have two jobs, one as Chairman of Huawei and the other as Dean of Huawei University. In both these roles, I will do my best for leadership development for women, and I hope that more and more females will work in the management team.

Sun Yafang, Chairman of Huawei, receiving the 2012 award from Dr Hamadoun Touré, ITU Secretary-General



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Broadband brings benefits to women and girls

In 2010, ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré invited Huawei to participate in the Broadband Commission for Digital Development. This commission is a great initiative for the ICT industry. We hope that every family, everybody, including all women and girls, will have access to broadband services in the near future.

We have worked particularly hard in the past two years, together with governments, carriers and manufacturers, as well as with other industries. As an example, I have the following cases to share about national broadband and how women in this industry have been supported.

In Angola, Africa, we helped the government to set up what we call a digital health information centre. This not only provided help for hospitals, but also supported a nurse training programme for women and girls, regardless of whether they live in cities or in rural areas. Huawei is also implementing a localization

strategy in South Africa, which endeavours to recruit, train, mentor and retain more women employees within its South African branch office.

Bringing broadband to villages, boosting the economy

In China, about 10 years ago, we worked together with China Mobile and China Telecom and China Unicom. The target was to connect every village. Now every village in China has an information station. Some villages have fixed fibre-optic broadband in these information stations and are already connected. Some are connected by mobile. The information stations provide a broadband information centre that can support e-education and e-health. Also, farmers can sell their products, vegetables and fruit online.

I have a story about a housewife whose husband used to ride a bicycle into town to sell their products. Their income was very

low. But now they do business on the Internet — online agriculture. They can earn about USD 3000 per year. The housewife suffers from a disability, so it is not easy for her to move around, but she can manage to do business with a smartphone. This is a great change in a farmer's life.

Another case is about a phone lady in Bangladesh. Four years ago we supported and managed a project with a local carrier. During this project, the lady took a phone from one village to another. At that time it was a feature phone, which enabled only talking, with no other functions. The lady used the phone to help people connect to each other. That was just four years ago. But now there are more and more broadband ladies working in this way, not only in Bangladesh, but also in other countries.

Some people cannot afford to buy a smartphone, so women bring smartphones to the villages for rent for a day or two, or even a few hours, in order to give people e-services such as e-health, and an opportunity to sell products online. Since broadband is delivered globally, this can be a great help for people everywhere.

Our world is in what we might call a hyperconnected era, with 6 billion mobile phone connections globally, of which around 1.3 billion are mobile broadband. There are an estimated 2.4 billion Internet users, with 600 million being fixed broadband. This provides a great platform for progress.

Enriching life through communication

Huawei's vision is to enrich life through communication. It is good for women and girls to have more opportunities, to gain more knowledge through e-learning, and also to get jobs whether they work in the office or in the home.

I am very confident that more and more women will work in the ICT industry, and I share the idea that women can hold up half the sky. Huawei has established a Special Needs Employee Management Process which is used for managing female employees under four special phases. The aim is to protect the health, rights and interests of employees.

Huawei's "Telecom Seeds for the Future" project in Thailand enables female and male telecommunication majors at Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, Mahidol University and Thammasat University to study cutting-edge telecommunication technologies (such as 3G and LTE). Since 2008, when the project was launched, Huawei has delivered about 3000 hours of training.

Looking ahead, we hope that males and females can work together, and that 7 billion men and women can all be connected and enjoy a good quality of life.



Huawei



Geena Davis

Hollywood icon and founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media

Geena Davis is a Hollywood icon and one of its most respected actors, having appeared in several landmark roles. She is an Academy Award winner who made her feature film debut starring opposite Dustin Hoffman in "Tootsie". She went on to star in such films as "The Fly", "Beetlejuice", "Earth Girls are Easy", "Angie", "The Long Kiss Goodnight", and "Stuart Little". She is also a world-class athlete having competed in international events in archery.

Ms Davis is recognized for her tireless advocacy on behalf of women and girls. She is the founder of the non-profit Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media,

a research-based organization working within the media and entertainment industry to engage, educate and influence people to ensure gender balance, reduce stereotyping and create a broad mix of female characters for entertainment that targets children aged 11 years and under.

Geena Davis is an official partner of UN Women in a global effort to change the way the media represent women and girls worldwide. She is ITU's Special Envoy for women and girls in the field of information and communication technology.

Geena Davis shares her life stories

I have appeared on screen as everything from a pirate captain to the President of the United States. The first role I ever played was as a man. As little girls back in the 1960s, my best friend and I play-acted at being brave characters from westerns. Because I was taller, I would often play the father, and she would be my son. And because we were young we never noticed that there were no female characters from movies and television that we wanted to pretend to be.

I have spent most of my adult life advocating for women and girls, and one small way has been in seeking roles that I believed would be constructive for women. I was once in a movie called "Earth girls are easy", but this was very early on, and I've become incredibly serious since then.

Half of the world is invisible

Five years ago, I launched the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and its programming arm called See Jane. This first came about from watching children's television and videos and G-rated (general audience — all ages admitted) movies with my then 2 year old daughter, Alizeh. I was stunned to see that there seemed to be far more male characters than female characters in these entertainments that were aimed at the youngest of children. I checked with my associates and with industry leaders, and no-one seemed to be aware of the serious gender imbalance that we are feeding kids through the images that they see. In partnership with the Annenberg School for communication and the University of Southern California, we sponsored the largest research analysis (performed by Dr Stacey Smith) ever done into



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the content of movies and children's television programmes. The results were stunning — even though I knew in my heart what they would likely be.

At the dawn of a new millennium, when 50 per cent of the global population is female, the message being sent to children in their seemingly innocuous kid's entertainment media, is that women and girls do not take up half the space in the world, and that women and girls have far less value in society than men and boys.

We might assume today that the marginalization and invisibility of female characters would be a relic of the past. Unfortunately, the reality is that gender stereotypes remain deeply entrenched in today's entertainment, and there has been no significant progress over the past 20 years. Currently, for each female character, there are approximately three male characters. The increase in the number of female characters in G-rated films during the past two decades is 0.7 per cent. By my calculation, if

*Geena Davis,
Hollywood icon
and founder of
the Geena Davis
Institute on
Gender in Media,
receiving the 2012
award from
Dr Hamadoun
Touré, ITU
Secretary-General*



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we keep on adding female characters at this rate, we will achieve parity in 700 years. That is too slow.

Sex symbols and nonentities

Our research also revealed that when female characters do exist in children's media, the vast majority are highly stereotyped or hypersexualized. The animated female characters in G-rated movies wear the same type of sexually revealing clothing as the female characters in R-rated movies (restricted viewing – children under 17 require an accompanying parent or adult guardian). Additionally, animated female characters, because they can be drawn this way, are highly likely to be shown with a waist so small that it is questionable whether a spinal column could actually fit in there.

The stark gender inequality in media aimed at children is of importance to our discussion of women and girls in ICT, because

television and movies can wield enormous influence on young children as they are developing an idea of their role in society and thinking about career choices. Our research shows that females are missing from critical occupational sectors. In a study of all G-rated films from 2006 to 2009, out of 800 speaking characters 80.5 per cent of the jobs were held by men, and 19.5 per cent of the jobs were held by women. This is in sharp contrast to the real world where women perform 66 per cent of the work. Our research also showed that not one female in these G-rated movies is depicted in the field of medical science, as a business leader, in the law profession or in politics. There were characters in those careers but all of them were male. All of the criminals were also male, but I am not going to fight for parity in that area.

The aspirations of the female characters were limited almost exclusively to finding romance, and one of the most common female occupations in G-rated movies was royalty, which is a nice gig if you can get it.

Communicating cultural stereotypes

Studies have shown that the more hours of television a girl watches, the fewer options she thinks she has in life, and the more hours a boy watches the more sexist his views become. And because kids tend to watch the same TV shows and movies over and over again, negative stereotypes are repeatedly imprinted on them from a very vulnerable age.

So what message are we sending to boys and girls if there are so few female characters, and if the female characters are one-dimensional, sidelined, stereotyped, hypersexualized, or simply not there at all? Children need to see an abundance of female characters of every kind occupying the space that is rightfully theirs. Seeing women take their full role will enhance awareness of the benefits for the family and community of women's empowerment, professional training, and non-traditional career choices.

See it and be it

We know that when girls see characters engaged in unsteereotyped activities, it can heighten the likelihood that they will pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics. In other words, if they see it, they can be it. And if boys can see girl characters engaged in non-traditional occupations, they will come to see it as the norm and not the exception. The media have a strong influence on society, and can have a powerful impact when used towards making a cultural shift. Media can create positive opportunities to overcome social and cultural barriers — that is why I launched the institute. Armed with our research, we partner with the decision-makers and the creators of children's entertainment in Hollywood to foster a

dramatic improvement in the gender balance that our youngest children see.

Change does not happen easily. In my industry, content creators simply do not notice how few female characters there are.

Add women, change everything

In the United States, there is an organization called the White House Project that advocates for more women to hold leadership positions. They released a benchmark report a couple of years ago looking across ten sectors of society to find the percentage of women in positions of leadership and authority. The average was 18 per cent. The motto of the White House Project is "Add women, change everything", and this concept covers all of our work to empower women and girls. Improving media images is just one facet of empowering women and girls.

The fierce urgency of now

The status of women and girls is already changing, and I believe ICT will lead the way towards equality. All of us, non-governmental organizations, public-private partnerships, along with ITU and other United Nations agencies, must leverage our combined influence to advocate for gender equality. We will embrace what Dr Martin Luther King called "the fierce urgency of now". We will not wait to see if real gender equality happens in the natural course of time, when all of the evidence tells us that it won't. Our world can only improve when women and girls are given their right as equal contributors and participants in every area of society.