

**Proposed message from Geena Davis**  
**ITU Girls in ICT Day event, 15 April, Geneva**

Hi, I'm Geena Davis, ITU's special envoy for women and girls in ICT.

I'm thrilled to be able to welcome you all to ITU's annual Girls in ICT Day celebration, and wish I could have had the chance of being with you in person to celebrate the success stories and inspiring initiatives you'll be hearing about over the next hour or so.

I guess most of you know that technology is having a huge impact on my business.

The entertainment community is not only delivering traditional movies and television programming, it's using technology to create totally new ways of viewing and new ways of building global communities.

Technology is creating large scale opportunities to empower women and girls.

But I believe one of the biggest impediments to progress remains the problem of role models. Last September, when Dr Touré and I launched the New Engineering University initiative at the Maker Faire in New York, I noted that the number of young women enrolling to study forensic science over the past two years had risen by over 75%.

I think we can pretty safely ascribe this dramatic increase to the popularity of the TV programs like CSI and Bones—which presented a very appealing female character who inspired young viewers. Sara Sidle was smart, sassy, and made a difference. Young girls naturally aspired to follow in her footsteps.

We need similar characters for the tech sector – characters like Sandra Bullock in Gravity proved very popular with girls principally because she had the tech skills to take control of her world when it was turned upside down.

Inspiring girls with these kinds of role models is fundamental – we need to kick out the geek image and re-fashion tech as a cool career choice.

For all of you, too, as parents and teachers, I'd like to say that giving girls the confidence to believe in themselves is one of the greatest gifts you can give. I encourage you all to take inspiration from today's panel discussion, and leave ITU today energized to inspire girls around you to consider a career in ICT. Enjoy today's celebration, and let's harness the amazing power of tech to empower girls everywhere!