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Geena Davis, the Duchess of York and other international female all-stars promote women at UN event

ARTICLE BY KATHERINE GRIWERT ON MARCH - 2 - 2010



When Geena Davis took on the role of the first female U.S. president in the ABC television series *Commander in Chief*, she was taking a step toward changing the way American women are portrayed in the media. Now, the [Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media](#) is advocating action to empower women internationally through its participation at the recent UN event, Engaging Philanthropy to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

According to the *New York Times*, the U.N. event garnered the support of countless foundations, corporate leaders, and international female icons – including Miss USA Kristen Dalton and Sweden's Princess Madeline.

The U.N. Economic and Social Council chose to focus on women's rights and gender equity on International Corporate Philanthropy Day to serve as a reminder that women need economic opportunity in order to be empowered. United Nations' Secretary General Ban Ki Moon urged the

private sector to promote women to all levels of corporate responsibility.

The myriad women in attendance brought up a number of other issues that women face globally and offered ways to solve these problems. Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson suggested that women need role models and offered a "Mother's Army" plan to encourage women to inspire girls.

Mary Quinn, manager of the [Avon Foundation for Women](#), talked about the problem of violence against women. She announced her foundation will give \$250,000 for programs to conquer gender-based violence in Mexico.

Geena Davis gave the keynote address about the continued issue of hyper-sexuality that plagues females in the media. "In a world that is over 50 percent female, the message that the media sends is that women and girls have far less value than men and boys," the *New York Times*/*New York Times* quotes her as saying.

The event had an impact on the women and men in attendance. World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists founder Tariq Cheema announced he will start an "Empowerment Through Enlightenment Initiative" to continue to develop solutions to the discussed issues. Ban Ki Moon hopes the initiative will raise awareness and offer skill-building opportunities for girls around the world.

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