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Transcript

As a woman I'm very, very sensitized to the absolute need to have women equally represented in all elements of society. Whether it's in business, politics, education, wherever it might be -- including in media organizations, from top to bottom, whether behind the scenes or in front of the camera. From all my experiences working in the field over more than twenty years now, I see more and more women in the field as journalists -- whether as reporters, producers camera people even sometimes engineers -- and what I see is that it is making a big change in the way stories are covered.

Women don't just report on women. They report on women and men but they report on the humanity and the humanitarian situation happening. They report on what is now almost exclusively the human factor when it comes to war, crises, disaster or even opportunities, hopes and challenges, like elections and other such things.

I've seen first-hand, as a journalist, what many pioneers in the economic field have seen and have been reporting on. That when you invest in a woman, it is 100 percent returned. It is a great and sure investment. Remember micro finance? Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank? He started off with the revolutionary principle, that if you lend a woman a little bit of money, just a little bit, a few cents to buy a goat to make milk; to buy a cell phone to be able to rent out her phone. Whatever it is, women make the money; lift up their families, their communities, their societies. It's a concentric circle that simply keeps getting bigger that way lift up the whole the world. And that is a fact when it comes from investing in women. So it stands to reason that women should be represented in one of the most important professions around the world and that's in the media. While many women in western news organizations have made enormous strides, both behind and in front of the cameras, I still think we need more women in the executive suites. That, we still need to achieve here in the west but in other parts of the world, it is still a very dangerous job for women, whether it's in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Africa the Far East, Latin America, wherever it might be, women are still having to face very difficult threats, very difficult situations of abuse, very difficult situations of intimidation and out and out being banned from taking part the field of journalism. It's still a difficult world. However in many of these places that women actually do take part, they see an enormous improvement in their societies and in the way the message gets across.

No matter where we come from, whether it's the privilege west or the developing world, women still have to climb the ladder, and it's not that easy. I was able to start of the very bottom level at CNN when I left university, and I climbed my way up to where I am now, which is an international correspondent and host of a nightly international affairs, global affairs program. But I went every step of the way and I think therein lies the hope and the optimism, that those of us and those of you women around the world who are determined, and no matter what profession you choose, who are determined to make it and

battle the odds and make sure that you never hear the word no, that I think is the hope and the optimism and the opportunity we can benefit from and that we can then put back into society.