



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

Graduate Women International “The Time is Now to End Child Labour Through Education and Peacebuilding”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Geneva, Switzerland, June 12, 2017 – Today, Graduate Women International (GWI) joins the international community in marking 2017 World Day against Child Labour and the alarming, merciless impact of conflicts and disasters on child labour. We join those governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world who determinedly strive to eliminate child labour. “Children in conflict zones lead unimaginably horrific lives and GWI joins the global commitment to break the cycle”, says GWI President, Geeta Desai.

“Many children caught in child labour situations are drafted as soldiers, others are forced into labour as sex workers, drug dealers and servants. Child labour in conflict zones is widespread and to a large extent invisible. Children in the aftermath of natural or manmade disasters suffer similarly. At the mercy of gangs, children are expected to participate in all manner of illegal activities as they are inculcated into a culture of abuse and violence” adds Desai.

Clearly child labour interferes with children’s education, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, maintain their health and lead peaceful lives. This is an implausibly disturbing injustice to children and an inequality with maximum possibility for change. GWI recognizes that both boys and girls are equally vulnerable and universally defenseless against child labour ([UNICEF 2016](#)). ***Yet, let’s make no mistake, girls suffer the shortcomings of child labour more than boys.*** Girls are at a colossal disadvantage and are at a considerably higher risk to be denied an education, be abducted by child traffickers, and live a life deprived of even the most basic human rights. Education is the agent of change for conflicts and manmade disasters and GWI accepts the challenge to eliminate child labour by 2025.

As graduate women, GWI raises our voices and unites our membership in the global commitment to rid the world of all forms of child labour. ***Today we especially declare our opposition to the reprehensible level of child labour in conflict and disaster zones and ensure our fight continues for girls to have access to education and the normalcy of childhood to the greatest extent possible.***

About Graduate Women International

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 80 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls’ and women’s global organisation advocating for women’s rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and International Labour Organization.

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