



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

This Human Rights Day Graduate Women International (GWI) calls for a celebration of the right to education and for this right to be upheld as an enabler of numerous other rights

Geneva, Switzerland, 10 December 2015 - On Human Rights Day, Graduate Women International (GWI) calls for the right to education of all girls and boys up to the end of secondary school at least, according to the principles enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). The human right to free education for all must be asserted and recognised. Education, as a standalone right and one which enables other human rights, combines GWI's advocacy priorities concerning the need for action in many areas that touch girls' and women's lives.

During this critical year, in which the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) were adopted, GWI believes that their commitment "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" must be developed with a gendered human rights perspective that facilitates access to quality lifelong education and training for all girls and women, including those most vulnerable due to conflict, disability or isolation. Investment in education must include addressing gender disparity in the number of women teachers and educational leaders, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and capacity development in gender-disaggregated data for monitoring purposes.

This Human Rights Day is also the 50th anniversary of the two International Covenants on Human Rights in which education is also a pillar: the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#). The two Covenants, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, form the International Bill of Human Rights, setting out the civil, political, cultural, economic, and social rights that are the birthright of all men and women.

GWI President Catherine Bell states: "The relevance of the two Covenants and the need to respect them has never been greater. We live in a time where the limiting of women's freedom is increasing once again. Violence against women in conflict, and restrictions on women's access to knowledge under the guise of protection are eroding hard-won gains in economic and social rights in the name of crises or security. It is critical that states protect and defend the rights of women against these violations for the advancement of all societies."

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 60 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 ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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For more information please contact: Amy Paunila,
T: +41 22 731 23 80; Email: ap@graduatewomen.org