



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

Graduate Women International call for an end to Female Genital Mutilation: A violation of the human rights of girls and women

Geneva, Switzerland, 6 February 2017 – Graduate Women International (GWI) joins the global community in observing International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and call for governments, policy makers and community members for the abandonment of this harmful practice. The United Nations [Resolution](#) adopted in July 2016 urges Member States to place special emphasis on education of youth, parents and religious, traditional and community leaders and especially encourages the involvement of men and boys to become agents of change.

GWI aligns with this Resolution and reaffirm that FGM is a human rights violation, torture and extreme form of violence against girls. FGM is a dangerous traditional practice of irreparable, irreversible abuse that negatively impacts women and girls lives and that stands as a barrier preventing girls from accessing education. Girls who undergo FGM are at risk of prolonged bleeding, infection, infertility, and death in addition to extreme physical and psychological pain. FGM is a manifestation of deeply entrenched gender inequality and, still today, some societies consider FGM a rite of passage as prerequisite to marriage. According to the [World Health Organisation](#), as many as 100 to 140 million girls and women worldwide currently live with the consequences of this harmful practice.

Recommendations by the [United Nations Population Fund](#) to eliminate FGM include collective abandonment in which an entire community chooses to participate in a collective public declaration to keep their girls free from FGM. This decision requires a process in which communities are educated about FGM, and then open a dialogue to reach a consensus on eradicating FGM locally. The need for girls to have access to quality education is featured prominently in dialogues with leadership, and local and grassroots organizations, such as GWI, can play an important role in raising awareness.

In taking part as global citizens in support of the effort to successfully implement Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 5 (gender equality), GWI calls for renewed efforts and the continued commitment by states, civil society organisation, community members and intergovernmental organisations to keep the issue of the elimination of FGM on the agenda of development policies.

GWI President, Geeta Desai, "The Sustainable Development Goals include a specific target that calls for an end to FGM which reflects a deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls. The practice of FGM affects women and girls at all levels of their daily activities including their access to and pursuit of education. GWI has called for the elimination of this practice and support the efforts of its global membership in influencing national legislation and empowering their communities to act collectively to end this practice."



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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 ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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