



Press Release

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**GWI celebrates teachers worldwide and urges global leaders
to accelerate the quality training of female teachers**

Geneva, Switzerland, 5 October 2017 – Today, on World Teachers’ Day, Graduate Women International (GWI) celebrates teachers, women teachers! To mark this important day, GWI wishes to draw worldwide attention, across developed and developing countries, that teachers are essential to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and female teachers are the key to empowering young girls to contribute to the Agenda. To this end, quality training, recruitment, retention and working conditions of all women teachers are the foundation of GWI’s advocacy work.

“GWI emphasizes that women teachers remain a key influence in the advancement of girls and women through education; it is essential that the international community and governments stand united to support female teachers and quality learning worldwide, says GWI President, Geeta Desai.

This year, World Teachers’ Day commemorates the 20th anniversary of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. GWI recognizes that higher education teachers are often overlooked in discussions concerning the status of teachers. Akin to primary and secondary level teachers, teaching in higher education institutions requires expert knowledge, specialized skills, and pedagogical competence of which women teachers can excel when given the opportunity.

World Teachers’ Day 2017 is celebrated today under the theme “Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers”. The theme echoes the 2015 theme that followed the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 when teacher empowerment was reaffirmed as a top priority in all education and development strategies and when world leaders dedicated target 4.c to recognizing teachers as key to the achievement of the 2030 Education Agenda. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, the world needs 69 million teachers if universal primary and secondary education by 2030 is to be achieved. GWI commends female teachers’ achievements and we strive for ways to counter the acute shortage of quality female teachers beginning with the GWI Teachers for Rural Futures program at Makerere University in Uganda.

Ensuring a constant supply of qualified and motivated teachers is a critical step to combat the staggering global illiteracy rates, especially in girls and women, who account for two thirds of the world’s some 700 million illiterate.

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

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