



GWI UPDATE – 21 March 2018



Drs. Sophie Turner Zaretsky and Maureen Byrne at the GWI Breakfast Briefing on 12 March

— Graduate Women International News —

GWI breakfast briefings during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Graduate Women International (GWI) held two breakfast briefings during the first week of the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62). At the first breakfast briefing, GWI United Nations Representatives Dr. Maureen Byrne, Dr. Sophie Turner Zaretsky and Ms. Mick Minard presented to some 25 GWI delegates and guests the vital work they do as GWI United Nations (UN) Representatives to advance the status of women and girls. The role of GWI UN Representatives is paramount to GWI advocacy work. GWI UN Representatives champion the GWI mission by participating in UN meetings and reporting back on various on-mission and emerging topics being discussed by international policy makers. Dr. Maureen Byrne and Dr. Sophie Turner Zaretsky presented their advocacy work towards the Sustainable Development Agenda, including representing GWI at the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). During the breakfast briefings Dr. Maureen Byrne also presented her work on the CSW Zero Draft Document and provided compelling information on the UNESCO report on education. Ms. Minard presented her work covering the High Level Political Forum. GWI commends all of its UN Representatives on their continuous commitment to making the voices of graduate women heard at the highest level of international governance and extends a warm welcome to our newly arrived UN Representative in New-York, Mariella Hannum.

GWI delivers oral statement at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council

On 9 March, GWI Executive Director, Stacy Dry Lara, delivered an [oral statement](#) on behalf of Graduate Women International (GWI) at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). The statement highlighted the urgency of fostering tolerance of minority groups and creating a more inclusive world. The statement also draws attention to GWI Resolution 5, adopted by its 32nd triennial General Assembly that defines GWI's commitment to fostering values of tolerance, inclusiveness and recognition of other's rights. While GWI has laid the groundwork on local levels, through girls' access to education, to create a more peaceful and inclusive world, GWI asked for the Council's influence over States to ensure that their legislation and penalties are relevant to girls' rights to education.



GWI Executive Director Stacy Dry Lara delivers as oral intervention on intolerance of minority groups at the

4th Latin American meeting of women graduates to be held in Mar Del Plata, Argentina

The 4th Latin American Meeting of Women Graduates will take in the city of Mar Del Plata, Argentina, from 9 to 11 May. Organised by the Mar del Plata Civil Association of Women Graduates (AMU Mar Del Plata), the local branch of the Argentina Federation of Women Graduates (FAMU), the event is centered around the theme "From Girl to Woman". This three-day conference will explore a variety of key issues, such as education, girls' rights, public and health policies and the role of states and non-states organisations under the prism of the South American context. The city of Mar Del Plata and this theme have been chosen to salute the commitment of AMU Mar Del Plata to the advancement of the rights of women and girls in their district. Locally, the observance of the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October) became recognised following the presentation of a recommendation from AMU Mar Del Plata. For further information about the event, please contact AMU Mar Del Plata [here](#).

— GWI Member News —

Bina Roy Partners in Development (BRPID): 2017 Summary Report

The BRPID programme supports locally-developed and locally-run projects initiated by GWI National Federations and Associations (NFAs) to empower women and girls through education and leadership development. The programme began in 1978 and was later renamed in honour of Dr. Bina Roy, educator and former President of GWI from India. Generously funded by the VGIF, the BRPID grants are awarded on a competitive basis to NFAs in developing countries and emerging economies. All projects support locally important issues in relation to girls' and women's education and economic empowerment. In the most recent (2017-2018) round of funding, BRPID awarded grants to seven projects from NFAs in the Americas (Mexico), Africa (Egypt, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and South Africa) and Asia (Turkey). Those projects focus on a variety of crucial issues, ranging from literacy and numeracy learning with vocational skills training (Egypt), livelihood skills training for rural women (Kenya), oral health sensitisation (Mexico), creative writing to counter gender stereotypes (South Africa) to increasing girls access and participation in education (Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Turkey). Further information about each project can be found on the 2017 GWI PRPID projects summary, available [here](#).

SLAUW contributes to the Women’s Situation Initiative for non-violence in elections

Members of the Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) are lending their expertise in the Women’s Situation Room Initiative (WSRI) for non-violence in elections. In Sierra Leone, International Women’s Day on 8 March is observed as a national holiday. This year, 8 March was also a day of elections for the citizens of Sierra Leone, who cast their votes for the presidential, parliamentary, mayoral and councilor elections. Through the WSRI, women are playing a key role in preventing conflict and ensuring peaceful elections. The WSRI is also vital to the fight against violence and discrimination against women and girls in the country. Created in 2011 in Liberia, the WSRI mechanism harnesses the expertise and experiences of women in acting to mitigate conflict and other threats that could emerge during or after local, parliamentary and presidential elections in Sierra Leone. The WSRI also focuses on eliminating obstacles to women’s participation to the electoral processes such as violence against women. Various women’s organisation are working together within the WSRI to conduct advocacy, peace marches, radio programmes and election observation to press for the orderly conduct of the democratic process in Sierra Leone. Across Sierra Leone, members of SLAUW actively contribute to the work of the WSRI in various capacities, such as district coordinators and observers. GWI commends the members of SLAUW for their participation in this powerful peace building platform and for their active contribution to the transparent and peaceful electoral process across Sierra Leone. Their commitment is vital to the advancement of the status of women and girls in all spheres of society.

Irish Federation of University Women’s Annual Conference

Last fall, the Irish Federation of University Women (IrFUW) held its annual conference hosted by Queens University Women Graduates. The 2017 conference was centered on the theme “Women’s Movement: Stories of Migration”. Its eight talks and two panel discussions focused on different aspects of the experience of female migrants, ranging from the dangers of gender stereotyping of migrants to the struggles of girl refugees in Syria. GWI applauds IrFUW for calling attention to such a wide variety of concerns for women and girl migrants and refugees, and recommends reading their [newsletter](#) for further details about the conference.

— Advocacy —

Fiji and the Republic of Korea are States under review at the 69th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) held its 69th session in Geneva from 19 February to 9 March 2018. The State parties assessed during this session included GWI NFAs Fiji and the Republic of Korea.

In the case of Fiji, GWI welcomes the recommendations to reduce school related costs for students and to work to create a safe, non-discriminatory educational environment for girls. Additionally, GWI acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation for the government to create a strategy to actively combat discriminatory gender stereotypes, particularly those concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men. GWI urges the Fijian government to apply these recommendations to help eliminate barriers to girls’ education as well as to advance the status of women and girls in all factions of their society.

The Republic of Korea has been encouraged by the Committee to implement temporary special measures to ensure the equal representation of women in high level public positions including public schools,

universities, and academic offices. GWI commends this suggestion for the positive effect it will have on the position of women within Korean society and the positive influence it will have on girls attending these institutions or aspiring to careers in academia. The Committee also recommended the Korean government to adopt an official definition of discrimination against women and a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. GWI supports this recommendation and hopes it will lead to an improvement in the safety and status of women and girls in the Republic of Korea.

GWI celebrates the 43rd annual International Women's Day

On 8 March, GWI, along with members, partners and friends around the world celebrated the 43rd annual International Women's Day. This day of observance presents the opportunity to celebrate the economic, political and social achievements of women around the world, as well as to highlight necessary measures for the advancement of women and girls everywhere. This year's theme, as established by the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, was #PressforProgress, which led GWI to emphasize the importance of eliminating gender stereotypes and disparities in the media in an annual press release. In addition to the press release, GWI marked International Women's Day with a social media campaign promoting related articles, advocacy ideas, and achievements. GWI encourages you to review [this campaign](#)—and to continue the spirit of International Women's Day by appreciating the women in your life and striving to #PressforProgress every day.

GWI observes World Water Day on 22 March

On 22 March, GWI invites you to join in observing the 15th annual World Water Day. This day of observance provides the opportunity to underscore the importance of proper water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems to girls' education. Lack of safe, adequate and private WASH facilities impedes girls' ability to manage their menstrual hygiene which, especially in cultures with stigmas that induce Menstrual Hygiene Insecurity (MHI), can lead to girls missing multiple days of school each month. Long journeys to obtain water and/or time spent caring for family members that fall ill from the effects of unsafe water is also a concerning barrier to girls' education. For more information and advocacy ideas relating to the importance of sanitation to eliminating barriers to girls' education, follow along with GWI's World Water Day [social media campaign](#).

— Call for Applications —

The Anita Borg Institute "Pass-it-On" Awards Programme

[The Anita Borg Systems](#) Pass-It-On (PIO) Awards honour Anita Borg's desire to create a network of women technologists helping one another. The cash awards, funded by donations from the Systems Online Community and others, are intended as means for women established in technological fields to support the projects of other women seeking a place in their field, and range from 500-1000 USD. PIO Award applications are open to any woman over 18 years who is in or aspiring to be in the fields of computing from any country. The deadline for applications is **28 March 2018**. More information on the programme and application is available [here](#).

Applications for Women PeaceMakers now accepted at the Institute for Peace and Justice

[The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice \(IPJ\)](#), at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies, is currently accepting applications for its Women PeaceMakers Program. Eight PeaceMakers are selected each year for a 10-month fellowship that includes residencies as well as a virtual learning exchange. PeaceMakers will design shared commitments for improved collaboration on key issues

through the building of a community of peacemakers from conflict-affected communities as well as international peace partners. The deadline for applications is **2 April 2018**. More information on the program and application can be found [here](#), or by contacting Jennifer Bradshaw, IPJ Senior Program Officer for Women PeaceMakers Program, at jenniferbradshaw@sandiego.edu.

Call to nominate a candidate for the 2018 Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life-WWSF

[The Women's World Summit Foundation \(WWSF\)](#) is currently accepting nominations for its 24th annual prize for women's creativity in rural life. This award seeks to honour creative and courageous women and women's groups around the world working to improve the quality of life in rural communities. The prize (USD 1000 per laureate) aims to draw international attention to laureates' contributions to sustainable development, food security and peace. The deadline for nominations is **30 April 2018**. More information on the eligibility criteria and guidelines is available [here](#).

UNESCO/ISEDV Co-Sponsored Fellowships Programme

This co-sponsored fellowships programme aims to increase capacity-building and human resources development of sustainable and renewable energy sources in developing and transitioning countries. The programme offers twenty fellowships, each four weeks long, held in October in Moscow, Russia. All instruction will be in English. Applicants must be no more than 35 years of age, proficient in English, and have received a Bachelor's Degree in Economics. Deadline for applications: **3 April 2018**. A full list of invited member states, requirements and benefits is available [here](#).

— GWI at the United Nations —

Sustainable Development Goal 6 Highlight

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. However, this goal is especially meaningful for women and girls, as the responsibility of obtaining water falls on them in 80% of water-deprived households. This leads to women and girls losing hours (an estimated 16 million each day) of their time to travelling, multiple times per day, to a water source and collecting and decontaminating enough water for their families to drink, cook and bathe with. Without improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, it will be much more difficult to achieve SDG 4 (quality education for all) and SDG 5 (gender equality) as well. Young and adolescent girls spend hours a day collecting water, or watching their siblings and managing the household while their mothers complete this task. This amounts to many hours these girls could be spending in school—and that their male peers and relatives often are—lost to the difficult process of obtaining water. Making safe, adequate sources of water more accessible and private, sanitary hygiene facilities more prevalent in schools will help girls attend school more regularly and for longer, and contribute to the advancement of their status in the long run.

GWI participates in HRC side event ensuring the rights of Older Refugees in the UNHCR Global Compact for Refugees

On 12 March, GWI co-sponsored and participated in an HRC37 side event at the UNHRC Global Compact for Refugees entitled Ensuring the Rights of Older Refugees. This event addressed the concerns of the NGO Committee on Ageing, and their recommendations relating to older refugees, proposed to be included in the UNHCR Global Compact for Refugees. The panelists highlighted the need for gender and age sensitive criteria in refugee policy reforms noting that women and girls, especially the very young and the very old, are particularly vulnerable within refugee camps; that their needs, as well as their opinions,

must be included in new policies concerning them. Older refugees need to be recognized as vulnerable, but also as valuable. Stereotypes often lead to their social value being discounted, which is detrimental to both the community and the refugees themselves. To preserve their dignity and self-reliance, older refugees must be allowed and encouraged to make meaningful contributions. GWI recognizes the role education can play in this—encouraging older refugees to take courses will help them feel a sense of purpose, integrate them into their new communities, and teach them new skills that can lead them to create further social contributions. GWI emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, and the potential this holds to improve the lives of older refugees.

— Give the gift of membership —

Do you know a graduate woman who would like to join the leading women’s international organisation that works to empower girls and women through access to lifelong, quality education and training? [Give the gift of membership](#) to join a global community of some 16’000 members in 55 countries, either as a GWI independent member or national member of one of our National Federations and Associations (NFAs).

— Did you know? —

Did you know? GWI participated in the annual Commission on the Status of Women this past week in New York, New York. Here, various delegates and organizations joined together to address the “challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”. In her introduction of CSW62 GWI President, Geeta



Desai provided the contextual framework for the conference, which aims to address the 12 barriers to rural women’s empowerment. Solutions to overcome these obstacles, including public-private partnerships that target rural development and investments in public health facilities that benefit rural women are addressed in her online publication. As a member of GWI, you can gain access to [the report](#) and other valuable CSW62 reports including summaries of ministerial roundtables and advocacy UN reports.

— Other Information and Events —

23 Feb-26 Mar
12-23 Mar

37th Session of the Human Rights Council, United Nations, Geneva
Commission on the Status of Women, 62nd Session, United Nations
Headquarters, NY, USA

14-15 Mar	ZurichEduCaExpo 2018: 2 nd International Education and Career Exhibition, Zurich, Switzerland
22 Mar	World Water Day, Global
17-19 Apr	Federation of University Women Africa (FUWA) Regional Meeting, Bibliotheca Alexandria's Conference Center, Alexandria, Egypt
23 Apr	World Book and Copyright Day, Global
27 Apr	International Girls in ICT Day, Global
14 May-1 Jun	Committee on the Rights of the Child, 78 th Session, United Nations, Geneva
12 Jun	World Day Against Child Labor, Global
18 Jun-6 Jul	Human Rights Council, 38 th Session, United Nations, Geneva
21-23 Jun	University Women of Europe (UWE) Annual Meeting, Rome, Italy
2-20 Jul	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 70 th session, United Nations, Geneva
31 Jul-2 Aug	4 th Gender and STEM Network Conference, Oregon, USA

Follow us on social media!



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. GWI, formerly IFUW, is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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