



Graduate Women  
International (GWI)

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **On International Girls in ICT Day, Graduate Women International (GWI) celebrates women's and girls' potential as creators of technological and digital solutions for a better future**

Geneva, Switzerland, 26 April 2018 — On International Girls in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Day, GWI drives global attention to the need for women's and girls' full and equal access to ICT education and careers. The 2018 theme "Expand Horizons, Change Attitude" is a reminder that gender inequalities continue to severely hinder women's and girls' ability to advance as academics and professionals in the ICT domain in order to create innovative ICT-based solutions for a more just and sustainable future.

In our globalized world, current and emerging technologies increasingly permeate our everyday lives while fundamentally altering the job market. The ICT sector, as one of the fastest growing industries worldwide, is marked today by a pressing need for a wide range of new ICT talents. The European Commission, for instance, has predicted a skills gap of over 500,000 ICT jobs in Europe by 2020. Despite the soaring employment opportunities offered by the ICT sector stereotypes, discrimination, poor subject choice and career guidance continue to deprive women and girls of the chance to enter let alone excel in this field.

GWI is gravely concerned by recent International Telecommunications Union statistics on the gender gap in ICT that present the harsh reality that, globally, men make up some three quarters of staff in tech firms, while only about 20% of jobs in leading ICT firms are held by women. Without a globally concerted effort to increase women and girls access to ICT studies and careers, they are still at risk of losing out on tomorrow's best ICT job opportunities.

"In an increasingly digital world, the time is now to effectively engage women and girls in ICT careers that then empower them to enjoy a future that reflects their wants, needs and rights", says Louise McLeod, GWI VP Marketing. "As an organisation committed to improving the education space for women and girls, GWI joins global efforts to improve education, leadership and learning strategies to equip young women and girls with the skills required by the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour markets", she adds.

GWI underscores that closing the gender gap in ICT professions is crucial to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Development Goal 5, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Not only are jobs in the ICT sectors able to offer women an opportunity to achieve their full potential, these jobs also provide fulfilling careers that improve their financial situation. A broad range of organisations have further concluded that an effective gender-balanced workforce positively impacts their financial performances.

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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*Contributing to the press release is GWI intern, Clémence Mathiaud, Sciences Po, Lyon*