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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Graduate Women International (GWI), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 May 2017]

Graduate Women International (GWI) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the 35th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). Founded nearly 100 years ago, GWI unites thousands of women graduates around the world who are committed to improving the safe access of all girls to quality, secondary education. We endorse the relevance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights report released last month on the *Realisation of the Equal Enjoyment of the Right to Education by Every Girl* which notes that without effective and comprehensive accountability at all government levels the right to education becomes a hollow promise. To avoid shortfalls, barriers to girls' education, including corruption, must be addressed.

Corruption blurs Member States' gender obligation to education – this is indisputable in every society. GWI appeals that you fully embrace that educating girls matters and that corruption has a corrosive impact on girls' education. We emphasise that the 2030 Agenda specifies that to “accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows are essential.”

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

We align with the Special Rapporteur on the right to education who calls for States to undertake full-scale investigations of fraudulent practices.

To this end, with united voices, we ask the question...what are Member States and the Council waiting for? The time is now to improve access to quality education with the full inclusion of women and girls. The time is now to accept that achieving the SDGs requires unprecedented political commitment.

GWI strives to make meaningful contributions to the HRC and to assisting States in achieving the SDGs by calling on you to:

- Actively engage and support NGOs within the educational sector as partners and subject experts;
- Broaden accountability by developing additional, complementary SDG indicators, especially for SDG4;
- Establish a mechanism that requires all schools to register with national and local authorities;
- Implement clear complaint mechanisms for students, parents and teachers;
- Institute sanctions for bribery and;
- Establish legal frameworks to recruit and advance careers based on merit.

Mr. President, Excellencies, GWI has engaged with you in the past and we will continue doing so because our mission is to urge the Council to recognise the importance of girls' fair access to quality secondary education. This statement addresses corruption and its tributaries of consequences that can no longer be swept aside to handle later. The SDGs are not self-sustaining in the long run without an educated, non-corrupt populous.

We are here to assist in these efforts. Thank you.
