



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**On the 37th Annual International Day of Peace, GWI announces “Peace through Education”
Centenary Conference to be held 25-28 July 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland**

GWI draws attention to the right to peace, focusing on the role of quality education as an enabler in fostering a culture of peace

Geneva, Switzerland, 21 September 2018 – This year, to mark International Day of Peace (IDP) and in line with the theme of Graduate Women International’s (GWI) upcoming [33rd Triennial and Centenary Conference](#), “Peace through Education” to be held 25-28 July 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, GWI emphasises the role of education as a fundamental enabler to achieving peace and stability.

In 2019, GWI will turn one hundred years old and will mark this important milestone with a conference offering interactive workshops and seminars that will focus on a range of peacebuilding sub-themes including how education prevents conflicts and transforms societies; how curricula can deconstruct patriarchal and other societal paradigms bringing into fruition a culture of peace and non-violence; what it means to live in a connected, conflict-ridden world; ways in which young professionals can be empowered to make connections between education, gender equality issues, culture change and environmental issues; and how graduate women can meaningfully influence the global society by working at the intersection of education, peace, advocacy and action in local, national and global policies.

While the organisation has changed over the years, what has not changed is the founders’ vision. As GWI President, Geeta Desai says “At the end of the first World War, our founding mothers Virginia Gildersleeve, Caroline Spurgeon and Rose Sidgwick understood that graduate women, bound by friendship and mutual respect and working across country borders could provide leadership in advancing the full complement of human rights for all people including the right to live in peace. On the eve of our Centenary, the voices of our founding mothers ring in our ears, urging us to remember this vision. Therefore, with more than half the world ablaze in war and internecine conflict, over 200,000 refugees and displaced persons and the disproportionately higher price that conflicts and war extract from women and girls, it is only fitting that GWI facilitate a discussion about the role that education can play in establishing peace”.

This year, IDP’s theme focuses on “The Right to Peace – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70”. With a focus on SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, GWI calls for the recognition of peace as a basic human right, urging all to foster a culture of peace through the promotion of the equally fundamental human right of access to sustained, quality education. As evident in GWI’s “Peace through Education” conference theme, GWI respects IDP and intends to fully participate in achieving SDG 16 and fulfilling its mission of the advancement of women and girls, by championing a culture of peace through education.



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Unable to attain their full potential due to conflict and economic disruption, locked into cultural practices and traditions which take away their ability to choose their own paths, many women and girls struggle for the right to education to liberate themselves and their families from poverty and repression. Others face issues of gender inequality, environmental and economic disparity and access to justice. It is further recognised that a violent and unstable environment destroys the quality of education – a vicious cycle. Through the 2019 Conference's sub-themes, GWI will address these matters, enabling the Graduate women delegates to leave the Conference informed, enthused and committed to advocating for the empowerment of women and girls and advancing the fulfilment of the SDGs, through an approach which focuses on the role of quality education as a tool for cultivating peace.

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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Contributing to the press release is GWI intern, Olivia Flett, University of Manchester

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