



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director
sdl@graduatewomen.org
Tel: +41 22 731 23 80

On World Children's Day, GWI raises concerns about childhood statelessness as a barrier to the realization of lifelong rights and education

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 November 2018— World Children's Day, celebrated annually on 20 November since 1954 is a global entry-point to advocate and promote children's rights into multilogues, commitments and actions to build better futures for children. On World Children's Day 2018, GWI, alongside its 55 National Federations and Associations and independent members worldwide, raises concerns about the alarming and fast-growing number of stateless children whose condition contradicts children's rights and the intensions safeguarded under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1989. Sharing a common curse, often from cradle to grave, the absence of a legal identity (statelessness) severs children's access to education, health care, legal inheritance and economic development during a lifetime, and even dignity of an official burial when they die. GWI voices serious concerns that stateless children are ill-fated and often pass this status to their children, perpetuating the cycle.

Ending statelessness can appear insurmountable. However, in October 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees called for the "total commitment of the international community to end statelessness with the [Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024](#)". GWI endorses the plan whose guiding framework is made up of 10 Actions that can end statelessness within the 10-year time frame. GWI joins global leaders in raising awareness towards effective implementation of the Global Action Plan and the active [#IBelong Campaign](#).

"The arbitrary deprivation of nationality because of varying factors are addressed by too few international and national child protection systems. State's must include stateless children rights as part of their action plans to ensure their social protection, development and their right to an education", says Geeta Desai, GWI President. "Addressing statelessness as national policy is a vital step towards ensuring that millions of children have the opportunity to escape marginalization and claim their rights to build better and safer futures", she adds.

Because statelessness is often invisible, not weighed, and ignored by States, GWI is raising awareness on World Children's Day about the vital importance of birth registration to reduce statelessness, as a measure to ensures that every child has a legal bond establishing a State's responsibility to educate that child. GWI further calls on governments to strengthen their child protection systems to extend equal access to social protection systems to stateless children.

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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