



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director

sdl@graduatewomen.org

Tel: +41 22 731 23 80

Graduate Women International continues to act towards the elimination of FGM as barrier to education

Geneva, Switzerland, 6 February 2019 – Graduate Women International (GWI) once again joins the global community in observing International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and engages with governments, policy makers and community members for the elimination of this harmful practice. GWI, an organisation promoting the empowerment of women and girls of all ages through education, today voices serious concern about the barrier this practice puts between girls and their education.

FGM has no known health benefits. On the contrary, it is known to be harmful in many ways. FGM is painful, traumatic and has immediate and long-term health consequences. Despite the ancestral sociocultural roots supporting FGM, the practice is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights. Girls who undergo FGM are at risk of prolonged bleeding, infection, infertility, and death in addition to extreme physical and psychological pain. In addition, this practice undermines the dignity and worth of the girl/women. Yet, still, the World Health Organisation estimates that a nearly three million girls fall victim to FGM annually across the world.

As a materialization of our organisation's commitment to end this harmful practice, GWI unanimously passed [Resolution 6](#) on FGM during the 32nd Triennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa in 2016. Through this resolution, GWI affirms that FGM is "an act of extreme violation of the female body. It is an expression of supreme power of man over women's bodies".

"The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly call for an end to FGM through Target 5.3, which aims to eliminate all harmful practices, including FGM", says Geeta Desai, GWI President. "GWI's advocacy persists towards ending FGM, noting that FGM is a human rights violation and a direct desecration of the Convention on the Rights of the Child", she adds.

GWI takes part in the global fight towards FGM elimination through our advocacy and awareness-raising work at the international and national levels through our special consultative status with the United Nations, as well as at the grassroots level through the work of our National Federations and Associations. GWI particularly promotes the elimination of FGM through tough legislative support and the implementation of community-led solutions where local actors and leaders are fully engaged.

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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