



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On World Day against Child Labour, Graduate Women International calls for the universal adoption of ILO Child Labour Conventions

Geneva, Switzerland, 12 June 2019 - Today, Graduate Women International (GWI) joins the International Labour Organization (ILO) on World Day against Child Labour Day in calling for the universal ratification of the ILO's [Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention](#) adopted in 1999 and the ILO's [Minimum Age Convention](#) adopted in 1973 which established the minimum age for work as 12-14 years old *on the condition that the work does not impose a barrier to the child's pursuit of education*. Recent ILO statistics estimate that nearly 100 million girls are forced into child labour around the world. Over half of those girls, 53 million, are involved in hazardous work; one of the worst forms of child labour. *Of these girls, 20 million are less than 12 years old.*

"GWI joins the ILO is saying that, "Children shouldn't work in fields, but on dreams". Societies cannot simply turn a blind eye to approximately 100 million of those dreams being tossed aside for corporate short sighted, selfish, gains. Child labour is a cruel atrocity robbing children of their childhoods and the world of its future. Ratification of the ILO Conventions is imperative for the future of the world and its children", says GWI President Geeta Desai.

On this Day, GWI also looks towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7 that calls for an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025. In support of the SDGs, GWI calls for immediate action to address the many challenges of achieving SDG 8. A newly released [ILO report](#) points the way with policy approaches and responses.

Child labour is injurious to the pursuit of education. When child labour removes girls from schools, those girls become vulnerable to gender-based violence, sexual violence, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, high poverty rates, trafficking, and all other forms of exploitation. Traditional gender roles often tear girls from their schoolwork by burdening them with an abundance of domestic labour. According to a report by UNICEF, girls between the ages of 5 and 14 spend approximately 160 million more hours than boys a day performing unpaid domestic labour. This time disparity leads to "time poverty" that severely limits the amount of time that can be used on educational pursuits and dreams.

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 this press release is GWI intern Grace Weichler from Kent State University, USA.