



Graduate Women  
International (GWI)

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **On United Nations Day, GWI celebrates Graduate Women International's enduring contribution to the United Nation's vision and ideals for a better future**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 24 October 2019** – On the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations (UN), Graduate Women International (GWI) celebrates the prevailing ideals of the UN Charter, ratified on 24 October 1945. Whilst reflecting on our foremother's crucial contribution to the building of international cooperation, peace and equality, GWI looks excitedly towards the future and the celebration, in 2020, of the UN's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To mark this historical date, the UN will launch the [UN75: 2020 and Beyond – Shaping our Future Together](#) campaign, the biggest-ever global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building a more equal and sustainable future for all. Today, GWI and its members call on the United Nations to urgently put women and girls' education, empowerment and rights at the forefront of this global conversation that will shape our shared vision for the future.

"From the creation of our organization in 1919, GWI's missions, ideals and work have been intrinsically linked to the UN and its values", says Terry Oudraad, GWI President. "As GWI begins its second century of existence, we have not waived these objectives and will continue with more determination than ever to strive for gender equality and lifelong education for all women and girls in close cooperation with the UN", she adds.

GWI, formerly known as the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), was created as a global organization uniting university women to foster international peace, friendship and cooperation in the aftermath of the First World War. An early and active collaborator of the League of Nations, GWI is proud to have played a crucial role in the creation of the UN. Virginia Gildersleeve, one of GWI's foremothers, was one of five female delegates present at the 1945 San Francisco Conference, where she fiercely defended the recognition and inclusion of women's rights in the UN Charter. In 1947, GWI, then IFUW was one of the first ten organisations worldwide granted special consultative status with both Economic and Social Council and UNESCO. Since, GWI has operated under this capacity to promote the potential and vitality of women and girls, influence policy regarding girls' and women's access to education and contribute to the achievement of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Ahead of the [UN75: 2020 and Beyond – Shaping our Future Together](#) global discussion in 2020, GWI warns that unless greater attention is given to the needs and rights of the 3.7 billion women and girls on earth, the global community is at risk of falling short of its commitments to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) targets by 2030 and will fail to honor the UN Charter's core commitment to protect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all individuals, men and women. Today, our message to the UN and to its member states is simple: the time is now to truly invest in all women and girls' lives through education, economic and social empowerment, as an indispensable mean to create a better and more equal future for all.

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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