

GWI United Nation Representative Advocacy Report Vienna 2018

GWI advocacy goals

1. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
2. By 2030 100% of United Nations low income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
3. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
4. Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
5. All 17 SDGs will include girls' education targets.

Please bear in mind these five overarching, long-term goals during any United Nations intervention that you make on behalf of GWI. Any intervention should push these five goals further.

NB1: *Although these goals represent GWI's mission, UN Reps are also invited to promote GWI key messages on areas where especially relevant e.g. women in STEM, securing investment in women teachers, addressing barriers to girls' education such as child marriage.*

NB2: *Please try to fill out this report comprehensively and bear in mind that any Advocacy Report that is not submitted on the official GWI Advocacy Report Template will be sent back.*

Meeting attended: (place, date, time, name of meeting)

Vienna + 25: Building Trust – Making Human Rights a Reality for All

Vienna City Hall, Austria, 22 and 23 May 2018

Subject of meeting: 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of the historic World Conference on Human Rights which took place in Vienna in 1993 and was attended by more than 10,000 representatives of governments, the United Nations and the international civil society. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) adopted at that Conference is a landmark document for the promotion and protection of human rights, creating inter alia the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and his office (OHCHR).

This 25th anniversary conference was organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the City of Vienna, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Karin Kneissl gave the keynote speeches.

The High Level Opening on “Emerging human rights challenges – perspectives from the ground” was chaired by the Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Michael O’Flaherty, and included UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking Nadia Murad (who has since won the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize!), as well as Nigerian human rights lawyer Hauwa Ibrahim, Argentinian lawyer and women’s rights activist Susana Chiarotti, and Austrian data protection activist Max Schrems. In their comments, they discussed current human rights challenges such as armed conflict and internal displacement, violent extremism, women’s rights and gender equality, data protection and privacy. They noted that in spite of progress in some areas of human rights, there had been retrogression in other areas in recent years and challenges persisted. There were calls upon the international community to stand by their achievements and defend human rights in the face of mistrust, indifference, persisting conflict and increasing isolationism.



The panel including (from left) Nadia Murad, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Karin Kneissl, Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Michael O’Flaherty, Hauwa Ibrahim, Max Schrems and Susana Chiarotti

Representatives from all world regions discussed global trends such as digitalisation, demographic changes, urbanisation and climate change and their impact on human rights. Two parallel working groups were focussed on the following topics:

1. Human Rights and Security
2. Promotion of Equality in our Societies.

The conference gathered independent human rights experts from civil society, academia and the private sector, youth, human rights defenders, representatives of the UN, regional/sub-regional/national/local human rights institutions, interested NGOs, as well as government representatives. Elisabeth Francis represented GWI.



Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Refers to SDG no #: (please reference) All

Relevant treaties/conventions/resolutions: The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) and subsequent.

What GWI [resolution\(s\)](#) does your attendance relate to? (i.e. Tolerance of Minority Groups (5), FGM (6), Human Trafficking (7), Child Marriage (8), etc.) . Human rights – the rights of women – underly all GWI resolutions.

Intervention by GWI rep: (what you did) Had various conversations with members of the panels, working groups, as well as a short interaction with the keynote speaker. Networked with other conference participants.



The Conference in the Vienna City Hall

Personal observations : This was a very interesting, relevant and productive conference. It was notable that in the discussions about Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Rights, it was generally concluded that there had not been progress but rather regression since the millennium!

The implementation gap in relation to gender equality was highlighted: ‘Where it exists in law, the formal right to equality and a gender equality-based policy approach are frequently not implemented in practice and often present greater challenges and resource requirements than overcoming the initial hurdles to create the legal or policy foundation in the first place. For individuals, especially for women, substantive equality is often not a reality, as a result of traditional approaches where women are unaware of or indifferent to their right to equality, or have no space to claim and realise it.’ The Conference recommended:

- the universality of women’s rights should be emphasized as an integral and indispensable part of all human rights.
- policies and programmes should be focused on effective promotion of women’s and girls’ right to equality, including through affirmative action.’

How this serves GWI members:

Human rights are fundamental to GWI’s advocacy objectives and the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda are strongly grounded in international human rights standards.

The conference concluded that while the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are ‘the single most important development policy document of recent years and dominate as the defining benchmarks all development planning, policy dialogue, programming and financing bilaterally and multilaterally, at national, regional and international levels’, they are a policy framework and thus “soft law”, whereas the international human rights treaties are legally binding standards. It was stressed that “human rights offer to the SDGs a framework of

binding legal obligations that does not exist as such in the 2030 Agenda. Human rights standards on non-discrimination and substantive equality provide a detailed framework to guide implementation of the SDG commitments to “reduce inequality within and between countries” and to “leave no one behind”.

Next steps:(what needs to be done, who can we contact? Who did you network with?)

GWI members may like to review the Conference outcome document and the many recommendations that it contains.

https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Menschenrechte/Vienna_25_Outcome_Document.pdf

Did you take any photographs? If yes, please include captions - Included



Elisabeth Francis, 2nd from right, together with colleagues from other Organizations in front of one of the ‘Live Drawings’ prepared during the conference, illustrating the issues under discussion.

May GWI use this information on its social media?

Please send to the GWI office : sdl@graduatewomen.org and include photos where possible

Submitted by Elisabeth Francis