

GWI United Nation Representative

Advocacy Report

2021

GWI advocacy goals

- 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.
- By 2030 100% of United Nations low income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
- 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.
- Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
- 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.

NB: *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.*

Submitted by GWI Fall 2021 intern, Alex Taylor, Colgate University

Geneva Peace Talks 2021 - Palais des Nations, Geneva, 21 September 2021, 4:00pm-5:30pm CEST

The Geneva Peace Talks 2021 hosted speakers from all across the globe, bringing them together to discuss peace and what it means in today's world. Held on the International Day of Peace, 21 September, the theme for this year's event was "Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World." As the world begins to recover from COVID-19, it seems to be as good of a time as any for everyone to come together and work towards a better future.

The event hosted twelve speakers, all of whom were from different parts of the globe, reflecting on different concerns or findings, and communicating their messages on peace through a variety of methods. The first of these speakers was Zarifa Ghafari, an Afghan activist who, in 2019, became the youngest female mayor to ever be appointed in Afghanistan. After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan this past summer, she fled her home with her family and currently lives in Germany. As such an influential woman in Afghanistan's political history, Ghafari used her platform at the Peace Talks to discuss the current situation of her fellow Afghan women. She discussed the way in which those in power are using "tradition" as a way of suppressing the female community alongside any change or development that could potentially form. Lastly, Ghafari stated that the Taliban and political leaders in Afghanistan needed to make peace with the women of Afghanistan in order to create a better future for the country.

The next two speakers, Hiba Qasas and Yves Daccord, a development and humanitarian leader respectively, focused on a more global perspective of peace. The pair stated that two things must be done in order to make peace possible in the future. First, one must believe peace is possible, and second, people must take accountability for peace. The two main takeaways from their speech were that there can be no peace without accountability and that peace is more than political peace, more than simply the absence of violence. Baaba Maal, Teo Ormond-Skeaping and Lena Dobrowolska, the following three speakers, proved the latter point by showing how culture and art can foster peace in today's world. Maal used music to show how musicians can touch people where politicians can't as well as promote social cohesion. The final speaker, Diwele Molale Lubi, seemed to prove this point when he was able to get those in attendance to join in his chanting while he created music that filled the room. In between drum beats, he expressed how important it was for people to connect with one another and showed how music is one way to do this. Following Maal, Ormond-Skeaping and Dobrowolska showed how sometimes it is not policy that changes the world, but art.

Before Diwele concluded the event with his music, three high schoolers were able to raise their voices and join the global discussion of peace that was taking place. Kareem Gomersall, Ksenia Vlasova-Kuznetsova and Héloïse Hughes are co-founders of the international school of Geneva's student-led club. Each of the students spoke about an issue of importance to them. Having such young activists engage in an international discussion like that of the Peace Talks shows that the future of peace in international relations is bright, with many ready to stand up and add to the conversation.