



Graduate Women International oral statement submission for the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Crafted from the GWI original written statement titled:

***Education is the cornerstone on which a more equitable and prosperous future can be built for women and girls, and it is through financing of education that we can address poverty, narrow the gender gap, and strengthen institutions.***

*Prepared by Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director, Graduate Women International; to be delivered if selected by UN Women by Maryella Hannum, GWI UN Representative, New York*

Graduate Women International (GWI) and its global network of graduate women strongly assert, as we have done for the past 105 years, that education is the cornerstone of gender equality and socioeconomic empowerment. We embody the approach that education is a powerful tool in narrowing the gender gap, combating poverty, and strengthening institutions. Today, as part of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, we call upon states to renew their commitment to existing United Nations mechanisms and resolutions, emphasizing integrating education into poverty reduction strategies, institutional strengthening, and gender-responsive financing.

Research consistently highlights the impact of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and reducing gender disparities. By equipping women and girls with skills and knowledge, education enhances their economic opportunities and fosters their financial independence. GWI urges states to align their efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 for quality education that in itself will alleviate poverty, and to recall their commitment to the Third Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

Moreover, GWI emphasizes the critical need to strengthen institutions to translate educational opportunities into tangible progress effectively. We stand ready to support states in comprehensively addressing the root causes of poverty, advocating for inclusive policies and practices that leave no one behind.

In addition to education, GWI underscores the importance of gender-responsive financing to dismantle systemic biases and promote equality. By prioritizing resources tailored to address gender disparities in education, we can empower individuals and communities, especially those in rural and marginalized areas.

As part of the CSW68 agreed conclusions and actions long after the session has ended, GWI urges states to prioritize partnerships, recommit to United Nations mechanisms, develop gender-sensitive policies, and promote evidence-based policymaking. By working collaboratively with civil society organizations such as Graduate Women International, we can, together, build a future where all women and girls, have the opportunity to thrive, paving the way for a more equitable and sustainable societies and nations. [388 words, approximately three minutes]

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