



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GWI urges investment in women's sports as means to break education and societal barriers

Geneva, Switzerland, 6 April 2024 - In celebration of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, marked annually on 6 April, Graduate Women International (GWI) emphasizes the positive influence of sport on the educational and professional achievement of women and girls. Today, GWI underscores the positive role of sports in keeping girls engaged in education, strengthening their resolve to overcome challenges while concurrently building skills that are transferrable to careers, social landscapes, and personal relationships, contributing to overall development and future success. Amidst the Day's celebration, GWI underscores the pivotal role of funding for sports initiatives from governments, private and public community sectors as a means to provide equal opportunity for advancement for all women and girls through sports in alignment with the 2024 theme, "Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies."

Moreover, GWI recognizes the importance of equal access to physical education within the realm of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDG 4, on inclusive and equitable quality education, and SDG 16, which aligns with sports' power to drive peace, justice, and strong institutions. It is also pivotal to emphasize sports' connection with SDG 3, building on sports' ability to improve girls' mental health and further improve confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy.

"On the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, GWI emphasizes the positive impact of sports on girls' and women's educational and professional achievement. By promoting fair competition, cooperation, inclusivity, and teamwork, sports contribute to building peaceful and inclusive societies. Cooperation is needed to break down sports and education barriers for all women and girls, both on the field and off," says Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director.

GWI urges States and communities to acknowledge sports' power to connect societies and drive education and peace initiatives. As urged within the [GWI statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) in September 2023, States must work towards incorporating physical education into school curricula to recognize physical education and sport as a fundamental right for all. Additionally, national and local governments must adopt policies to omit barriers and biases that prevent women and girls from obtaining the same sports access as their male counterparts by increasing funding and highlighting powerful female role models.

As we celebrate this day, GWI emphasizes the critical need for adequate funding and policy support from governments and private and public sectors to ensure equal opportunities for all women and girls in sports.

About GWI: GWI is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with a 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 Brooke Leggat.