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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Graduate Women International (GWI), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[12 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Mandating Member States' Action on Education: GWI's Call for Quality Education, Peace, and AI Literacy at the 57th Human Rights Council Session

Graduate Women International (GWI) is honored to have the opportunity to address the 57th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC57) panel on the critical issue of Quality Education for Peace and Tolerance for Every Child in Promoting Peace and Tolerance among children worldwide. With a century-long dedication to advancing women's and girls' education and in Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council since 1947, GWI emphasizes the urgent and ongoing need for quality education in developing sustainable societies of peace and tolerance. This aligns with GWI's broader objective of advocating for the provision of safe access to quality education for every woman and girl beyond primary school.

Quality education is defined by access, equity, relevance, and effective learner outcomes. It encompasses not only the availability of educational resources but also the inclusiveness of curricula, the training of educators, and the overall learning environment. GWI reminds that the significance of quality education is underscored in United Nations (UN) mechanisms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights [2] and that UN stakeholders expect member states continued commitment to these mechanisms. Furthermore, as the field of artificial intelligence (AI) evolves, integrating AI literacy into educational curricula is essential and must be taken up by member states as per GWI recommendations at the end of this statement.

Building on this understanding, GWI calls to attention that it has long recognized the critical role of education in advancing peace and tolerance. In 2001, the GWI General Assembly (GA) adopted the policy resolution Education for Peace [3], which required GWI affiliates to work with member states to ensure comprehensive education programs that address conflict resolution and promote peace incorporated into the curricula in schools and higher learning institutions.

At this 28th triennial, the GA, resolved to urge affiliates to advocate for implementing UN resolutions 1325 and 1366. The GWI plan of action required regular progress reports from the UN Secretary-General on these resolutions for wide distribution to GWI networks to increase member state accountability.

Furthering this commitment, the GWI GA adopted the Women - Essential to Peace resolution in 2004 [4]. This resolution highlighted women's crucial role in peacebuilding. It emphasized the importance of their participation in educational settings to promote peace. It recognized that women's perspectives and contributions are vital in creating educational environments that support and sustain peace.

Most recently, in 2019, the GWI GA adopted the Peace through Women's Education [5] policy resolution at its centenary Peace through Education Summit and GA. It built upon previous commitments by advocating for educational policies and practices that advance gender equality and peace. Advocacy stemming from this policy resolution focuses on promoting diversity in teacher education to achieve equitable education, mainly through peace education. Through this policy resolution, GWI recommends that its National Federations and Associations (NFAs) collaborate with member states to enforce existing laws related to peace education, support academic research on the issue, and engage local communities and media to highlight the importance of educating women for peace.

GWI's position in this policy resolution emphasizes that education for peace is crucial for empowering girls and women to contribute positively to society and reduce violence. To achieve this, GWI committed to several actions:

1. Advocate for peacebuilding education in communities, especially for girls and women outside the formal education system.
2. Educate families about the negative impacts of excluding girls and women from education and raise awareness about the consequences of bullying and discrimination.
3. Utilize their consultative role with the UN and other international bodies to support the implementation of peace education.

Significant global challenges related to GWI efforts, and the international community persist despite the commitment of the UN, GWI, and other stakeholders. According to recent UNESCO reports, over 258 million children and youth are out of school, and many enrolled receive substandard education. [6]

To reiterate GWI's position, quality education is critical in promoting peace and tolerance. For instance, in post-conflict societies such as Rwanda, educational programs that emphasize reconciliation and inclusive histories have been instrumental in healing communities and preventing the resurgence of violence. Similarly, educational initiatives in regions affected by extremism, such as parts of the Middle East, focus on teaching tolerance and coexistence to counter radical ideologies and create sustainable cultures of peace.

In line with these efforts, GWI takes this opportunity to urge member states to reaffirm their commitment to crucial UN resolutions and frameworks that emphasize education's vital role in promoting peace and tolerance. Their recommitment will decrease the depletion of trust in UN mechanisms and the inclusion of civil society as meaningful contributors to education policy and peacebuilding. This will include modernizing their approach to include AI education standards to UN mechanisms such as:

In conjunction with the aforementioned, GWI seizes this opportunity to call upon member states to reassert their dedication to crucial UN resolutions and frameworks that underscore the fundamental importance of education in advancing peace and tolerance. Their renewed commitment will lessen the erosion of trust in UN mechanisms and enhance the involvement of civil society as valuable stakeholders in education policy and peacebuilding. This will include modernizing their approach to include AI education standards to UN mechanisms such as:

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the critical role of women in peacebuilding and the need for education to advance gender equality. It underscores the role of education in achieving gender equality. Clearly, integrating AI literacy and digital skills into education is crucial for empowering women to communicate and offer innovative strategies to peace and security effectively. [7]

UN GA Resolution 64/290 (2010) on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations stresses the need to uphold educational rights in humanitarian contexts, vital for stability in post-conflict areas. This should modernize to include digital education and AI resources to ensure students, women, and girls are equipped with the latest tech skills as peace evaluators and changemakers. [8]

UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace, and Security recognizes education's role in empowering youth for peacebuilding, highlighting its importance in countering extremism. As a relevant suggestion, GWI recommends member states enhance their resilience by integrating crucial AI and digital skills for youth to face future peacebuilding challenges. [9]

The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Framework by UNESCO strongly advocates for integrating sustainability, peace, and tolerance into educational systems in alignment with the 2030 Agenda. While the ESD framework supports the use of technology in education, GWI further emphasizes the importance of promoting AI literacy to empower

women and girls for success in a technology-driven world, providing them with the tools and confidence to address peacebuilding challenges with innovation and and resilience. [10]

To address these challenges and promote quality education as a fundamental right, GWI proposes the following recommendations to member states:

Prioritize education in national budgets and policies, ensuring adequate school funding, teacher training, and educational resources.

Incorporate into education systems curricula that promote peace and tolerance. This includes adequate, quality female teacher training and collaboration with educational experts such as GWI's 9000-plus international network of graduate women to help develop such curricula.

Embrace that international cooperation is a crucial step for sharing best practices and resources in promoting quality education. This shared responsibility of the UN, civil society and private sector is critical to ensuring all children have access to a quality education, regardless of their circumstances.

Establish robust monitoring mechanisms to track progress on modernizing education goals and ensure accountability. This includes regular educational quality and equity assessments and transparent reporting to all stakeholders.

Integrate AI and digital skills into educational programs to prepare students for future challenges and promote responsible innovation.

Promote cross-sector partnerships to enhance educational access and quality, particularly in emergency and post-conflict situations, ensuring that digital education and AI resources are included for equitable development.

Recommit to equipping women and girls with the knowledge to navigate the future job market and understand the ethical implications of AI, promoting responsible innovation and creating a culture of peace in an increasingly digital world.

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1. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
 2. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>
 3. <https://graduatewomen.org/members-login/constitutional-material/resolutions/education-promotion/>
 4. <https://graduatewomen.org/members-login/constitutional-material/resolutions/6973-2/>
 5. <https://graduatewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2020-Advocacy-Campaign-2019-Resolutions-2.pdf>
 6. <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/new-methodology-shows-258-million-children-adolescents-and-youth-are-out-school.pdf>
 7. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>
 8. <https://press.un.org/en/2010/ga10964.doc.htm>
 9. <https://press.un.org/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>
 10. <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/educationmember>