



GW I UPDATE – 26 March 2025



GW I UN Representative, Maryella Hannum, reports on her participation in the Commission on Social Development Civil Society Forum. (Read report below)

— Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

Support girls' education with the GWI 105-year Heritage Fundraising Wall

GWI continues to commemorate its 105th anniversary through the virtual Heritage Fundraising Wall, an opportunity to make a lasting impact on girls' education. Every donation directly supports GWI's mission to advance education and advocate for equitable learning opportunities worldwide. GWI extends its sincere appreciation to those who have already contributed and invites others to purchase a commemorative brick on the fundraising wall. Each contribution helps break down barriers to education and empowers the next generation of women and girls. Join us and make a donation, click [HERE](#).

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, GWI released a press release to underscore the urgent need to dismantle racial barriers through equitable access to quality education. Marking the 60th anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), GWI called on governments and education systems to uphold their commitments to eliminate racial prejudice and promoting inclusive learning environments. While the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March, join GWI efforts to address racial inequities in education beyond a single day. The full press release can be read [HERE](#).

— GWI Member News —

GW I Independent Member Network holds Meet and Greet

GWI Independent Members Network (IMN) held its inaugural Meet & Greet in February 2025. In the spirit of their shared commitment to peace, justice, and equality, participants engaged in discussions about GWI's work and the diverse opportunities available to them as Independent Members. The IMN and the Meet and Greet gatherings provide a valuable platform for professional networking, strengthening connections among members across different countries. Dr Meera Bondre, GWI Vice President of Membership; Patricia Reavy, GWI Membership Committee Member and Peer-to-Peer Marketplace Convener; and Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director, reaffirmed their strong support for the IMN initiatives and future plans. "The GWI IMN embodies a global community dedicated to advancing education rights for women and girls. Congratulations to IMN Convener, Sahar Gamal, for organizing this inaugural gathering and bringing GWI IMs together for meaningful discussion and networking with peers. Congratulations to all involved," says Lara.

— GWI at the United Nations —

GWI participates in the 63rd session of the Commission on Social Development

GWI United Nations representative in New York, Maryella Hannum, actively participated in the 63rd session of the Commission on Social Development held on 10-14 February 2025, and the Civil Society Forum (CSF), held on 14 February. This year's theme was *"Strengthening solidarity, social inclusion and social cohesion to accelerate the delivery of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."* This session brought special focus on the emerging issue of social resilience and social development.

As per Hannum's report, discussions emphasized social resilience and the challenges to social progress, culminating in five adopted resolutions addressing youth, aging, Africa's development, and the Commission's future work. The session also highlighted the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha, Qatar, as a critical moment for resetting global priorities and advancing social development. Civil society engagement was a key theme, with the CSF 2025 providing a platform for NGOs to coordinate advocacy efforts and share insights on grassroots perspectives, intergenerational collaboration, and systemic inequalities.

Key takeaways from the CSF included the need for civil society to lead in shaping social development policies, questioning structural drivers of inequality, and addressing decent work deficits. Thematic discussions highlighted the role of young activists, grassroots leadership, and traditional knowledge in promoting social inclusion, as well as the importance of financing for social development and ensuring displaced women's leadership in policy discussions. The session reinforced the relevance of eight Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those addressing poverty, education, employment, and reducing inequalities. The Copenhagen Declaration remained central to discussions, reaffirming commitments to poverty eradication, productive employment, and social integration as fundamental pillars of sustainable development. Click [HERE](#) to read the full Advocacy report. **GWI thanks Maryella for her tireless contributions.**

— Give the Gift of Education —

Girls Education for Brighter Futures is a programme that funds global education, gender equality and women’s empowerment projects around the world. With your donations, this programme can, through different projects, make a profound impact on young girls’ lives by ensuring they can access education and the resources they need to succeed. The latest initiative, “Training Adolescents, Teachers, and Parents in Luuka District in Making Reusable Sanitary Pads”, funded by the Bina Roy Partners in Development project, is helping to improve the personal health of women and girls, teaching them skills that provide new sources of income, and increasing school retention rates for girls in the Luuka District, in Eastern Uganda. GWI invites you to click [HERE](#) to learn more about this project and is grateful to all the generous support of the Girls Education for Brighter Futures program. To contribute towards more of these causes click [HERE](#). **Thank you for making such a difference!**

— Did you know? —

World Water Day

Did you know that World Water Day has been celebrated on 22 March every year since 1993? It is an annual United Nations Observance focusing on the importance of freshwater. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of this day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030. This year’s theme is Glacier Preservation. **To read the GWI infographic for World Water Day click [HERE](#).**

— Dates and Events —

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| 24 February - 4 April | 58th Session of the Human Rights Council |
| 6 April | International Day of Sports for Development and Peace |
| 23 April | World Book and Copyright Day |
| 25 April | International Girls in ICT Day |
| 28 May | Menstrual Hygiene Day |
| 12 June | World Day Against Child Labour |
| 11-13 September | GWI 35th Triennial General Assembly, Lusaka, Zambia |

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GW, formerly IFUW, is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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