

GWI United Nation Representative

Advocacy Report

2025

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.

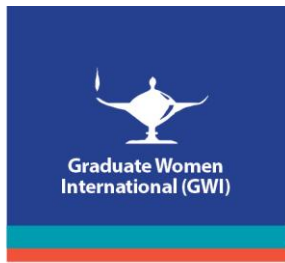
Please bear in mind these five overarching, long-term goals during any United Nations intervention that you make on behalf of GWI. Any intervention should push these five goals further.

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.*

ILO & UNICEF On Child Labor

The latest data on child labor show a total reduction of over 20 million children since 2020, reversing an alarming spike between 2016 and 2020. Despite this positive trend, the world has missed its target of eliminating child labor by 2025. According to new estimates released June 11, 2025 by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, nearly 138 million children were engaged in child labor in 2024, including approximately 54 million in hazardous work likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or development.

The report, titled *"Child Labor: Global estimates 2024, trends and the road forward"*, released one day ahead of the World Day Against Child Labor and on International Day of Play, underscores a stark reality that while gains have been made, a decrease of nearly 44% since 2000, millions of children are still being denied their right to learn, play, and simply be children. "The findings of our report offer hope and show that progress is possible. Children belong in school, not in labor. Parents must themselves be supported and have access to decent work so that they can afford to ensure that their children are in classrooms and not selling things in markets or in family farms to help support their family. But we must not be



blindsided by the fact that we still have a long way to go before we achieve our goal of eliminating child labor,” said the ILO’s Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo.

According to the data, agriculture remains the largest sector for child labor, accounting for 61% of all cases, followed by services (27%) like domestic work and selling goods in markets, and industry (13%), including mining and manufacturing. Boys are more likely than girls to be involved in child labor at every age, but when unpaid household chores of 21 hours or more per week are included, the gender gap reverses, the report notes.

Asia and the Pacific achieved the most significant reduction in prevalence since 2020, with the child labor rate dropping from 6 per cent to 3 per cent (from 49 million to 28 million children). Although the prevalence of children in child labor in Latin America and the Caribbean stayed the same over the past four years, the total number of children affected dropped from 8 million to about 7 million.

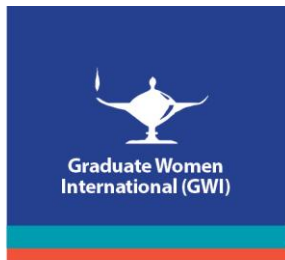
Sub-Saharan Africa continues to carry the heaviest burden, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all children in child labor, around 87 million. While prevalence fell from 24% to 22%, the total number has remained stagnant against the backdrop of population growth, ongoing and emerging conflicts, extreme poverty, and stretched social protection systems.

“The world has made significant progress in reducing the number of children forced into labor. Yet far too many children continue to toil in mines, factories, or fields, often doing hazardous work to survive,” said Catherine Russell. “We know that progress towards ending child labor is possible by applying legal safeguards, expanded social protection, investment in free, quality education, and better access to decent work for adults. Global funding cuts threaten to roll back hard-earned gains. We must recommit to ensuring that children are in classrooms and playgrounds, not at work.”

Sustained and increased funding, both global and domestic, is needed more than ever if recent gains are to be maintained. Reductions in support for education, social protection, child protection, and livelihoods can push already vulnerable families to the brink, forcing some to send their children to work. Meanwhile, shrinking investment in data collection will make it harder to see and address the issue.

To accelerate progress, UNICEF and ILO are calling for governments to:

- **Invest in social protection** for vulnerable households, including social safety nets such as universal child benefits, so families do not resort to child labor.
- **Strengthen child protection systems** to identify, prevent, and respond to children at risk, especially those facing the worst forms of child labor,



- **Provide universal access to quality education**, especially in rural and crisis-affected areas, so every child can learn,
- **Ensure decent work for adults and youth**, including workers' rights to organize and defend their interests, and
- **Enforce laws and business accountability** to end exploitation and protect children across supply chains.

Countries wishing to address child labor concerns legally can look to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Minimum Age for Admission to Employment Convention (No. 138), and the universally ratified ILO Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No. 182). To collect accurate data based on these, states can use statistical terms for measurement purposes established by the 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians in 2008.

Submitted on 6/20/2025:

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Empowering women and girls through lifelong, quality education and training. GWI, formerly International Federation of University Women (IFUW), in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.