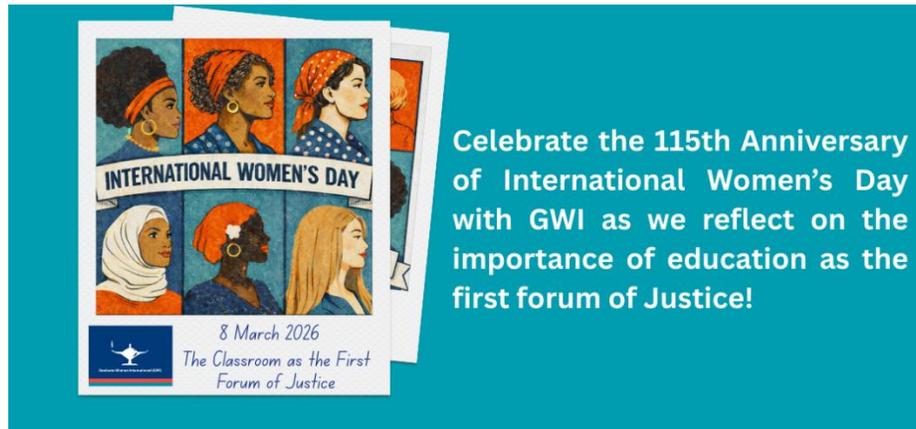




GWU UPDATE – 11 March 2026



Celebrate the 115th Anniversary of International Women's Day with GWI as we reflect on the importance of education as the first forum of Justice!

GWU International Women's Day Celebration post

— Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

GWU Celebrates International Women's Day!

This year marks an extraordinary milestone: 115 years of collective action, solidarity, and progress for women and girls around the world. On 8 March 2026, GWI proudly joined the global celebrations, honoring more than a century of advocacy, resilience, and change. For 115 years, International Women's Day has amplified the voices of women, fought for equal rights, and called for bold action. As an NGO dedicated to advancing women's and girls' rights through education, GWI celebrates not only the achievements of the past, but also the power of education to shape the next century of progress. The classroom is often the first forum of justice for women and girls, a place where rights are learned, voices are strengthened, and equality begins to take root. When girls have access to quality education, they gain not only knowledge, but the confidence and opportunity to claim their rights and shape their futures. Together, we celebrate the pioneers who paved the way and recommit to ensuring every girl and woman has access to the quality education and opportunities she deserves.

— GWI Member News —

Spanish Federation of University Women (SFUW) celebrates 106th anniversary

Written by Eloísa Sánchez -Amillátegui, SFUW President

On 7 March, the SFUW celebrated its 106th anniversary. On that day in 1920, the most progressive women of their time gathered in Madrid, led by Clara de Campoamor and María de Maeztu, and formed the Women's University Youth, which would later become part of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW). Its president attended the first International Conference that year, which took place in London, where she presented a report entitled "Higher Education for Women. » Today, 106 years later, we can tell you that we remain committed to achieving international understanding and peace through education and equality for women and girls. The Spanish Federation is growing steadily, with 151 members this year spread across Bilbao, Marbella, and Murcia.

Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to host a conversation on global peatlands and climate action

Co-hosted by CFUW North Delta/Surrey in Canada, Graduate Women Scotland, and the Paraguay Federation of University Women, this online conversation titled "Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World" will take place virtually on 26 March at 12:00 pm Eastern Standard Time. The discussion will feature speakers Eliza Olsen (Peatlands Protection Society, CFUW North Delta/Surrey; B.Ed., Simon Fraser University; Hon. Doctorate, KPU) and Cats Sutherland (Graduate Women Scotland; Past Chair of GWI Policy Resolutions). Together, they will explore the critical role of peatlands in global climate mitigation and the urgent need to protect these unique ecosystems. This conversation will bring together members and supporters from across different regions to raise awareness of the environmental importance of peatlands and encourage dialogue on sustainable climate solutions. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with the speakers and learn about international efforts to safeguard these vulnerable landscapes. Participants are encouraged to register in advance to attend the webinar. Register [HERE](#).

— GWI at the United Nations (UN) —

Key Highlights from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Pre-Session 52

GWI reviewed the statements and presentations delivered during the UPR Pre-Session 52, where national Human Rights institutions and civil society organizations shared their analyses of the Human Rights situations in countries under review. GWI summarizes below the key concerns and recommendations raised for Sierra Leone, Niger, and Singapore, with particular attention to issues relating to women and girls and the right to education. Click [HERE](#) to view all country statements and presentations on UPR Info's country pages.

Sierra Leone

Civil society organizations highlighted persistent gender inequality and harmful practices affecting women and girls. Concerns were raised regarding high rates of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, which continue to undermine girls' access to and completion of education. Stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen implementation of laws protecting girls from early marriage and sexual and gender-based violence, and to ensure accountability for perpetrators. Education remained a central issue, while progress has been acknowledged in expanding access to basic education, organizations pointed to gaps in quality, infrastructure, and inclusive access, particularly for girls in rural areas, pregnant girls, and girls with disabilities. Recommendations called for sustained investment in free and compulsory quality education, comprehensive sexuality education, and measures to prevent school-related gender-based violence. Additional concerns included limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, barriers to women's political participation, and insufficient protection mechanisms for survivors of violence were raised. Civil society urged the government to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting, reinforce child protection systems, and ensure that national development strategies fully integrate the rights of women and girls.

Niger

Civil society organizations highlighted persistent gaps in the implementation of recommendations accepted during the previous review, particularly those affecting women and girls. Child and early marriage remain widespread, with the legal age for girls still set at 15 and an estimated 76% of girls are married before the age of 18. Stakeholders stressed the direct impact on girls' right to education, pointing to lower enrolment and completion rates for girls compared to boys, especially in insecurity-affected areas. They called for raising the minimum age of marriage to 18, adopting sanctions against forced and early marriage, protecting girls from school-related violence, and lifting reservations to CEDAW and ratifying the Maputo Protocol. Women's political participation was also raised as a concern. Although a quota law exists, its implementation remains partial, and women are underrepresented in decision-making positions. Civil society recommended strengthening monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. In the context of insecurity, organizations underscored the limited implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2020–2024), insufficient resources, and the need for a funded third-generation plan and protection mechanisms for conflict-affected women and girls. Additional concerns included shrinking civic space, restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and assembly, problematic detention conditions marked by severe overcrowding, and the continued use of the death penalty in law despite no executions since 1976.

Singapore

Civil society submissions on Singapore addressed ongoing restrictions on civic space, freedom of expression, and assembly, which affect human rights defenders and civil society actors, including women's rights advocates. Additional issues highlighted included the continued use of the death penalty, the absence of a Freedom of Information law, and structural barriers affecting migrant workers' access to justice. Notably, the presentations reviewed contained very limited reference

to women's and girls' rights, or education. Apart from a brief mention of obstacles affecting the LGBTQI+ community, gender equality and education-related concerns were not substantively addressed during the pre-session.

— GWI at CSW70

GWI to hold a Side Event and two Parallel Events at the CSW70

- Co-hosted with the Permanent Mission of Ireland and Soroptimist International, GWI is organizing an in-person Side Event titled: *“Knowledge is Power: Education as the First Step to Justice for Women and Girls”* on 11 March 2026, 13:15-14:30 EST, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, 885 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10017. See flyer below.
- Organized by the GWI Young Member Network, this Parallel Event titled: *“From Barriers to Breakthroughs: Pathways to Access Justice for Women”*, will be held virtually on 12 March 2026 at 3:30 pm EST. See flyer below. Register in advance for this event [HERE](#).
- GWI President, Pat Patton, will be a featured speaker at the CSW70 Parallel Event titled *From Law to Life: “How Women’s Organizations are Advancing Justice through Community Accountability”*, taking place in person on 12 March 2026 from 2:30 to 4:00 pm EST at the Salvation Army Centre in New York, New York. See the flyer below.

Let’s Go Virtual

GWI encourages those unable to attend CSW70 in person to register for the online CSW70 Forum and follow Side Events online. The virtual environment allows everyone to participate in the CSW70, offering opportunities to explore hundreds of events and connect with thousands of participants, including events organized by GWI and many organized by GWI affiliates. Meet with fellow NFA members or colleagues to watch the sessions live or at a convenient time. Then, follow with discussion and advocacy planning. For more information and to register check out the [flyer below](#).

— Give the Gift of Education—

Girls Education for Brighter Futures is a GWI program that funds global education, gender equality and women's empowerment projects. Donations to this program, impact women and girls' lives by offering education and income-generating education. One of the latest initiatives, “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 readers 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. GWI appreciates all contributions towards these projects. Please click [HERE](#). **Thank you for making such a difference!**

— Did you know? —



Mila METIVIER, GWI Intern

GWI extends a warm thanks to Mila Metivier for her dedication and hard work at GWI during her time interning. Mila interned for six months, during which she made major contributions to GWI initiatives. As an intern, Mila showed strong engagement and great potential. Some of her hard work included co-production of the Update newsletter, production of infographics for various UN Days of Observation, preparations for the upcoming CSW70, with honourable mentions for the Year-at-a-Glance, and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign. “I want to thank Mila for the exceptional work she produced during her internship. I wish her much success in her future endeavors and look forward to seeing her accomplishments in the future,” says Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director.

— Dates and Events —

9-19 March	70 th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22 March	World Water Day
6 April	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
23 April	World Book & Copyright Day
26 April	International Girls in ICT Day

Follow us on social media!



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Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace.

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

Graduate Women International

7-9, Chemin de Balexert, CH-1291, Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland

E-mail: gwi@graduatewomen.org Website: www.graduatewomen.org



**“Knowledge is Power:
Education as the First
Step to Justice for
Women and Girls”**

Wednesday 11 March 2026,
13:15-14:30 EDT
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations
885 2nd Ave, Floor 21, New York, NY 10017

[REGISTER NOW](#)

CSW70/GWI

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN 70TH SESSION

LET'S GO VIRTUAL

09-19
MARCH 2026



The CSW offers a virtual environment that allows everyone to participate in the various sessions. **This year's CSW offers more than 800 events** with speakers from all over the world to address the access to justice for all women and girls, including a Young Member Network parallel event a side event!



Not attending CSW70 in person, then how about a get-together?

Organize a watch party with your fellow NFA or colleagues!



@GRADUATEWOMENINTERNATIONAL

@GRADWOMEN

@GRADUATEWOMENINTERNATIONAL

12 March 2026
3:30PM CET (Central European Time)

Registration Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8MgmlKRtTt6bMBKRLZdUYA>

"From Barriers to Breakthroughs: Pathways to Access Justice for Women"

PANEL OF SPEAKERS

 Sudha Srivastava (United Kingdom) "Leadership Begins Young: Policy Pathways to Women's Access to Justice"	 Nana Adwoa Adowaa Nsiah (Ghana) "Digital Exclusion is Injustice: Girls, AI and Right to Participate"	 Tzazil Valencia (Mexico) "Justice Starts in the Classroom: How Education Shapes Women's Access to Justice in Mexico"	 Nkem Menkiti (Nigeria) "Mentorship: A Key Driver for Women's Access to Justice in Nigeria"
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BREAKOUT SESSION LEADERS

 Cynthia Adinortey (Ghana)	 Carla Pierini (France)	 Alukhanyo Xonti (South Africa)	 Menna Mohamed (New Zealand)
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GWI Young Members Network CSW70 Parallel Event

The event is developed and produced by Sudha Srivastava (President YMN GWI) with YMN Team. The session highlights the need of empowering young women through education, mentoring and training opportunities - providing solution-driven pathways to access justice. The event is highly interactive and the programme is divided into a few engaging sections - diverse panel presentation followed by breakout room discussions led by young women. There will also be further opportunities for audience to participate in opinion polls and interactive Q&A.



FROM LAW TO LIFE:

How Women's Organizations are Advancing Justice through Community Accountability

 Bandana Rana CEAW Committee	 Diana Barragán President BPW International	 Susan Jones President Project Five-O	 Renata Probst President Soroptimist International
 Salla Tuominen President Zonta International	 Patricia Pattan President Graduate Women International	 Dr Luana Parisi MCAA University of East London	 Emily Van Vleck NGO CSW NY

This parallel event brings together the world's leading non-governmental women's organizations to explore how civil society is turning legal commitments into real change

12 March, 2:30 4:00 pm

Auditorium,
Salvation Army Centre

CSW 70 - Physical Parallel Event