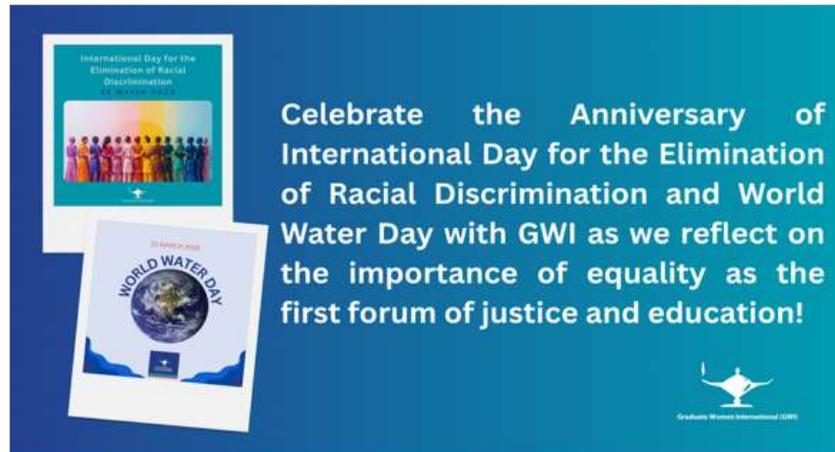




GWI UPDATE – 25 March 2026



GWI International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and World Water Day Celebration

— Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

GWI concludes successful Commission on the Status of Women session

GWI has concluded its participation in the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70). Nearly 100 GWI members from Austria, Australia, Britain, Canada, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, Senegal, Switzerland, the United States of America, Vietnam, and more participated in New York, alongside thousands more engaging virtually worldwide. Throughout the session, GWI contributed to global discussions on “Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls,” emphasizing the role of education as a foundation for rights, equality, and participation.

Through its official Side Event, Parallel Event, and engagement in high-level dialogues, GWI advanced evidence-based advocacy linking education systems with access to justice frameworks. [GWI’s Written Statement](#), co-signed by 14 organizations, further reinforces the recognition of education as a structural component of access to justice and called for strengthened alignment between education and justice systems. As a next step, comprehensive reports from GWI delegates will be compiled and widely distributed, ensuring that key insights and outcomes inform ongoing advocacy and engagement at national and international levels.

GWI marks International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and World Water Day

On 21 March, GWI joined the global observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD), reaffirming the importance of sustained action to address inequality and uphold commitments to justice and inclusion. As an organization dedicated to

advancing equality through education, GWI underscored that knowledge and awareness are vital tools to challenge racism and prejudice. GWI continues to advocate for equitable access to lifelong education as a pathway toward inclusive societies, grounded in dignity, respect, and equal opportunity for all.

Building on this commitment to equality and human rights, GWI also marked World Water Day (WWD) on 22 March, joining the global community under the theme “Where Water Flows, Equality Grows.” The observance highlighted the direct relationship between access to safe water, gender equality, and educational attainment. In many contexts, women and girls remain responsible for water collection, a burden that limits school attendance, learning continuity, and economic participation. GWI affirms that access to safe and reliable water is integral to realizing the right to education and broader social equity. Through its advocacy, GWI emphasizes the importance of linking sustainable water management with inclusive education policies, recognizing that when water access is secured, pathways to opportunity and dignity are strengthened.

GWI also underscores that it is never too late to advocate for these priorities. Members and partners are encouraged to engage with and share GWI’s social media campaigns, which remain accessible and provide practical entry points to raise awareness, contribute to ongoing dialogue, and reinforce collective action. Click [HERE](#) to access the IDERD campaign. Click [HERE](#) to access the WWD campaign.

— GWI Member News —

Three GWI National Federations and Associations (NFA) to host “Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World” Conversation

Co-hosted by Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) North Delta/Surrey, Graduate Women Scotland (GWS), and the Paraguay Federation of University Women, this online conversation titled “Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World” will take place virtually on 23 April 12:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST). The discussion will feature speakers Eliza Olsen, Peatlands Protection Society, CFUW North Delta/Surrey, B.Ed. Simon Fraser University; Hon. Doctorate, KPU, and Catriona Sutherland (GWS), 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. Interested GWI members and guests are encouraged to register in advance to attend the webinar. Register [HERE](#). Please see the flyer at the bottom of the Update for more information.

Spanish-Speaking Culture Bridge hosts Women in Positions of High Responsibility: Challenges and Costs of Decision-Making webinar

On 10 March, the GWI Spanish-Speaking Culture Bride project, organized by GWI NFAs from Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Spain, addressed the theme Women in Positions of High Responsibility: Challenges and Costs of Decision-Making. The discussion featured María Sol Durini of Argentina, Zoraida García Castillo of Mexico, and Susana Palomino of Spain, who brought perspectives from diplomacy, law, academia, and public enterprise. Despite their different professional backgrounds, the speakers shared the clear message that women in leadership continue to face intense scrutiny, structural bias, and the ongoing challenge of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. The panellists reflected on the personal, political, and economic costs that can accompany women's leadership, while also emphasizing resilience, perseverance, and the importance of support networks. They concluded that greater representation of women in positions of responsibility is not only a matter of fairness, but is also essential to more inclusive, democratic, and effective decision-making. GWI thanks Isabel Usobiaga for submitting this report that can be found [HERE](#).

Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) elects new leadership

GWI extends its congratulations to the new SLAUW leadership team. This transition marks an important moment for SLAUW and its continued commitment to advancing education and engagement for women and girls. GWI looks forward to continued collaboration with SLAUW in advancing shared priorities and strengthening opportunities for women and girls through education. GWI welcomes Mariatu A. Swaray, President, Daisy Gaye, CIR, Dr. Martha Williams-Ngegba, General President, and Musu K. Jabbie, Treasurer.

— GWI at the United Nations (UN) —

GWI co-hosts CSW70 side event: Knowledge Is Power: Education as the First Step to Justice for Women and Girls

On 11 March, GWI, in collaboration with Soroptimist International, convened a CSW70 side event at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, with the support of official sponsors including the Permanent Missions of Ireland, Mongolia, and Sierra Leone, as well as UNESCO, the United Nations Digital Library, CreditAccess India, and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Moderated by H.E. Ambassador of Ireland to the United Nations, Fergal Mythen, welcome remarks were delivered by Renata Trottman Probst, President Soroptimist International. The panel included Patrick Paul Walsh, Vice President of Education and Director of the SDG Academy at the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Pia Britto, Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development at UNICEF; and Patricia Patton, President GWI, and Nabila Aguele, Chief Executive, Nigeria at the Malala Fund, with final reflections by Isata Mahoi, Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs of Sierra Leone.

Discussions emphasized that education is central to ensuring women and girls can understand and exercise their rights, participate in economic life, and engage in decision-making processes. Speakers highlighted the need for coordinated partnerships across civil society, governments, academia, and the private sector to address barriers such as conflict, financing gaps, and unequal access to digital resources. The exchange reinforced that sustained investment in education, alongside locally led approaches, remains critical to advancing equitable outcomes for women and girls globally. GWI extends its sincere appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Ireland for hosting this event, Soroptimist International, and to all official sponsors and partners for their collaboration and continued engagement on education for women and girls.

GWI Young Member Network (YMN) hosts CSW70 parallel event

On 12 March GWI hosted a virtual CSW70 parallel event featuring dynamic speakers from the GWI YMN. Following introduction and welcome remarks from GWI Executive Director Stacy Dry Lara and President Pat Patton (Canadian Federation of University Women), respectively, GWI YMN President Sudha Srivastava (British Federation of Women Graduates) took the floor to facilitate the formal discussions on "Leadership Begins Young: Policy Pathways for Women's Access to Justice." She highlighted girls' safety concerns in the United Kingdom from a 2025 survey and advocating early interventions like children's books, mentoring, and policy awareness to build confidence from childhood. Nana Adwoa Adowaa Nsiah, Creative Technologist from Ghana's AlgoPeers, addressed "Digital Exclusion is Injustice: Girls, AI, and the Right to Participate," revealing AI biases (e.g., UNESCO 2024 findings linking women to "home" over careers) and sharing stories like 11-year-old Dweller's AI app, urging girls' inclusion as creators.

Tzazil Valencia (Federacion Mexicana de Universitarias) explored "Justice Starts in the Classroom: How Education Shapes Women's Access to Justice in Mexico," emphasizing education as a gatekeeper against gender gaps like dropouts due to pregnancy or poverty, calling for gender-perspective curricula to prevent violence before it occurs. Nkem Menkiti (Nigeria Association of University Women) discussed "Mentorship, A Key Driver for Women's Access to Justice in Nigeria," citing low prosecution rates for gender violence and a success story of a mentee reclaiming funds, with calls to "find one woman to mentor today". Breakout rooms led by young leaders like Alukhanyo Xonti (South African Association of University Women), Carla Pierini (Association Française des Femmes Diplômées Des Universités), Dr. Cynthia A. Adinortey (Ghana Association of University Women), and Menna Mohamed (Graduate Women New Zealand) presented global exchanges on barriers (e.g., cultural norms, costs, digital divides, gender-based violence, and sexual assault) and solutions (e.g., awareness, policy reforms, educational programs), underscoring mentorship and support networks. Watch the full recording [HERE](#) on GWI's Vimeo channel.

GWI UN Representative participates in Commission for Social Development

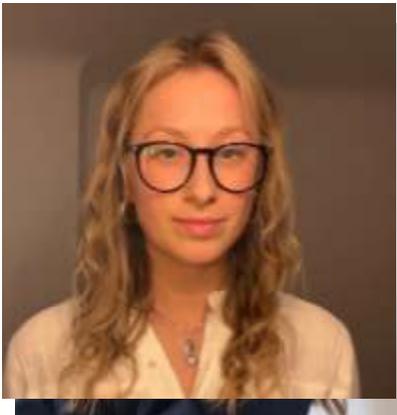
GWI UN Representative, New York, Maryella Hannum participated in the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD64) at UN Headquarters in New York from 2-10 February 2026. The session advanced social development and social justice through coordinated,

equitable, and inclusive policies, addressing emerging issues like eradicating poverty and ensuring dignity via resilient care and support systems. Key resolutions emphasized gender equality, family-oriented policies, inclusive labor markets, and support for Africa's development priorities, including women's empowerment and youth employment. Discussions highlighted integrated policy approaches connecting social protections, education, health, decent work, and digital transformation, with a focus on care systems as shared societal investments and youth mental health challenges. GWI underscores its advocacy goals for universal access to education, gender parity in secondary schooling, increased tertiary access for girls and women in low-income states, lifelong learning policies, and embedding girls' education in all SDGs. GWI thanks Maryella Hannum for participation and reporting on the CSocD64 session. Readers are encouraged to read the full report [HERE](#).

— Give the Gift of Membership —

The GWI Independent Member network is growing, with many new members joining from around the world over the past few months. A thoughtful gift for the graduate woman in your life is a GWI membership. There are many benefits of being a member of GWI, including belonging to an influential international organisation composed of graduate women influencing policy and legislation on women's issues at the international level and gaining an international perspective on women's issues through networking activities. Click [HERE](#) to find out how to join GWI.

— Did you know? —



Ida Niemeier, GWI Intern

Hi, my name is Ida. I'm excited to join Graduate Women International as the new intern this spring. I'm currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in international business at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Alongside my studies, I've been actively involved in youth education and advocacy projects, coordinating programmes that empower children and young people to engage with topics like equality and inclusion. During my internship, I'm excited to contribute to GWI's work while learning more about how advocacy can drive systemic change. I'm also very happy to be in Geneva, a city that brings together so many voices for global cooperation, and I look forward to learning from the GWI team and this experience. GWI is delighted to welcome Ida Niemeier as a new

member of our team. We look forward to Ida's contributions and to supporting her professional development during her time with the organization.

— Dates and Events —

6 April	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
21-22 April	Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE region
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.

GW, 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

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





Graduate Women International
Empowering women & girls through lifelong education

Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World

On Thursday, April 23rd, at 12:00 EST, join us for a conversation co-hosted by CFUW N.Delta/Surrey, Graduate Women Scotland and the Paraguay Federation of University Women about our imperiled peatlands



Eliza Olson
B.Ed Simon Fraser U
Hon. Doctorate KPU
CFUW North Delta/
Surrey
Peatlands Protection
Society



Cats Sutherland
GW Scotland
Past Chair of GWI Policy
Resolutions

