



GWI UPDATE – 20 May 2026



GWI and partner, Menstrual Hygiene Day organization, to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day on 28 May.

— Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

Menstrual Hygiene Day is just around the corner

Menstrual Hygiene Day, observed annually on 28 May, is a global advocacy day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of menstrual health and hygiene and advancing action to end the stigma, discrimination, and barriers associated with menstruation. Each year, the day brings together organizations, advocates, educators, policymakers, and communities worldwide to promote access to menstrual products, education, sanitation facilities, and accurate information for all women and girls.

To mark Menstrual Hygiene Day 2026, GWI will run a social media campaign centered on the long-term mission and 2026 theme, “Together for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld”. Through the campaign, GWI will highlight why menstrual health and hygiene remain closely linked to dignity, education, health, and gender equality, and why ensuring safe and equitable menstrual health management continues to be essential for the full participation of girls and women in school, work, and public life. This year’s campaign will provide valuable information highlighting both persistent barriers and evolving approaches shaping policy, education, and access worldwide. On 28 May, watch for posts across GWI social media channels and be ready to Like, Share, and participate in the global awareness-raising campaign.

— GWI Member News —

The Future of Work: New Professions and Skills for Women

On 12 May 2026, the GWI Spanish-Speaking Cultural Bridge met to discuss the topic “The Future of Work: New Professions and Skills for Women.” Speakers included GWI members, Carmen Virasoro from Argentina, Sonia Pardo from Mexico, Ana Sofía Alemán from Panama, and Milagros Vega from Paraguay, moderated by Noemí Castillo from Panama. Virasoro addressed climate change and Artificial Intelligence (AI), emphasizing the urgent need for a cultural shift and the importance of women taking on a role centered around climate change. She pointed out the existing gap that cannot be ignored, as 25% of women use technology less than men. She proposed new professions and skills, such as Intergenerational Partnership Architecture and Climate Finance, highlighting the importance of systemic and interdisciplinary thinking, collaborative leadership, and scientific communication for diverse audiences. Pardo for her part, offered a cultural perspective, promoting women's social inclusion, female leadership, and transversal skills, while also noting the significance of the AI revolution. Alemán highlighted the profiles most in demand in the business sector. After sharing personal experiences and insights, she pointed out that human capabilities will remain relevant in the future and that automation, data processing, AI, cybersecurity, geopolitical risk, sustainability, and digital reputation are emerging and future-oriented issues. Vega added that an entrepreneurial vision, coupled with digital transformation, sustainability, risk and compliance, as well as an international perspective and local understanding, is essential. Building trust and consensus, collaborative leadership, and the ability to reinvent oneself are fundamental skills for future employability. Each panelist, drawing on their background and professional experience, offered a wealth of high-level insights, making this panel a veritable treasure trove of expertise. GWI congratulates the Spanish-Speaking Cultural Bridge on another highly successful programme within the longstanding GWI Membership Marketplace initiative. Through the exchange of professional expertise and regional perspectives the session reflected the depth of knowledge of GWI membership and international engagement that continue to define the global GWI network.

CFUW Webinar on Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World

On 23 April 2026, the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) hosted the webinar Climate Mitigation: Peatlands of the World. The webinar offered the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences on peatlands, their role in climate mitigation, and the urgent need to protect these vital ecosystems. Speakers and participants shared examples of national initiatives, restoration projects, advocacy efforts, and educational approaches that demonstrate how local action can contribute to global climate goals.

The webinar underscored the importance of translating awareness into practical advocacy. A key aim of the event was to provide GWI National Federations and Associations with guidelines on how to advocate for peatlands in their countries and communities. This way, the webinar served not only as a space for learning but also as a resource for action, encouraging NFAs to engage more confidently with policymakers, educators, and environmental stakeholders.

This work is connected to GWI Policy Resolution 6, Restore, Preserve and Protect Global Peatlands, which calls for the protection and restoration of peatlands as an essential climate and biodiversity priority. The webinar aimed to provide practical recommendations linking the resolution to advocacy at national and local levels, with emphasis on translating policy into practical engagement. It also highlighted the role of GWI and its NFAs in promoting sustainable environmental action through education, awareness-raising, and policy advocacy. The GWI 35th Triennial Policy Resolutions document can be found [HERE](#). The breakout group summary of actionable items can be accessed [HERE](#), and the Vimeo recording is available [HERE](#).

Federación Boliviana de Mujeres Profesionales Universitarias (FBMPU) designates new Coordinator of International Relations

GWI extends its congratulations to Rocío Lourdes Verena Barrientos Jiménez and welcomes her as Coordinator of International Relations at the FBMPU. This designation reflects FBMPU's continued commitment to strengthening international cooperation and advancing opportunities for women and girls through education and professional engagement. GWI looks forward to continued collaboration with FBMPU in support of shared goals and initiatives. The position holds special meaning for Jiménez, whose relationship with GWI began at a young age when she accompanied her mother to an international congress in the Netherlands in 1983.

— GWI at the United Nations (UN) —

GWI advocates to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights against child marriage

On 27 April 2026, GWI submitted a comprehensive contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in response to the official Call for Inputs issued pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/158 on child, early, and forced marriage. The submission will contribute to the forthcoming report of the United Nations Secretary-General on global progress towards ending child, early, and forced marriage. The OHCHR call requested information from civil society and other stakeholders regarding progress, challenges, best practices, and recommendations related to eliminating child marriage, including in situations of poverty, humanitarian crises, armed conflict, and disasters.

In its submission, GWI emphasizes that child, early, and forced marriage remains a serious violation of human rights and a significant barrier to girls' and women's education, autonomy, health, and participation in public life. Drawing upon decades of international advocacy, United Nations engagement, and member-led policy resolutions, GWI stresses the importance of strengthening policy frameworks and investment in safe, equitable, and quality secondary and tertiary education as a central strategy to prevent child marriage and advance gender equality.

The submission addresses all thematic areas outlined in the OHCHR guiding questions, including root causes of child marriage, access to education and health services, gender-responsive budgeting, prevention strategies, protection mechanisms, humanitarian contexts, research and data gaps, birth and marriage registration systems, and innovative approaches to eliminating harmful practices. GWI further highlights the importance of integrated, multi-sectoral responses that address structural gender inequality, poverty, discriminatory social norms, and weak legal enforcement mechanisms.

Through this contribution, GWI further advances its ongoing advocacy within the United Nations system and reiterated the importance of coordinated international action, evidence-based policymaking, and strengthened cooperation among Member States, civil society, and international organizations to eliminate child, early, and forced marriage globally. Read the full submission [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 organization 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? —

GWI is an official partner of Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day), a global initiative led by WASH United. MH Day unites governments, NGOs, the private sector, and activists to advance menstrual health and hygiene. The initiative works to break taboos, raise awareness, and drive policy change by advocating for access to menstrual products, education, and safe sanitation facilities. Through

coordinated global campaigns and partnerships, MH Day amplifies voices, shares knowledge, and encourages collective action to ensure that menstruation is no longer a barrier to education, health, or opportunity. Learn more about the movement [HERE](#).

— Dates and Events —

28 May	Menstrual Hygiene Day
3 June	GWI Connects: What We Heard Summary, GWI members only
12 June	World Day Against Child Labor
15 June-10 July	Human Rights Council 62 nd session
19 June	International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict
20 June	World Refugee
28 October	GWI Annual Meeting, virtual

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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

