



## GWI UPDATE - 03 June 2026

**MENSTRUAL  
HYGIENE  
DAY** 

  
Graduate Women International (GWI)  
28 MAY 2026



*GWI Menstrual Hygiene Day 2026 Social Media Campaign*

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### — Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

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#### **GWI releases eight emerging trends in a Menstrual Hygiene Day social media campaign**

On 28 May, GWI marked Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day) with a social media campaign highlighting eight emerging trends associated with the 2026 theme, “Together for a Period Friendly World.” Observed annually on this day, MH Day aims to raise awareness and advance progress in menstrual health and hygiene. The eight trends reflect developments across advocacy, policy, services, and infrastructure, including increased global visibility of menstrual health, greater government investment, expanded education initiatives, and growing attention to menstrual health services. Additional trends address affordability and access to menstrual products, improvements in infrastructure in schools and communities, and the increasing use of data and economic evidence to inform policy decisions. For GWI, this year’s social media campaign builds on its longstanding partnership with MH Day organization and years of engagement that have consistently linked menstrual health to education, rights, and gender. In previous years, GWI has contributed MH Day infographics, ([2025](#), [2024](#)), [advocacy toolkits](#), and United Nations [Human Rights Council \(HRC\) written statement](#) that highlight how menstruation affects school attendance, learning conditions, and longer-term opportunities for girls and women. Access the full GWI MH Day 2026 social media campaign and the eight emerging trends [HERE](#).

### **Education and Diversity: Meet GWI Education Committee (EduCom)**

On 22 June, the GWI EduCom will host the webinar Education and Diversity: Meet EduCom. Moderated by GWI Vice President Education Dr. Shirley Gillett, the webinar will feature EduCom members sharing perspectives on diversity and education. Presentations include Dr. Geneviève Etornam Adukpo (Ghana Association of University Women) on learning with a disability in STEM; Kei Foran (Japanese Association of University Women) on education and diversity in Japan; Anne Headley (Irish Federation of University Women) on ethnic diversity in Irish education; Dr. Annie Musonda-Mubanga (Graduate Women Zambia) on inclusive education and school leadership in rural and remote settings; Nahide Nesrin Koç (Turkish Association of University Women) on diversity and inclusive learning in the Montessori classroom; Gail Neff (Canadian Federation of University Women) on the education of girls in conflict zones; and Tzazil Valencia Oseguera (Mexican Federation of University Women) on educational inequality in Latin America. The webinar offers an opportunity to explore current education issues while engaging with EduCom members and their areas of expertise. GWI members and guests are invited to register [HERE](#) and join the discussion on 22 June at 10:00 p.m. Central European Summer Time.

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## — GWI Member News —

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### **Graduate Women New Zealand (GWNZ) highlights CEDAW pay equity complaint**

In Aotearoa New Zealand, a broad coalition of unions, human rights advocates and affected workers has taken the extraordinary step of filing a complaint with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), arguing that the government's 2025 pay equity law changes amount to systemic discrimination against women. The complaint follows the National-led coalition government's decision to pass the Equal Pay Amendment Act under urgency in May 2025, without the usual select committee process, abruptly extinguishing 33 live pay equity claims that reportedly affected more than 180,000 workers, most of them women in care, health, education, and social services. Critics say the new law not only cancelled long-running claims but also raised the threshold for future claims so sharply that access to redress has been drastically curtailed, turning what was once seen as world-leading pay equity legislation into a test of New Zealand's commitment to equal pay for work of equal value. GWNZ's support reflects its longstanding commitment to advancing gender equality and addressing systemic barriers that affect women's economic opportunities and workplace rights. Read the full complaint [HERE](#).

### **University Women Europe (UWE) to host Annual Meet & Greet in Berlin**

UWE will host its Annual Meet & Greet on 26-28 June 2026, in Berlin, Germany. The event will take place at Harnack House, the conference venue of the Max Planck Society in Berlin. The event

will bring together GWI National Federations and Association in the UWE region as well as former and non-member organizations to network, exchange ideas, and discuss potential future initiatives and projects. The Meet & Greet will feature keynote speakers from women in academia, dialogues with peers from across Europe, and a cultural program in Berlin, including historical women's tours tracing the path of women in science. Further details and registration information can be accessed [HERE](#).

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## — GWI at the United Nations (UN) —

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### **Future of the United Nations HRC**

On 1 May, GWI participated in a stakeholder discussion at the United Nations of Geneva concerning the ongoing review of the institutional status of the United Nations HRC. Established in 2006, the HRC is the United Nations' principal intergovernmental body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and serves as a forum for dialogue, accountability, expert reporting, and the examination of human rights situations.

The 2026 review is a significant milestone. Under a mandate from the United Nations General Assembly, Member States are considering whether the HRC should continue operating as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly or whether its institutional status should evolve within the United Nations system. The discussion brought together Member States to exchange perspectives on the future role of the Council. As civil society looked on, Member States considered how the Council can continue to respond effectively to emerging human rights challenges while improving its ability to engage with a broad range of actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the need to increase meaningful civil society participation. It was recognized that NGOs, such as GWI, play a vital role in bringing attention to human rights concerns, providing expertise from the field, and contributing to international dialogue. Participants emphasized that any future reforms should maintain transparency, accessibility, and opportunities for civil society engagement. The consultation also highlighted concerning questions about the effectiveness, visibility, and authority of the HRC within the United Nations system. As the international community confronts complex challenges stakeholders stressed the importance of ensuring that the human rights pillar of the United Nations remains adequately supported.

For GWI, these discussions are particularly relevant. Through its Economic and Social Council Special Consultative Status since 1947 and longstanding engagement with the United Nations, GWI regularly contributes written statements, oral interventions, side events, and advocacy

initiatives that advance the rights of women and girls through education. The HRC provides an important platform for raising concerns related to the safe access to education and lifelong learning opportunities. As discussions on the future of the HRC continue throughout 2026, GWI will remain engaged in relevant consultations and monitor developments that may affect civil society participation and international human rights advocacy.

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### — Give the Gift of Education —

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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 for all donations that can be given [HERE](#). **Thank you for making such a difference!**

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### — Did you know? —

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Louisa MacDonald was a distinguished classics scholar from University College London who arrived in Sydney in 1892 to become the first Principal of The Women’s College at the University of Sydney, a position she held until 1919. A strong advocate for women’s education and advancement, she was actively involved in organizations supporting women’s rights and intellectual engagement, including the Womanhood Suffrage League of New South Wales, and in 1907 became the first woman to stand for election to the University Senate. On 19 May 1892, she was elected the first President of the newly established Sydney University Women’s Association, created to unite university women for social and intellectual exchange. In 1920, accompanied by Mildred Muscio, Louisa MacDonald represented Australia at the first International Federation of University Women, now GWI, conference in London, contributing to the foundations of what later became the Australian Federation of Graduate Women, now Australian Graduate Women, in 1922.

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### — Dates and Events —

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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 <sup>nd</sup> session
19 June	International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict
20 June	World Refugee
22 June	Education and Diversity: Meet GWI EduCom
28 October	GWl Annual Meeting, virtual

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

GWl, 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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