



# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GWI recalls its foremothers' contribution to the League of Nations and the United Nations**

**Geneva, Switzerland**, 24 October 2017- On the 72nd anniversary of the United Nations (UN), Graduate Women International (GWI) celebrates its relationship with the UN and the progress the UN has made towards improving girls' access to education.

[The International Federation of University Women](#) (IFUW), what is now GWI, began in 1918 after Dean Virginia Gildersleeve of Barnard College, Professor Caroline Spurgeon of the University of London and Rose Sidgwick of the University of Birmingham decided to create an international federation of university women to help prevent another catastrophe such as that of WWI. Gildersleeve then became the only female delegate sent by the United States to assist the League of Nations drafting of the United Nations Charter. She continued to be the only United States delegate to the United Nations when the organisation came into effect. In 1947, IFUW was granted special consultative status with both Economic and Social Council and UNESCO. Since, GWI has operated under this capacity to promote the potential and vitality of girls and to influence policy regarding girls' and women's access education.

"Since the origins of our relationship with the United Nations, GWI continues to mark the advancements made by the United Nations and its agencies. GWI believes that the promotion of international cooperation and world peace is best achieved by the protection of the right to an education, especially for women and girls. We hold our foremothers dear for their tireless efforts towards peace through education," says Geeta Desai, GWI President.

### **About GWI**

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 60 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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