



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

On International Day of the Girl Child GWI calls for states and policy makers to commit to implementation of girls' rights and promote their empowerment.

Geneva, Switzerland, 11 October 2015 ---Today, International Day of the Girl Child, Graduate Women International (GWI) calls for states and policy makers worldwide to take action on the challenges affecting girls and empower them to fulfil their potential by removing barriers to their education at all levels. Despite the existence of legislation to protect and promote girls including [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) and the [Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage](#), these measures do not go far enough. GWI strongly emphasises the critical timing of action following recent adoption of the post 15 Global Goals to ensure that the measures agreed will be implemented before momentum is lost.

Many barriers remain to girls' equal enjoyment of their rights, limiting their social and political participation. Nearly 1 in 5 adolescent girls is out of school i.e. 65 million girls worldwide. Early marriage forces girls out of education and into a life with an increased risk of 22% of domestic and sexual violence. 14 million girls in developing countries marry before their 18th birthday, affecting not only their health, but the health of their family and their ability to contribute to their societies' economies.

GWI President Catherine Bell states: "This day of celebration is an opportunity to rally the girls' rights movement towards addressing the difficulties girls and women face. As the world lauds the Global Goals vision for 2030, now is the time to make these international promises touch girls' and women's lives with concrete action on the ground, enabling them to fulfil both their personal potential and the benefit to society."

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 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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