



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

On this International Day of Rural Women, Graduate Women International Calls for an end to discrimination against rural women and empowerment through equal access to education, human rights and pay.

On October 15, 2015 International Day of Rural Women, Graduate Women International (GWI) calls on states and policy makers to end discrimination against rural women and empower them through equal access to education, human rights and pay. Educating rural women improves the health and resilience of their families, improves their ability to use technology that assists them and increases agricultural efficiency, contributes to decreasing world hunger and eradicating rural poverty.

Rural women comprise over a quarter of the total world population. In developing countries, rural women make up approximately 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force, and produce, tend, harvest and prepare much of the food available, thereby giving them primary responsibility for food security. Due to their frequent isolation and dependence on increasingly unreliable weather patterns, rural women are becoming more sensitive to environmental crises and less able to break the cycle of poverty.

GWI President Catherine Bell states: ‘It is a source of international shame that rural women, who are so crucial to sustainable food production, are often the most vulnerable in society. It is the responsibility of the global community to commit to the empowerment of rural women and recognise that the role of rural women and girls as agricultural and environmental guardians is critical for the success of the new Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030’.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and has an international membership. GWI was founded in 1919 under the original title of International Federation of University Women. 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.

For more information, please contact: Amy Paunila, Communications and Advocacy Officer
T: +41 22 731 23 80; Email: ap@graduatewomen.org
To learn about our [fellowships & grants](#) and our [advocacy work](#) visit the GWI website
Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)