

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Graduate Women International champions women in science and information technology during the 32nd Triennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, 24-26 August 2016

Geneva, Switzerland, 11 August 2016 – Graduate Women International (GWI) will welcome representatives from the private sector, educators, nongovernmental organisations and government to its [32nd Triennial Conference](#) in Cape Town, 24-26 August 2016. As advocates for women's empowerment, a major focus at the upcoming conference will be on women's participation in science and technology and ways to encourage their participation in the sectors' workforces.

Though women account for 50.3% of the global workforce,¹ they are nevertheless underrepresented in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sectors. Globally, 12% of the engineering workforce and 30% of science researchers are women. STEM fields are essential to global growth and competitiveness and the absence of women in STEM will have a damaging impact on the development of national economies. Statistics show that countries will face a large deficit in the labour force in the medium term, which is exacerbated by the low uptake of women in STEM. Women in STEM jobs earn approximately 33% more than those in non-STEM occupations and experience a smaller wage gap relative to men.

Similarly, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world with an estimated 90% of future jobs requiring ICT skills. Yet women, accounting for less than 20% of ICT specialists,² are severely under-represented. Increasing opportunities for women in the ICT and STEM fields is a critical step towards realising improved economic success and greater equality for women.

GWI President Catherine Bell states: "Diversity within the workforce is an essential element of success within the STEM and ICT industries. The gender gap in innovation-related industries has serious consequences for long-term sustainability, competitiveness and economic development. The GWI Conference offers a timely opportunity to share approaches to support greater female participation at all levels, especially at management level."

GWI conference panels and panellists examining this topic include: *Women in Science and technology; recommendations to overcome barriers* with Ms Rovani Sigamoney from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Ms Anisa Khan from the British Council's Newton Project; *Harnessing ICTs for greater access to education for girls and women* with Mr Paul William Delorme from the Orange Device Group, Ms Jade Mathieson from Sea Monster and Mr Steve Vosloo from Pearson South Africa; *Girls, coding*

¹ International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database (2014)
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>

² Tandon, N. (2012), "A Bright Future in ICTs: Opportunities for a New Generation of Women",
International Telecommunication Union,
http://girlsiniict.org/sites/default/files/pages/itu_bright_future_for_women_in_ictenglish.pdf



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

and ICT: great cases to overcome barriers from high school onwards with Ms Baratang Miya from GirlHype and Mr Tom Birtwhistle from the British Council.

Sign up today to join this exciting conference at www.gwiconference.org.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international nongovernmental organisation (NGO) based in Geneva, Switzerland, with a presence in over 80 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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For more information on the conference and to register, please visit www.gwiconference.org. Learn about our [grants & fellowships](#) and our [advocacy work](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter \(@GradWomen\)](#)

For more information please contact: Amy Paunila

T: +41 22 731 23 80; Email: ap@graduatewomen.org