

Press Release

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On World Day Against Child Labour, Graduate Women International (GWI) and Verband der Akademikerinnen Österreichs (VAÖ) Issue Urgent Call to End Child Labour: A Global Education Crisis Demands Immediate Action

VAÖ, Vienna, 12 June 2023— Graduate Women International (GWI) is a formidable global organisation that resolutely advocates for child education rights. GWI and VAÖ observe World Day against Child Labour on 12 June, an annual event organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The objective of this day is to emphatically raise awareness about the atrocity of child labour affecting millions of children around the world. It serves as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to eliminate child labour and protect the education rights of children worldwide. GWI and VAÖ identify with the 2023 theme, “Week of Action against Child Labour” which represents a week-long ILO campaign committed to educating people about the injustice of child labour and inspiring them to act against the crime of it.

GWI President, Patrice Wellesley-Cole, strongly emphasises GWI’s commitment to ending child labour, “GWI speaks against the alarming prevalence of child labour in the world, which necessitates continued effort beyond this week. Support for all children demands establishing and enforcing national child labour laws. GWI is working towards the 2030 Agenda as it incorporates Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 5 into its 2023-2025 triennial planning. The future of humanity is at stake if children who should be in education are labourers”, she says.

Nevertheless, it is concerning to note that the ILO estimates approximately 152 million children work in various forms of labour, often in hazardous conditions that threaten their well-being and future. This distressing reality is a blatant violation of their fundamental rights to education, health, and a safe childhood; rights that are unequivocally enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Contrary to popular belief, girls are as likely as boys to engage in child labour globally, with unpaid domestic tasks being given to girls more frequently. Seventy-two percent of child labourers work within their own families. Immediate action is needed.

The United Nations SDGs 8 has set a clear target of completely eradicating child labour in all forms by 2025. To achieve this goal, we need to raise awareness and put immense pressure on governments, private and public sectors to implement effective solutions. However, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) predicts that around 121 million children could still be trapped in child labour by 2025 if the current progress continues. We must take urgent and decisive action to prevent this from happening and eliminate child labour.

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 Special Partnership with UNESCO and in special relations with the ILO. [[About VAÖ click here](#)]

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