



Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.

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6/10/2017

The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House,
Canberra 2600

Dear Ms Bishop,

Re Using Foreign Aid to Advance the Education of Girls

On the Day of the Girl Child, 11 October 2017, the Australian Federation of Graduate Women is sharing in an international campaign of advocacy and action, *My Two Cents for Girls Education*. As part of our action, we wish to commend the Department of Foreign Affairs on the recent Statement of Action to Accelerate Marginalised Girls' Education Outcomes and Gender Equality, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

As the Statement acknowledges 'educating girls is one of the world's best investments as it offers truly wide-reaching returns. Educating girls not only leads to economic growth and increased incomes but it contributes to reduced rates of maternal and infant mortality. Educating girls reduces the incidence of malaria and HIV/AIDS, and educated girls are less likely to be forced into child marriage. Educated women have a positive impact on agricultural production, communities' resilience to natural disasters and they take more of a leadership role in decision-making.'

We urge you therefore to make the education of girls the top priority in foreign aid funding. As a matter of policy such aid should be directed to areas of greatest need, so that particular attention is given to those groups of girls whose participation in education, both primary and secondary, is known to be poor – primarily girls in rural areas and girls with disabilities – and to those countries such as Papua New Guinea that are still lagging in fulfilling the aims of the Millennium Development Goals, let alone the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Jane Baker President

Cc Senator the Hon Penny Wong Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs