

## International Day of the Girl Child - October 11, 2017

The Canadian Federation of University Women continues the series highlighting significant days to facilitate the conversation about the Sustainable Development Goals. Our purpose is to overlay a recognized Theme Day with the SDG lens in order to shine a light on and bring the conversation to the grassroots level.

We believe change begins with consciousness. For this significant day, International Day of the Girl Child - October 11, 2017 we are intentionally making connections to SDG #4, #5, #16 and #17 (However, connections to any other SDG may be implied).



This initiative provides a critical opportunity to discuss the interconnections between SDGs for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

The 2030 Agenda is for all, and achieving its goals requires action at all levels. In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, speakers from diverse backgrounds have offered a perspective that we hope you can connect to and extend the conversation until it reaches everyone. Read more about the world's 1.1 billion girls poised to take on the future by clicking on the link <http://www.un.org/en/events/girlchild/>.



## **Born into the Light**

You are a perfect idea  
Little girl your appearance on the planet has been timed so perfectly  
We waited for you to come  
We prayed by the fire for you to show up  
We celebrated with friends when we learned you were coming  
We worshiped with family when we learned of you  
We cried when we saw your crown for it was so pure and perfect  
Now that you are here  
Stay in the light  
I will walk ahead of you with a lantern  
I will ask my sisters to walk beside and behind you so your circle of protection is complete  
My brothers will teach you how to navigate the world  
Mother Nature will reveal what was said in the beginning  
You are here to reveal what was said in the beginning  
You are all that there is, no less, no more  
You are my girl child and you balance the scale  
Your steps are quiet and peaceful  
Your brain is sharp and smart  
Your hands are brisk and intentional  
Your smile knows what it is embracing  
Your word speaks truth to power  
You are a future that has to be seen  
We waited for you to come and here you are  
Our beloved girl child, for whom we have changed the world  
Walk in the light always my girl child  
Remember, you are the light and the light is you  
Look for those who are lost in the dark  
Call them to join you  
Stretch your arms out to embrace them into the light  
Remember you are faster than anything else, so pause sometimes in once abandoned spaces  
Do not forget that where you are darkness cannot exist  
Your narrative is light, your purpose is enlightenment  
Tell them they can join the light  
Let them know you are the predominant narrative  
Light favours real change  
You are the light, you are the change, you are the peace, you are the realized hope  
This is your time in history to reveal that which has been hidden  
Remember when we used to sing “This little light of mine I’m going to let it shine”  
We continue to sing that song for you my child

**Cheryl Hayles, VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)**

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*Educating girls is a sure way to raise economic productivity, lower child and maternal mortality, improve nutritional status and health, reduce poverty, and eliminate HIV/AIDS and other diseases.” UNICEF*

On the International Day of the Girl Child, October 2016, 48 girls walked through the village of Longido, Tanzania. They carried posters they had made earlier in the day and sang songs as they walked. The girls are part of a preform one program sponsored by a Canadian registered charity – TEMBO (Tanzania Education and Micro-Business Opportunity) that works in partnership and with partners in the local community to provide educational and micro business opportunities for girls and women.

The girls wanted to share with the villagers the importance of girls' education and their walk was significant on so many levels.



Primary education in Tanzania ends after year 7 when the students write a public examination for admission to secondary school. Many children do not continue beyond primary school. A 2017 Human Rights Watch Report estimates that only 52% of eligible adolescents are enrolled in secondary school. The end of primary school also happens to be the age at which a girl is considered to come of age and when she might be subjected to FGM and an arranged marriage, often to a much older man.

Longido is a largely Massai community. Many of the girls are the first in their family to attend school. The community is very poor. The program is free and girls are selected from every school in the district. For ten weeks, they live together and study together. It is an amazing experience to see their academic progress, especially in English (the language of secondary school). These girls want quality education and they want the opportunities that are so often taken for granted in the developed world.

**Kathryn Wilkinson, VP Education, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)**

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## **The Girls The Girls**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDKP\\_x9dn0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDKP_x9dn0w)

<p><b>The Girls The Girls</b></p> <p><b>The gentlest beings</b>  <b>Sing along (female) students</b>  <b>Ta fa ti fi ta fa ta</b></p> <p><b>Say how lucky we are</b>  <b>How lucky how lucky</b>  <b>How happy we are</b>  <b>That we were born as girls</b></p> <p><b>Girls are caring, all of them are kind</b>  <b>All they care about is serving their country</b>  <b>The same way boys do</b></p> <p><b>The girl is just like the boy</b>  <b>She is not just a number</b>  <b>As far as endurance and stamina are concerned, she is mentioned in miracles</b></p> <p><b>Girls are quite clever</b>  <b>“How much does it cost”, they ask</b>  <b>Fit to be ministers of finance</b>  <b>and economy, nothing more to say</b></p> <p><b>The girl is the apple of her mother’s eye</b>  <b>Her father loves her as well</b>  <b>Eyed with admiration from balconies</b>  <b>throughout her neighbourhood</b></p> <p><b>Oh, how wonderful are girls</b>  <b>The smart, The amazing</b>  <b>Photographic memory</b>  <b>Informative like computers</b></p> <p><b>You well behaved girl</b>  <b>You sweet and tidy</b>  <b>As far as talent is concerned</b>  <b>How many creatives we do have</b></p>	<p>البنات البنات  ألطف الكائنات  غنوا يا تلميذات  طفا طفي في طفاطا</p> <p>قولوا يا بختنا  يا بختنا يا بختنا  أد أيه كلنا فرحانين  إننا أتولدنا بنات</p> <p>البنات حنين كلهن طيبين  همهم خدمة بلدهم  زيهم زي البنين</p> <p>البنات زي الولد  ماهيش كمالة عدد  في الإحتمال والجلد  مذكورة في المعجزات</p> <p>البنات ناصحين تمام  يسألوا الحاجة بكام  ينفعوا وزراء مالية  واققتصاد مفيش كلام</p> <p>البنات عين أمها  و أبوها بيحبها  والكل معجب بها في الحي والبلكنات</p> <p>يا سلام على البنات  الأروبة المدهشات  ذاكرة فوتغرافية  كمبيوتر معلومات</p> <p>يا بنت يا مؤدبة  يا حلوة يا مرتبة  وفي حتة الموهبة  كم فينا من مبدعات</p>
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This song was sung in 1985 by the Egyptian actress, Soad Housny, in the famous television series “Him and Her”. The lyrics are by the Egyptian poet, Salah Jaheen, and the music is by the Egyptian composer, Kamal ElTaweel (as stated in a number of websites).

The scene is a music class in a girls’ school, where their music teacher is singing with them, to boost their self-esteem, about girls and what they are capable of.

This song has been viewed as a national anthem for girls for a long time.

Translated into English by:

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### **A Thought Is Never A Secret**

In the Bible, Proverbs, chapter 23, verse 7 addresses the thought theory as follows; “As a man thinketh so is he”. One does not have to be a mind reader to know what society thinks about their Girl Child. With no effort from the individual, both the unconscious and the conscious mind collaborate to ensure that thought is realized. What we think comes out in belief, words, actions and results. October 11th is audacious in reminding us to stop and examine what we really think about our Girl Child. Spoiler alert it’s already clear what we think. Our challenge is then to figure out what to do to make a Girl’s thought process align with her potential and guarantee that her global community is supporting her success. Equity and Inclusion for the Girl Child starts with a thought. Will you join us in the thinking?

**Cheryl Hayles, VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University Women, CFUW**