

Irish Girl Guides press release
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Assistant Chief Commissioner represents 10 million voices at UN Commission on the Status of Women

- 'I am just one voice, but I am proud to have represented 10 million voices' -

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) Assistant Chief Commissioner, Jenna Goodwin, had the honour of representing 10 million Girl Guides at the 61st Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) in New York.

Ms Goodwin was one of 11 young women from around the world representing the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) at CSW61 - the principal body dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the United Nations.

Ms Goodwin delivered a statement on behalf of WAGGGS at an interactive expert panel on "Enhancing availability and use of data and gender statistics to support accelerated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals".

She talked about the importance of collecting data by age, gender and other categories so that progress for all girls is adequately captured. She also spoke about U-Report, a social messaging tool developed by WAGGGS and UNICEF to enable anyone anywhere to speak out on the issues they care about.

"I am just one voice, but I am proud to have represented 10 million voices of WAGGGS members around the world," she said.

Ms Goodwin took part in various sessions, including "Young Women and Mental Health" and "The voices of young women in peace and security" as well as skills exchange labs on digital and political advocacy. As a member of the WAGGGS team, she was also involved in running a session on the *Free Being Me* body confidence programme while other members of the delegation ran a session on WAGGGS's *Stop the Violence* campaign.

She relished the opportunity to hear "some amazing speakers", including Amina Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations.

The overall theme of CSW61 was "Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work" and, as a member of the WAGGGS delegation, Ms Goodwin had the opportunity to sit on various panels at different events in conjunction with other non-governmental organisations to speak out on important issues such as empowering girls' economic futures through education, addressing discriminatory social norms and practices that inhibit girls and young women in society today.

"Throughout the two weeks, we each had the chance to influence policy makers by meeting with our governments to lobby them on the important and unique issues facing girls and young women in today's society," said Ms Goodwin. "Women's economic empowerment starts with girls and we wanted governments to understand that investing in girls is a primary means of increasing economic outcomes for them in later life."

On St Patrick's Day Ms Goodwin attended a reception at the Irish Permanent Mission to the United Nations where she met with decision-makers from the Irish government as well as officials from the

Permanent Mission who were engaged in negotiations on the CSW's Agreed Conclusions and had the chance to share WAGGGS's key messages and highlight the importance of governments recognising the unique perspectives of girls and young women and the barriers preventing gender equality.

"Being part of this delegation has been an amazing opportunity for me to not only represent WAGGGS at a global level, but also to have a meaningful impact on global decision makers to ensure that the challenges facing girls and young women are taken into account," said Ms Goodwin. "I have had the chance to develop my public speaking and critical thinking skills as well as connect with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world."

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator and Global Traveller.