TERMS OF REFERENCE
Spotlight Initiative’s Civil Society (Non-State Experts) National Reference Group

Background and Objective
Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world today. It is a major obstacle to the fulfillment of women’s and girls’ human rights and a threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

In September 2017, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) launched the Spotlight Initiative -- a global partnership to eliminate all forms of VAWG. Backed by a financial investment of EUR 500 million, the Initiative will operate in five regions (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific) and respond to all forms of VAWG, with a particular focus in specific regions on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation. In line with the 2030 Agenda, the Initiative will fully integrate the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ and adopt a multi-stakeholder approach.

For decades, women’s movements have been at the forefront of the fight to eliminate violence and harmful practices against women and children across the globe. Their expertise and contributions span the Outcomes of the Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive Theory of Change -- supporting the implementation of laws, policies and interventions in order to prohibit, prevent and sanction all forms of VAWG; tackling impunity; ensuring timely, adequate and high-quality multi-sectoral services for survivors; educating women and girls on their rights, as well as men and boys on the harmful consequences of traditional notions of masculinity; addressing social and cultural norms that perpetuate and enable discrimination and unequal power relations between women and men; ensuring accurate, reliable and meaningful data on all forms of VAWG; and building alliances, movements and solidarity across the world to eliminate VAWG and advance progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment more broadly.

The Spotlight Initiative intends to work closely with women’s movements and relevant human rights-based civil society organizations (CSOs) on the design, implementation, monitoring and accountability of the Initiative and its Country Programmes in a mutually supportive and reinforcing way, deploying and building upon their vast knowledge and experience, developed at global, regional, national and community levels.

To this end, the Initiative will establish a Civil Society (Non-State Experts) National Reference Group (CS-NRG) in Uganda as an institutional mechanism to harness civil society expertise. The CS-NRG will have a dual responsibility — as advisors to the Spotlight Initiative and as advocates and partners for the realization of its objectives. Members of the CS-NRG will be jointly selected by representatives of the Initiative’s Interim CS-NRG, participating UN agencies, and the European Union Delegation.

Mandate
The CS-NRG is a group of approximately 15 pre-eminent experts on eliminating VAWG, violence against children (VAC), and harmful practices (HP) as well as on women’s rights more broadly. The
CS-NRG will also select a minimum of three of its members to serve on the National Joint Steering Committee1 of the Spotlight Initiative.

Roles and responsibilities of the CS-NRG are broadly as follows:

- Provide advice on the overall strategic direction of the Spotlight Initiative’s Country Programme in Uganda and on cutting-edge national policy and legal issues on eliminating VAWG, VAC, and HP and promoting sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR);
- Provide advice and perspectives on good and promising practices and possibilities in eliminating VAWG, VAC, and HP-related issues at national and local levels;
- Provide advice on ongoing interventions, including where Spotlight activities could improve and prioritize the dignity and safety of women, girls, and children;
- Partner on high-level advocacy and communications as well as political dialogue, including by supporting visibility and promotion of the Initiative’s goals at the national level;
- Support efforts of dissemination of the messages of the Spotlight Initiative on eliminating VAWG, VAC, and HP and promoting SRHR to the public, from the national to the community level, especially to vulnerable groups, youth and the media;
- Provide advice on ongoing interventions, good and promising practices and possibilities for scaling up the Spotlight Country Programme in Uganda;
- Serve as an interactive space and open forum for dialogue between the Spotlight Initiative and womens’ rights organisations, groups and networks working on eliminating VAWG, VAC, and HP and promoting SRHR, including on global, regional, national and local developments, trends and risks related to such work;
- Engage in broader consultations with groups and networks, especially at the local and grassroots levels, at regular intervals to update them and solicit input on the performance of the Spotlight Country Programme in Uganda and for advocacy, research, learning and action;
- Provide any other relevant information, analysis and lessons learned that could feed into the future programming and advocacy efforts of the Spotlight Initiative;
- Review and monitor the Spotlight Country Programme’s implementation and provide feedback to the Joint Steering Committee, including on addressing challenges; and
- Periodically connect with the global and regional Civil Society Reference Groups to share knowledge and lessons learnt as well as develop solutions to common challenges, with a view to supporting the achievement of the Initiative’s results.

In addition to advising the National Joint Steering Committee, the CS-NRG will have a close working relationship with the Resident Coordinator’s Office, the Spotlight Core Management Team and programme teams in Uganda to ensure its systematic engagement in providing technical advice.

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1 The National Joint Steering Committee is the multi-stakeholder governing body of the Spotlight Initiative in Uganda. It is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on the Initiative. The National JSC, is co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development on behalf of the Government of Uganda, with the Ambassador for the European Union Delegation in Uganda playing a key role. Additional members shall include Heads of Recipient UN Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, and UNHCR) as well as respective Government Ministry Permanent Secretaries; a minimum of three civil society representatives from and nominated by the CS-NRG, all with a strong record of working on EVAWG; and development partners who will seek to contribute to the Spotlight.
and informing programming and policy on addressing VAWG, including for the vulnerable groups of women and children, which is key to responding to Agenda 2030’s ‘leaving no one behind’ imperative.

**Criteria**

- All members included in the CS-NRG should be leaders with significant experience working on women’s rights and gender equality and have expertise in eliminating VAWG, VAC, and/or HP.
- Additionally, members should include individuals with knowledge of human rights and feminist frameworks and experience in issues of protection and SRHR.
- CS-NRG members join the group in their individual capacities and not as representatives of their organizations.
- In line with the SDG principle of national ownership, leaders or members of national/local community-based organisations and networks/associations working on eliminating VAWG, VAC, and/or HP using a human rights-based approach will be prioritised.
- In adherence with the principle of *leaving no one behind* (LNOB), a diversity of communities and constituencies should be well represented and considered for inclusion. This may include, survivors of VAWG; women’s rights leaders and academics; sexual and reproductive health and rights activists; leaders of indigenous or grassroots groups; leaders of community-based organisations or networks/associations; advocates or leaders of groups representing vulnerable women and girls, including rural women, persons with disabilities or living with HIV/AIDS, refugees and domestic or migrant workers, widows, adolescents or youth, victims of or those at risk of trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation.
- Geographic balance will be a key consideration to ensure fair representation of different regions on the CS-NRG.
- At least 50% of the CS-NRG members should represent women’s rights movements and feminist organisations.
- At least 50% of the CS-NRG members should be women.
- The group should include representatives from important constituencies such as youth networks, faith-based groups and networks of men and boys working on eliminating VAWG, VAC, or HP using a human rights-based approach.
- In order to ensure neutrality and in compliance with UN ethical standards, CS-NRG members must not have any formal affiliations with governments or political parties.
- Members of the CS-NRG may belong to organizations that are implementing partners of the UN. However, mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest will developed by and adhered-to by the CS-NRG and coordinating UN entities.

**Operational Framework**

The CS-NRG will determine its own operational framework but will meet at a minimum biannually and ensure opportunities for more regular engagement with Spotlight programme team in Uganda through other means. The ongoing collaboration will take place via informal meetings and online interactions. Members will serve for a minimum of one year on a rotational basis; the CS-NRG will determine the duration of membership in the group.
The CS-NRG will also determine a proposed schedule of meetings and tasks, modalities for selection of its representatives to the Spotlight Initiative’s Joint Steering Committee and any other relevant multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms, establish a work plan and budget in coordination and input from the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, and mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest, among others.

A representative of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and a second member of the Spotlight Core Management Team will be non-voting participants in the CS-NRG and may provide support, at the request of the CS-NRG.

Requirements
All interested persons must submit the following documents:
1. Motivation letter, expressing the reasons for the application and the contributions you would bring to the CS-NRG.
2. Curriculum vitae (CV).
3. Letter of recommendation or support from a civil society organization, network, coalition, association, or institution. This may include, for example, a feminist or women’s organization; an organization/network focusing on gender equality and women’s rights, ending violence against women or children, or SRHR; an organization/network that represents vulnerable women and girls as set out in this TOR; or other similar academic, religious, or cultural institution.

All applications must be forwarded to un.uganda@one.un.org; indicating “Spotlight CS-NRG Application” as the subject line.

The Deadline for submission is 24 January 2020.