



**Spotlight
Initiative**
To eliminate violence
against women and girls

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) are embarking on a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) - the *Spotlight Initiative*.

The Initiative is so named as it brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The name reminds us that violence often takes place in the dark, is denied or rendered invisible and that it cannot survive in the light. It also highlights the importance of targeted investments in women and girls to achieve sustainable development, making this renewed and unwavering commitment of the EU and the UN visible.

The *Spotlight Initiative* will deploy targeted, large-scale investments in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean, aimed at achieving significant improvements in the lives of women and girls. It will provide a unique opportunity to build an evidence base demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16 in particular) as well as contribute to the achievement of all SDGs.

The Initiative is intended to provide renewed investment in and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment as a pre-condition and driver for the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also intends to spearhead a new joined up approach and partnership between the UN and the EU to deliver on the SDGs in an integrated manner, in line with respective mandates. The Initiative will respond to all forms of VAWG, with a particular focus 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 for Sustainable Development, the Initiative will fully integrate the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

The Spotlight Initiative has different thematic focuses depending on the region and covers a limited number of countries to achieve a greater impact. In the case of Latin America, the Spotlight Initiative will focus on the elimination of femicide. This phenomenon has serious dimensions in the region, according to the available evidence. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on average, at least 12 women are murdered daily in the region because they are women¹. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that in the Latin American and Caribbean region between 27 and 40 percent of women have suffered violence at the hands of their partners.

¹ <https://www.cepal.org/es/infografias/femicidio>



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The EU announced the approval of an allocation of \$ 55 million for the Latin American region under the Spotlight Initiative, which will be implemented in five countries: Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. These countries were selected on the basis of agreed criteria including the level of femicide prevalence in country, and secondary criteria which assessed government commitment to the issue, enabling environment including for civil society, national and partner capacities, among other considerations.

There will also be a regional programme aimed at adding value, maximizing investment, and contributing to the scale, sustainability, visibility, lessons learnt and replication of programming to prevent and address femicide throughout the Latin American region. The regional programme is meant to address aspects of femicide that extend beyond borders and that cannot be solved entirely from a national perspective. The regional component will encourage regional institutions to move forward policies to prevent femicide in a context where women's human rights are being put into question and where some countries are rolling back previously agreed policies on gender equality.

Through a comprehensive approach, the Spotlight Initiative will focus its work on eliminating femicide through six key pillars: I) developing and implementing relevant legislation and policies, II) strengthening national and sub-national institutions, III) preventing violence through evidence-based programmes and campaigns, IV) ensuring the collection and use of prevalence and incidence data, V) establishing essential services for victims and survivors, and VI) supporting women's rights movements and civil society organizations.

A key principle of the Spotlight Initiative is the meaningful engagement of women's rights groups and relevant civil society organizations, including those representing young women, indigenous women, Afrodescendent women, migrant women, women with disabilities, and other groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Based on this, the three core Spotlight agencies – UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP- launch a call to submit nominations for the establishment of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group, which will serve as a mechanism to ensure the participation of civil society and integrate their experience during the design and implementation phase of the Regional Spotlight Program.

A webinar with civil society will be organized on May 25 at 10: 30-11: 30am (Panama time) to share more information about the Spotlight initiative, the development of the regional component and more details about the formation process and responsibilities of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group.



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To get access to the webinar you will find the connection details below.

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