**Spotlight Initiative Guyana**

**Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG)**

**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**Background and Objective**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an egregious human rights violation that cuts across all countries and cultures. It hinders the achievement of women and girls’ human rights and their abilities to live and love and reach their full potential in safety and dignity. Eliminating VAWG and achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is, therefore, a pre-requisite to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

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 girls across the globe. Their expertise spans all 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; 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 on the design and implementation 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 National Reference Group (CS-NRG) in Guyana 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.

**Mandate of the CS-NRG:**

The meaningful engagement of women's rights groups and relevant civil society organisations, including those representing victims and survivors of violence and groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination (rural/hinterland women and girls, adolescent mothers, women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, women and girls living with disabilities, LGBTQI persons, etc.), is a key principle of the Spotlight Initiative.

In line with this, a **Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG)** will be established as an institutional mechanism to bring in civil society participation and expertise. The CS-NRG would serve a dual function — to advise the Spotlight Country Programme for Guyana and to advocate and partner for the realization of its objectives. Meetings will be held on a quarterly or as-needed basis in Georgetown with internet participation as needed and feasible. Members of the Civil Society National Reference Group will serve in their individual capacities on an unpaid volunteer basis.

**Functions:**

The Spotlight Initiative CS-NRG would have the following roles:

* Provide advice on issues related to violence against women and girls
* Serve as partners in the advocacy, promotion and communication activities, including dissemination of the Spotlight Initiative messages to the public, especially adolescents, young people, families, community leaders, faith-based leaders and the media
* Provide advice on on-going interventions, possible scale-up and challenges
* Serve as an interactive space and open forum for dialogue/learning between the Spotlight Initiative and women's rights' organisations working on EVAWG
* Provide other relevant information, analysis and lessons learned that could feed into the future programming and advocacy efforts of the Spotlight Initiative
* Support the monitoring efforts of the Spotlight UN Country Team and advise on the implementation of programming, including by raising risks and proposing mitigation measures, as well as providing feedback to the National Multi-stakeholder Country Programme Steering Committee

**Composition:**

The Civil Society National Reference Group should be a strategic and substantive network of persons with diverse experience, expertise and perspectives in the priority areas of the Spotlight Initiative. It will be composed as follows:

* The group will consist of maximum of 15 persons, selected through an open selection process.
* All persons included in the CS-NRG should have expertise and experience in the area of addressing violence against women and girls. The criteria is listed below.
* Membership in the CS-NRG will not positively or negatively prejudice the respective individual’s organization in accessing Spotlight Initiative funds
* CS-NRG members join the group in their individual capacities and not as representatives of their organizations

**Criteria of Selection:**

A maximum of 15 persons will be selected on the following criteria ensuring a wide balance of the elements indicated across the criteria.

1. Available to actively participate in group meetings in Georgetown and where feasible virtually, have adequate time to follow up on activities, promote initiatives and respond to consultations.
2. Minimum of 2 years’ work experience in the non-governmental sector working with one or multiple organizations (registered under the Friendly Societies Act, Chapter 36:04 or the Companies Act), academia, research, progressive faith based organisations, independent Women Human Rights Defenders or activists who are not affiliated with an organization.
3. Thematic expertise in one or more of the following areas:
4. gender-based violence
5. intimate partner violence (domestic violence)
6. family violence (including incest)
7. school-based violence
8. child abuse and protection
9. early sexual initiation
10. teen and pre-teen pregnancies
11. sexual and reproductive health
12. mental health
13. reintegration of offenders
14. broader gender equality issues
15. other relevant areas
16. Knowledge and expertise in a combination of Spotlight Initiative pillars:
17. Policy & Legislation
18. Institutional Strengthening
19. Violence Prevention
20. Essential Services
21. Data management
22. Women’s movements/civil society
23. In adherence with the leaving no one behind principle, intersectionality and diversity of communities/constituencies across population typologies such as female victims and survivors of violence, youth, elderly, indigenous people, migrants, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV, sex workers, men and boys (positive masculinities etc.), LGBTQI, etc.
24. Diversity and balance of geographical typologies and scope (Regions):
25. urban/peri-urban communities
26. rural communities
27. hinterland/indigenous communities
28. mining camps
29. other