**Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) for the Spotlight Initiative for Central Asia** **and Afghanistan**

**DraftTerms of Reference**

**Background and Objective**

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 (CSOs) on the design and implementation of the Initiative and its 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.

**Mandate of Civil Society Regional Reference Group**

To this end the Initiative will establish a Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) in Central Asia and Afghanistan as an institutional mechanism to harness civil society expertise. The CS-RRG will have a dual responsibility — as advisors to the Spotlight Initiative and as advocates and partners for the realization of its objectives. The CS-RRG is a group of around 15 pre-eminent regional experts on eliminating VAWG and harmful practices (HP) as well as on women’s rights more broadly.

CS-RRG will be constituted via an independent process led by civil society and facilitated by the UN and involving no other stakeholders.

**Roles of CS-RRG**

The Spotlight Initiative CS-RRG has the following roles and responsibilities:

* Provide advice on the overall strategic direction of the Spotlight Initiative’s Regional Programme in Central Asia and Afghanistan and on cutting-edge regional policy issues on eliminating VAWG and HP
* Provide advice and perspectives on current eliminating VAWG and HP-related issues where the Spotlight Initiative’s advocacy, leadership and support to civil society advocacy is important
* 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 regional level
* Support efforts at dissemination of the messages of the Spotlight Initiative on eliminating VAWG and HP to the public, from the national to the regional level, especially to marginalized groups, youth and the media
* Provide advice on ongoing interventions, possibilities for scaling up the Spotlight Regional Programme in Central Asia and Afghanistan
* Serve as an interactive space and open forum for dialogue between the Spotlight Initiative and women’s rights organizations, groups and networks working on eliminating VAWG and HP, 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 Regional Programme in Central Asia and Afghanistan and for advocacy, research, learning and action
* Provide feedback (including via an annual monitoring report) on the Spotlight Regional Programme’s implementation as well as advice on addressing challenges
* Periodically connect with the global and national 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

**Criteria of selection**

* At least 50% of the CS-RRG members should be leaders or members of regional/sub-regional women’s rights organizations/ networks, including women’s funds and those representing local/grassroots communities, with significant experience working on women’s rights and gender equality and have expertise in eliminating VAWG using a human rights-based approach
* Additionally, members should include individuals with knowledge of human rights and feminist frameworks and experience in issues of protection
* In adherence with the *leaving no one behind* (LNOB) principle, intersectionality and diversity of communities/constituencies should be well represented, and survivors of VAWG, sexual and reproductive health and rights activists, leaders of indigenous groups, LBTQI leaders, representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, grassroots organizations, community-based organizations, networks and movements, labour/trade unions and women activists living with HIV, migrant, domestic, informal and sex workers considered for inclusion
* Geographic balance will be a key consideration to ensure fair representation of all states/regions/districts on the CS-RRG
* The Group should include representatives from important constituencies such as youth networks, progressive faith-based groups and networks of men and boys working on eliminating VAWG using a human rights-based approach
* CS-RRG members will not have any formal affiliations with governments or political parties
* CS-RRG members join the group in their individual capacities and not as representatives of their organizations

Knowledge of English will **not** be a pre-condition for participation in the CS-RRG. All efforts will be made to ensure language accessibility which will vary at the regional level, as well as accessibility to physical spaces.

**Working principles**

The Civil Society Regional Reference Group:

* Demonstrates an awareness and sensitivity to gender issues and to issues related to VAWGs
* Advocates and promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the Spotlight Initiative
* Displays cultural, gender, sexuality, religious, ethnic, and age sensitivity
* Exhibits professionalism, able to work in a multicultural environment and in a team
* In providing advice to the SI regional team, has the capacity to provide information, share best practices, evaluate information related to VAWGs accurately and identify key solutions to programmatic issues
* Communicates effectively
* Represents the voice of the wider civil society community, including academia, media, etc.
* Has the ability to contribute to the development and implementation of efficient and effective communications and visibility strategies and programming

The CS-RRG will also nominate its members to serve on the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee[[1]](#footnote-1) of the Spotlight Initiative as non-voting representatives (civil society representatives must comprise a minimum of 20% of the total membership of all multi-stakeholder committees/groups that form part of the governance structure of the Initiative at the regional level).

In addition to advising the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Committee of the Initiative, the CS-RRG will have a close working relationship with the Spotlight programme team in Kazakhstan to ensure its systematic engagement in providing technical advice and informing programming on addressing VAWG, including for the most marginalized groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which is key to responding to Agenda 2030’s *‘leaving no one behind’* imperative.

Members assume their roles on the CS-RRG in their individual capacity, and not as representatives of their organisations or as individual contractors. All decisions and actions undertaken by the CS-RRG shall therefore be guided solely by the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative’s Regional Programme, goals and objectives. Once established, newly selected members of the CS-RRG will be expected to sign the Code of Conduct for SI regional programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan, which outlines specifically conduct in terms of conflict of interest should a member of the CS-RRG be selected as an implementing partner of the Spotlight Regional/Country Programme.

1. The Governing Body of the Spotlight Initiative is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on the Initiative. Representation on the Governing Body is as follows: High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Jutta Urpilainen Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, eminent women’s rights and civil society leader with experience on eliminating VAWG [↑](#footnote-ref-1)