Call for Application

Call for Application for the Establishment of Civil Society Regional Reference Group

As part of the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP), the UN, on behalf of the appointed Regional Reference Group Selection Committee hereby launches a call for application for the establishment of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG):

Objective	Select fifteen (15) members of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) Members of the CS-RRG serve on a personal capacity and participation in the Group is not remunerated.
Deadline	November 18, 2021 until 11:59 PM EAT

I. Background

The European Union (EU), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the United Nations (UN) are strengthening the global, multi- year initiative, the Spotlight Initiative; focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), harmful practices (HPs) as well as on <u>women's rights more broadly</u>. The Initiative is so named as it brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the center of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), specifically SDG 5 on Gender Equality. The regional initiative includes two streams namely: **Stream 1,** supporting the overall regional response to addressing SGVB HP and SRHR; and **Stream 2**, supporting the regional response to prevention of harmful practices focusing specifically on FGM and Child Marriage.

In alignment with the principle of national ownership embedded in the SDGs and the SDGs' guiding principle of 'leave no one behind – reach the furthest first', the Spotlight Initiative adopts a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure the sustainability and ownership of the Initiative.

The Africa Regional Spotlight Initiative Programme priority is to strengthen existing strategies and initiatives, such as the AU Gender Strategy 2017 -2027, Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, the Maputo Plan of Action on the Operationalization of the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2016-2030), The protocol to the African Charter on the Maputo Protocol) the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend, the African Youth Charter (2006); and the Common Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa (2015) and others. The relevance of the

Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme is ensured by being fully aligned to the Africa Investment Plan with common objectives, pillars, Theories of change and results framework, and also being fully aligned to continental priorities.

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.

To this end the Initiative will establish a Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) as an institutional mechanism to harness civil society expertise and inform implementation of the Africa Regional Programme.

II. Objectives

The CS-RRG will have a <u>dual responsibility -</u> as **advisors** to the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme and as **advocates and partners** for the realization of its objectives.

In addition to advising the Regional Steering Committee of the Initiative and Stream I Steering Committee, the CS-RRG will have a close working relationship with the Spotlight Initiative Africa Coordination Unit to ensure its systematic engagement in providing technical advice and informing programming on addressing VAWG and HPs, including for vulnerable groups as defined in the Africa Regional Programme document,[1] which is key to responding to Agenda 2030's *'leaving no one behind'* imperative.

The CS-RRG will nominate members to serve on the Regional Steering Committee and Stream I Steering Committee of the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme as full voting representatives (*civil society representatives must comprise a minimum of 20% of the total membership of all multi-stakeholder committees that form part of the governance structure of the Initiative at the regional level*).

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[1] For the purpose of the Africa Regional Programme, Vulnerable Groups is defined as "*Groups facing discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion or political opinions or other status.*" This definition is in line with the 2030 Agenda, the principle of leave no-one behind and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) (see SDG 2030 (preamble, articles 9, 19, 23, 25, 39), and African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (preamble, article 2), Maputo protocol (preamble)).

III. Main tasks

The CS-RRG will have the following functions:

1. Provide inputs and recommendations on key issues related to VAWG and HP in Africa, as well as on the strategic direction of the Spotlight Initiative and issues related to public policy at the regional level

2. Act as partners in advocacy and communication activities, including the dissemination of the Spotlight Initiative messages to the public, especially social movements, including those of women, youth, and the media.

3. Provide advice on ongoing programme interventions, possibilities to scale them and address the challenges that may arise

4. Serve as an interactive space and an open forum for dialogue / learning between the Spotlight Initiative and women's rights organizations working on SGBV, HPs and SRHR

5. Provide other relevant information, analysis and lessons learned that can feed into the future programming and advocacy efforts of the Spotlight Initiative

6. Support the monitoring efforts of the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Steering Committee and advise on the implementation of the Programme

7. The CS-RRG will build partnership and linkages with the Civil Society Reference Groups at national and global levels, as well as traditional leaders, pan-African women's organizations and CSOs on AUC's campaigns and advocacy initiatives on EVAW, ECM and elimination of FGM.

8. Designate its representatives in the two Steering Committees (at Regional level and Stream I level of the Regional programme).

Note: At least 20% of the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Steering Committee members will be civil society representatives from and nominated by the Civil Society Regional Reference Group

IV. Composition and Diversity Criteria

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 including Sexual and Reproductive Health rights. The CS-RRG will be composed of experts from East Africa, South Africa, West and Central Africa and North Africa.

1. All members included in the CS-RRG should be leaders or members of regional/sub-regional women's rights organizations/networks, including women's funds, with 8- 10 years experience working on women's rights and gender equality and have expertise in eliminating VAWG and HPs using a human rights-based approach

2. Members should include individuals with knowledge of human rights and feminist frameworks and experience in issues of protection

3. In adherence with the *leaving no one behind* (LNOB) principle, vulnerable groups and people with disabilities   as defined in the Africa Regional Programme, should be well represented, and considered for inclusion

4. Geographic balance will be a key consideration to ensure fair representation of all states/regions/districts on the CS-RRG.

5. At least 50% of the CS-RRG members should represent women's rights movements and feminist organizations

6. The Group should include representatives from important constituencies such as youth networks, traditional leaders, faith-based groups and networks of men and boys working on eliminating VAWG using a human rights-based approach

7. CS-RRG members will not have any formal affiliations with governments or political parties

8. 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 (five AU languages – *English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish*), which will vary at the regional level, as well as accessibility to physical spaces.

V. Duration of the mandate
Members of the CS-RRG will serve for a period from **November 2021 to 31 December, 2022.**

VI. Periodicity of the meetings
Members are expected to participate in two (2) mandatory meetings a year, either virtually or face to face during programme implementation. The frequency of the meetings could be more intense during the programme implementation phase. Members may participate in ad hoc meetings on a voluntary basis, as needed.

VII. Selection

All applications will undergo a thorough review and due diligence in line with the Spotlight Initiative Regional Africa Programme's priorities, through a transparent process..

The selection process will be conducted by a Selection Committee composed of current representatives from UN (represented by UN Women), EU, AUC and 4 independent civil society experts, who will assess the candidacies. The Selection Committee will make decisions by consensus or vote if needed.

VIII. Submitting Your Application

All interested persons must submit the following documentation:

1. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**. No more than 5 pages, including your professional training and work experience, comprising of gender, gender equality, ending gender-based violence, harmful practices, women empowerment and experience working with women's/ feminist movement, as well as a list of references (maximum 3).
2. Portfolio of work in the form of summary of work supporting women's/ feminist movements, and illustrating familiarity with working with national and regional bodies and institutions, on these issues.

3. Motivation letter expressing the reasons for the application and the contributions you would bring to the CS-RRG, no more than 1000 characters long (including spaces). Please ensure you indicate availability to serve on the CS-RRG, especially if you are currently serving or employed in a professional capacity elsewhere.

Note:

- All applications must be sent to the following e-mail addresses by **18 November, 2021 by 11:59pm EAT (Nairobi)** to spotlight.stream1@unwomen.org and WGYD@africa-union.org. Applications received outside this deadline will not be taken into consideration and will not be considered.
- Applications can be submitted in English.