**Call for inputs – SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE Submission**

**Report to the UN Human Rights Council on the realisation of the right of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**

The Spotlight Initiative is a global partnership between the United Nations and the European Union. With the European Union’s historic investment of EUR 500 million, the Spotlight Initiative aims at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls through its 34 programmes across five regions, including two Trust Funds for civil society. Guided by the principle of “leaving no one behind,” programmes pay particular attention to reaching women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discriminations,  including LGTBI and GNC people. With its comprehensive theory of change and universality mandate, the Spotlight Initiative is well positioned to advance SDG 3 whilst ensuring that LGBTQI and GNC people, that have a higher risk of violence, have access to mental and physical health services.

During its first three years of implementation, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to fostering the meaningful engagement of LGTBQI and GNC people in strategic decision-making processes and spaces. In all its 25+ countries of implementation, the Spotlight Initiative has established Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG) to enable the systematic engagement of civil society giving civil and their access to the highest decision-making body at country and regional levels. In Civil Society Reference Groups, meaningful participation and representation of organizations and movements representing groups facing intersecting forms of discriminations have been ensured, including LGBTQI and GNC people. This has fostered their ability to participate into decision-making processes and amplified their voices and agency. In addition, the Spotlight Initiative has supported the review and reform of legal systems and frameworks to ensure that root-cases, consequences and risk factors of violence against women and girls are comprehensively addressed and the the specific needs of individuals facing intersecting forms of discriminations, such as LGTBQI and GNC individuals,  are effectively addressed.  In **Liberia**, for instance, the Spotlight Initiative conducted a legislative review of the Inheritance Law, Rape Law and Domestic Violence Law jointly with government officials and CSO representatives to ensure the inclusion of a comprehensive approach to target all forms of violence and discriminations. The LGBTQI community members were fully involved in this exercise and were able to identify gaps, propose amendments or draft new laws to address their concerns. In **Mozambique**, the Spotlight Initiative conducted an assessment of *Instituto do Patrocínio e Assistência Jurídica*’s capacity to provide justice services, assistance and legal representation to women and girls and other vulnerable groups, such as LGBTQI and GNC people with albinism and disabilities. In **Belize**, the Spotlight Intiative conducted a study to evaluate the effective implementation of Family law legislations and has launched a comprehensive review of existing policies and protocols on the response to sexual violence in the security forces, including in context of emergency. These processes have been conducted in close consultation with survivors of violence against women and girls including those facing discrimination due to sexual orientation and/or gender identification. In **Uganda**, the Spotlight Initiative supported the Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa to develop a ground-braeking  Inter-Religious Council of Uganda pastoral letter on sustained Sexual Reproductive Health/HIV/Gender Based Violence programming to raise awareness about risks and consequences of violence, including among marginalized groups. In **South-East Asia**, the Initiative is conducting a major study on the interlinkages between sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and ending violence in context of labour migration engaging with activists working on LGBTQI issues in the targeted countries.

The Spotlight Initiative  supports the provision of accessible, affordable and quality non-discriminatory essential services including health care services for persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Spotlight Initiative provided support through mobile clinics, offering coordinated sexual and reproductive health services, psychosocial counselling, information and referrals, and longer-term recovery services to vulnerable populations living in remote areas, including to LGTBQI and GNC people, persons living with disabilities and persons living with HIV and AIDS in **Mozambique, Niger, Haiti** and **Belize**. In **Guyana, Uganda** and **Tajikistan**, the Initiative supported services to adapt to the challenges emerged with the COVID-19 global pandemic, and provide quality support to  most at-risk groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, Tuberculosis, HIV and LGTBI and GNC people. In **Belize**, the Initiative, in coordination with civil society organizations, launched the “mobile women’s centres’’ model, a literal representation of the “leaving no one behind” principle which aims to connect with individuals in hard to reach communities such as the LGBTQI community. The success of the centres rested on the meaningful engagement of civil society organizations, which promoted local ownership and fostered trust with communities. In 2020 alone, the first six mobile women’s centres provided holistic care and support to almost 400 women and girls in the southern and northern regions of the country. Building on this, in 2021 the programme will develop a sustainability strategy as a Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for mobile service delivery. In **Trinidad and Tobago,** the Spotlight Initiative, during the outbreak of COVID-19 financially supported front-line personnel from civil society organisations to continue service provision for survivors, including Sexual and Reproductive Health services, and increase  accessibility to services for vulnerable populations such as LGBTI people, sex workers, among others. In **Haiti** and **Samoa**, the Spotlight Initiative supported hotlines and counseling services specialized in violence response and suicide prevention, including for LGBTQI and GNC people.

Finally, upholding the principle of “leaving no one behind”, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to strategically leverage the expertise of women’s rights and feminist activists, civil society organisations (including those representing groups facing intersecting forms of discriminations) as well as subject-matter experts and marginalized groups representing LBTQI and GNC people  to advance the rights and opportunities of women and girls suffering from violence, abuse and exploitation. In **Liberia**, for instance, the Initiative partnered with grassroots civil society organisations, including those representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual and queer people, to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviours around the specific challenges faced by them. In **Timor-Leste**, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with the only two LGBTQI rights advocacy organizations in Timor-Leste with the aim of increasing awareness around LGBTQI rights. The **Latin America** Regional Programme of the Spotlight Initiative, in collaboration with a LGBTIQ+ coaltion and other partners, provided service providers, including those operating in the national education system, with educational toolkits on prevention of violence against women and girls reflecting an intersectional approach. Similarly, in the **Pacific**, the Initiative was able  to break the mold on feminist partnerships and support groups with a more intersectional focus,  reaching the most marginalized groups like the LGBTQI community in Tonga.