



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence
against women and girls

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



PRESS RELEASE



Pictured: European Union Director of the People and Peace Directorate Henriette Geiger (left) and Executive Director of the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Jennifer Topping (right) with the signed agreements.

EU and UN green-light €260 million to save women's lives in 13 countries.

NEW YORK/BRUSSELS, 14 December 2018

The European Union and the United Nations approve €260 million in funding to eliminate violence against women and girls in 13 African and Latin American countries.

The Spotlight Initiative's Operational Steering Committee has approved national programmes to eliminate violence against women and girls in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The €260 million total investment across the 13 countries is the largest commitment of its kind, ever.



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence
against women and girls



The approval culminates a year-long series of nationally-led, multi-stakeholder investment planning and programme design activities. The consultations brought together civil society, national governments, the European Union, United Nations agencies and other partners to design comprehensive, high-impact interventions that can save women's and girls' lives.

"We want to show that the European Union and United Nations can be strongly aligned for effective multilateralism that is close to people and can make a difference in women's lives," said EU Director-General for International Cooperation and Development Stefano Manservigi.

With the funding in place, United Nations teams will begin coordinating the implementation of programmes that will address legislative and policy gaps, strengthen institutions, promote gender-equitable attitudes, and provide quality services for survivors and reparations for victims of violence and their families. Critically, programmes will also strengthen and build women's movements across Africa and Latin America.

"We are really excited that we can give the green light to country teams on the ground to get going," said UN Director of Sustainable Development Michelle Gyles-McDonnough.

National launches for the 13 programme countries are planned for early 2019.

A regional launch for Africa is planned for 9 February 2019 in Addis Ababa.

The [regional launch for Latin America](#) took place in September 2018.

For media inquiries please contact:

In New York: Koye Adeboye, +1 646 781 4768, adekoyejo.adeboye@unwomen.org

In Brussels Chiara Puletti, +32 2 2992230, chiara.puletti@ext.ec.europa.eu

BACKGROUND

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations globally.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is worrisome. In some countries in the region, 76 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Most affected are marginalized women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Fifteen of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are in Africa, and more than 40 per cent of girls marry before the age of 18. Every year, three million girls from 29 African countries join an estimated 200 million women and girls that have experienced the human rights violation known as female genital mutilation. The region also has the highest rates of unmet family planning needs, adolescent pregnancies, maternal deaths and HIV/AIDS prevalence.

Latin America is home to 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world. In 2016, 254 women and girls were killed in Argentina, 349 in El Salvador, 211 in Guatemala, 466 in Honduras and 2,813 in Mexico



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

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multiyear partnership between European Union and United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Launched with a seed funding commitment of €500 million from the European Union, the initiative represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality and women's empowerment as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Africa, the Spotlight Initiative is addressing sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and their linkages to sexual and reproductive health access. Programmes will invest in the prevention of violence and scaling-up innovative and evidence-based approaches to social norms change through community mobilization activities. Influential stakeholders — such as traditional and religious leaders — will also be engaged as allies to address negative stereotypes about gender roles and social norms that condone violence.

In Latin America, the Spotlight Initiative is addressing Femicide. Interventions will aim at strengthening laws and policies, and at ensuring their enforcement, while promoting prevention of violence and services to survivors. Priority is also given to serving those most left behind, focusing interventions on women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination, as evidence shows that such women and girls are more at risk of violence and femicide.