



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



MPTF OFFICE ANNUAL SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE SECRETARIAT NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2022

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Spotlight Initiative Secretariat MPTF Office Reference Number:² 00108307 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results¹</p> <p><i>Country/Region:</i> 34+ programmes in Africa, ASEAN, Caribbean, Central Asia, Latin America, and Pacific</p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results:</i> Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls, Sustainable Development, UN Reform</p>
<p>Participating Organisation(s)</p> <p>Organisations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA</p>	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document³: \$24,946,909</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN MPTFO (UNDP): \$10,182,492 UN Women: \$14,699,227 UNFPA: \$65,190 <p>Agency Contribution: \$744,264</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MPTFO (UNDP): \$235,714 UN Women: \$351,984 UNFPA: \$156,566 	<p>Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration: September 2017 - December 2024</p> <p>Start Date⁵: 20.09.2017</p>

¹ Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document.

² The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as "Project ID" on the project's factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

³ The updated Spotlight Initiative Fund Secretariat Project Document, and updated Budget, were approved by the Operational Steering Committee on OSC meeting #25, on 21 Dec. 2022. The figures included here reflect this latest approved version.

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organisations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

Government Contribution	Original End Date ⁶	31.12.2024
Other Contributions (donors)	Current End date ⁷	31.12.2024
TOTAL:		\$25,691,173

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.
<p>Functional review of the management unit functions commended in January 2022, final report received on 10 July 2022.</p> <p>Assessments were further carried out for all programmes as mid-term assessment, various thematic assessments are under way, and a final assessment is in the scoping stage.</p>

Report Submitted By
<p>Name: Alessandra Roccasalvo</p> <p>Title: Senior Fund Manager</p> <p>Participating Organisation: UNDP</p> <p>Email Address: alessandra.roccasalvo@un.org; alessandra.roccasalvo@undp.org</p>

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organisation is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

List of Acronyms

CPD: Country Programme Document
CSO: Civil society organisation
CSW66: Commission on the Status of Women
DCO: United Nations Development Coordination Office
DG INTPA: Directorate-General for International Partnerships (European Commission)
ECA: European Court of Auditors
EOSG: Executive Office of the Secretary-General
EU: European Union
EVAWG: Eliminating violence against women and girls
EVAW: Eliminating violence against women
FTR: Fund Transfer Request
FS: Fund Secretariat
GAR: Global Annual Report
GBV: Gender-based violence
GLS: Global Learning Symposium
HQ: Headquarter
KM: Knowledge Management
M&E: Monitoring & Evaluation
MPTF Office: Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
MTA: Mid-term Assessment
OM: Operations Manual
OSC: Operational Steering Committee
RPD: Regional Programme Document
RUNO: Recipient United Nations Organisation
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
SI Secretariat: Spotlight Initiative Secretariat
SMART: Spotlight Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
UN: United Nations
UNCT: United Nations Country Team
UNDAF: United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWG: Violence against women and girls

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	3
Table of Contents	4
Introduction	5
Overview	6
Results	7
Overseeing implementation and guiding acceleration	7
Facilitating decision-making and cooperation through governance and coordination structures	10
Programme Replenishment	14
Reporting on results	18
Monitoring and evaluating the initiative for results and recommendations	19
Advancing knowledge management and capacity development	22
Raising awareness and visibility	23
Mobilising partners and stakeholders to eliminate violence against women and girls	25
Sustainability	25
Navigating Complexity Across the Initiative	27

Introduction

This report is produced at the request of the MPTFO as the Administrative Agent and host of the Spotlight Initiative Fund Secretariat (FS). It offers an overview of the work accomplished and progress made by the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat in 2022 against the overarching functions and goals set out in the Spotlight Initiative Direct Cost Project Document and the Fund's [Terms of Reference](#), namely:

- Provide strategic advice and quality control over implementation of the Spotlight Initiative;
- Exercise accountability for the technical quality and coherence of the initiative in responding to country and regional programme needs;
- Provide management, operational, and administrative support to the Governing Body and the Operational Steering Committee (OSC), and ensure the submission of country-level/regional programme proposals to the OSC;
- Foster coherence, alignment, quality, scaling up and sharing of knowledge and lessons learned, and ensure that these feed into relevant wider United Nations Reform discussions;
- Facilitate collaboration and communication between the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), recipient United Nations organisations (RUNOs), and the United Nations Resident Coordinators regarding the operations of the fund;
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of programme technical quality, coherence and potential replicability of actions in other countries/contexts;
- Manage and support communication, public information and visibility, in close collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information, the EOSG and the three core implementing agencies (plus UNICEF), to raise awareness on VAWG and to illustrate impact;
- Coordinate with the three core implementing agencies — UNDP, UN Women, and UNFPA — plus UNICEF and the wider UN system, and leverage their collective capacities and gender expertise to deliver on the goal of eliminating violence against women and girls (EVAWG);
- Coordinate action amongst relevant international development actors and promote a streamlined process of information-sharing for EVAWG;
- Facilitate spaces for the meaningful engagement of civil society at all levels of programming;
- Produce high quality data analysis and practical tools for decision makers aimed at ensuring Spotlight Initiative interventions are based on sound research;
- Elaborate and periodically update a comprehensive [Operations Manual](#), to codify policies and rules of procedure in accordance with signed legal agreements, and ensure compliance;
- Manage the monitoring and control of operational risks and ensure activities are implemented as planned, having the intended impact on rights-holders, effectively owned by communities, relevant to the needs of rights-holders, and captured through knowledge management strategies to be converted into policy tools;
- Coordinate and oversee the annual reporting process, both at fund-level and programme-level, and consolidate narrative annual and final reports;
- Ensure collaboration and streamlined communication with all relevant stakeholders and foster constant engagement with civil society;
- Guide programme teams during the Phase II transition process, including dedicated quality assurance reviews to ensure quality of submissions and adherence to requirements;

- Actively engage UNCTs, implementing partners, and EU Delegations to develop and promote the Initiative's next phase (Spotlight Initiative 2.0) including by creating evidence-based strategic frameworks, and engaging in resource mobilisation to broaden the donor portfolio;
- Provide support and coordination for operational and financial closure of Spotlight Initiative 1.0 including final cumulative reporting and data collection, guiding on operational and financial closure procedures and ensuring UN Country Teams develop sustainability strategies and transition plans to safeguard and scale up the results achieved to date.

This report has been structured around these main responsibilities.

Overview

In 2018, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) launched the Spotlight Initiative, a global partnership to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (EVAWG), accompanied by an initial financial envelope of EUR 500 million. Additionally, as a complement to the EU's historic seed investment, the Government of Portugal committed USD 68,474 to the Spotlight Initiative, and the Government of Albania committed USD 5,000. Since its inception on September 20th 2017, the Initiative has advanced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) by supporting the collective efforts of development actors to eliminate violence against women and girls, as underscored by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality (Targets 5.2.12 and 5.3.13), as well as SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Targets 16.1.1, 16.2.2 and 16.2.3). The Spotlight Initiative is a Sustainable Development Goal and UN Development System reform model fund, pioneering an unprecedented integration of UN agency efforts under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, at country level, and the Development Coordination Office (DCO) Regional Directors, at regional level.

The Secretariat is a fund support structure that consists of two units: the Management Unit and the Technical Unit. The two units work in close collaboration and in a complementary manner. The Secretariat supports the governance bodies, executes the management and coordination activities of the Fund and provides both operational and technical support to teams across all Spotlight Initiative programmes. Given that the Spotlight Initiative is a Demonstration Fund for the United Nations Development System Reform, the Secretariat also facilitates coordination across implementing organisations in service of this new way of working. The Management Unit acts as the secretariat of the Governing Body and Operational Steering Committee and is hosted by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office, while the Technical Unit is hosted by UN Women and provides technical and programmatic leadership and support. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General provides overall coordination of the Secretariat.

2022 was the 5th year of the FS's operations.

Results

Overseeing implementation and guiding acceleration

Portfolio Implementation and Management Support

The Secretariat is responsible for overseeing 34 Spotlight Initiative programmes, to ensure they are well-equipped to advance implementation, address challenges and meet goals. In 2022, the Secretariat supported 14 programme teams with Phase I + II Country Programme Document (CPD) and budget development, budget revisions, and annual work plans, and provided guidance on programme governance (especially related to National/Regional Steering Committees).

Effective country and regional programme support

The Secretariat works to ensure that governance decisions, and guidance and resources reach programmes in a timely manner, so that programme teams are equipped to carry out effective and efficient programming in the spirit of UN Reform. Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat actively coordinated with Agency Focal Points, the EU and other actors to ensure prompt responses to requests for support. To ensure its support is relevant, the Secretariat systematically tracks requests received and associated responses, more effectively targeting support.

The Secretariat also organises relevant webinars and other regular spaces for exchange, including those listed below.

- On 18 February, 28 February and 1 March 2022, the Secretariat held budgetary clarification sessions with UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP respectively to ensure that their teams at country and regional levels are further equipped to support effective programme delivery.
- In May 2022, the Secretariat introduced dedicated Coordinator Calls, as an open space where coordinators can receive targeted support from the Secretariat on various challenges faced within their programmes while sharing experiences and good practices to collectively support more effective programme delivery. Within each cycle, a dedicated Coordinator Call is organised for each of the five Spotlight Initiative regions, to accommodate all time zones and teams. In 2022, the Secretariat organised five cycles of Coordinator Calls.
- On 20 June 2022, the Secretariat held induction sessions for Spotlight Coordinators who recently joined the programmes in Papua New Guinea and Samoa, alongside members of their teams. During these sessions, programmes receive information on key programme management principles and guidance, including on UN Reform, programme and budget revisions, implementation through civil society organisations, annual work plans, reporting and fund transfers.
- During the reporting period, the Secretariat also facilitated several programme-oriented sessions for engagement with Global, Regional and National Civil Society Reference Groups to uphold their role as key mechanisms for meaningful participation of civil society, including in monitoring and ensuring accountability. To that end, in 2022, the Spotlight Initiative held two Regional Civil Society Forums—in June and December—building on efforts carried out over

the previous year. Ahead of these forums, two surveys were shared with Civil Society Reference Groups at all levels, to map the level of engagement of Reference Groups; provide data for monitoring and tracking trends and improvements in CSG members' participation; and help inform guidance to programme teams to strengthen programme implementation.

- Throughout 2022, the Secretariat organised several support calls with programmes, aimed at fostering smooth implementation across the portfolio, including operational support pertaining to Phase II design, financial reporting, fund transfer requests, among others.
- From 22 to 28 November 2022, the Secretariat organised webinars on operational and financial closure, aimed at equipping programmes to close operations within the ongoing cycle, in full compliance.
- In December 2022, the Secretariat organised webinars to launch the 2022 reporting cycle for Spotlight Initiative programme annual reporting. Further details on guidance and support provided during the annual reporting cycle can be found below.
- In addition, with the aim of supporting programmes in knowledge management and facilitating spaces for knowledge exchange, the Secretariat organised a series of global-level knowledge exchanges throughout the reporting period including on *Engaging the Private Sector to End Violence Against Women and Girls*, *Resiliency to Crises: Lessons from Civil Society Organizations in the prevention of VAWG*, the launch of the SHINE platform, among others. Adding to this, the Secretariat organised a multi-stakeholder, in-person convening including over 200 participants from the UN, government, civil society and others. More on these session can be found in the **Advancing knowledge management and capacity development** section below.

In addition to the convenings noted above, the Secretariat also developed a range of guidance and processes to further support programme implementation, including a set of internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline support to programmes, and a range of guidance notes (and webinars) on civil society and knowledge management, described further below.

In April 2022, the Secretariat launched a survey to assess how programmes felt about the support received from the Secretariat on budgets and budget revisions, programme implementation and reporting. Feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and helped inform, shaping the Secretariat's approach to programmatic support going forward.

Phase II development for Asia, Caribbean and the Pacific

In February 2022, the Secretariat communicated with UN Resident Coordinators on the Phase II process for country and regional programmes in Asia, Caribbean and the Pacific⁸. From then on, the Secretariat closely supported twelve (12) country programme teams and two (2) regional programme teams in the Phase II transition process, including Belize, Central Asia Regional Programme, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Pacific Regional Programme, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vanuatu. Templates and detailed guidance on Phase II narrative and budget proposals were provided, and multiple rounds of review were conducted on

⁸ Excluding Afghanistan, Caribbean Regional Programme, Safe and Fair, which follow a different project cycle.

draft proposals and budgets to ensure the documents reached the necessary level of quality. Additionally, the Secretariat coordinated closely with counterparts at the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), to ensure clarity and streamline the OSC approval process.

To help programmes finalise their Phase II documents for OSC approval, the Secretariat also held two webinars in February 2022 to provide further guidance and assistance on Phase II, including information on Phase II proposals; details on allocations and duration; staffing; civil society engagement; budget development and templates; key Spotlight Initiative principles; and information on next steps.

Updating the Operations Manual Compendium and Other Mandatory and Supplementary Guidance

In further efforts to improve support to programme teams and UN Agencies, the Secretariat updated the existing Operations Manual (OM) Compendium. The compendium incorporates all relevant guidance issued and shared with Spotlight Initiative programmes since the Fund's inception. The revision incorporates feedback from Agency Focal Points and updates previously issued guidance on Phase II, the extension of the implementation period, and work with civil society. It also offers more detailed operational closure guidance. Following endorsement by the Operational Steering Committee in January 2023, the OM was shared with Agency Focal Points and Spotlight Initiative programme teams, to help ensure the Initiative operates in line with the United Nations Development Group standards.

In addition to the OM, the Secretariat issued specific guidance notes on aspects such as bridge funding, accelerated implementation, budget revision and operational and financial closure. To further support programmes and ensure that the guidance notes were understood, the Secretariat organised training sessions for coordinators and other stakeholders, as needed, and established accessible channels for Q&A.

Supporting the Agency Focal HQ Point system

As in previous years, the Secretariat held monthly meetings with Agency Focal Points at HQ level to discuss progress, address challenges and share operational and technical guidance. These meetings foster inter-agency coordination and improved communication among Spotlight Initiative programmes, Agencies at HQ level and the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, in order to better support programme implementation.

Technical Agency Focal Point meetings represent a critical space to collaborate, identify synergies across areas of work and, importantly, to ensure that the range of expertise across the UN system is leveraged for high-quality programme delivery. In 2022, the Secretariat held a total of six (6) Technical Agency Focal Point meetings. Following suggestions to more robustly cover topics related to programme management and operations, the Secretariat also held regular meetings with Operational Agency Focal Points. These meetings offer a dedicated space to discuss management and operational support, as well as share (and exchange on) updates to guidance, further streamlining communication and collaborative knowledge exchange on these issues to better support operational and

management processes at programme level and foster smooth and continuous programme implementation. During the reporting period, eight (8) Operational AFP meetings were held. Regular meetings with both technical and operational Agency Focal Points help to establish a more robust coordination mechanism between Agencies at HQ level and the Secretariat to support strengthened coherence and more effective programme implementation.

In addition to these regular meetings, in February 2022, the Secretariat and Agency Focal Points—at both technical and operational levels—co-hosted a retreat to look back on three years of implementation and collectively shape the future of the Spotlight Initiative. A follow-up meeting was held in June 2022, in direct response to reflections that came up during the retreat, to identify concrete action points on the way forward. The learning surfaced will help inform and strengthen future programming by improving operational, managerial and technical support.

Facilitating decision-making and cooperation through governance and coordination structures

The Governing Body is the highest tier of governance of the Initiative; it provides overarching high-level strategic direction and strengthens partnership, collaboration and coherence across the Initiative. This high-level forum facilitates consultation among stakeholders, provides strategic oversight, develops common strategic communication messaging, and approves operational tools. The Secretariat provides strategic support to the Governing Body by advising on compliance and decision-making; providing substantive servicing in meetings (including agenda setting, drafting of talking points and background notes, convening participants, holding pre-negotiation meetings with key stakeholders, planning logistics of events and compiling background documents for decisions); and engaging in detailed record-keeping and appropriate follow-up. On 5 May 2022, the Governing Body of the Spotlight Initiative convened to discuss overall progress across programmes in the current portfolio (including a dedicated agenda point to discuss the current situation of the Afghanistan Country Programme and the critical need to remain in-country in support of women), as well as the future of the Spotlight Initiative. The next Governing Body meeting will take place in the first semester of 2023.

The second tier of governance is the Operational Steering Committee (OSC). The OSC ensures effective management and coordinates all operational and technical aspects of the initiative, with operational and administrative support from the Secretariat. In 2022, the OSC launched five written procedures and held two virtual meetings. Key decisions are summarised in the text box below.

2022 Operational Steering Committee Key Decisions

Operational Steering Committee - 15 March 2022

- The Spotlight Initiative Afghanistan Programme 2022 Annual Work Plan was approved, with affirmation of the Joint Operating Principles based on the UN's Transitional Engagement Framework in alignment with EU principles.

- The maximum implementation timeframe for Spotlight Initiative programmes in the Caribbean, Asia, and Pacific is extended by one year from 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2023. The extension will be applied with adjusted Programme Management Costs from 18% to 22% for small programmes (with a phase II budget under or around USD 2 million).
- The possible extension of Spotlight Initiative Programmes in Latin America and Africa to a maximum date of 31 December 2023 will be decided based upon the written request by the Resident Coordinator to the OSC. The extension will be applied with an adjusted Programme Management Cost from 18% to 22% for those with an approved fifth year of implementation within the available country envelope.
- Approval of a resource mobilisation position at senior level with corresponding allocation of funding from currently unallocated Spotlight Initiative funds.

Operational Steering Committee - 7 April 2022

- Approval of the Phase II allocation and updated Country Programme Document (CPD) for the Kyrgyzstan Country Programme, including Phase II.

Operational Steering Committee - 31 May 2022

- Approval for Phase II as per the Spotlight Initiative Investment Plans, with an additional allocation (30%) of the total budgets per country programme for: Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor Leste and Vanuatu.

Operational Steering Committee - 26 August 2022

- Programme extensions are approved for Africa and Latin America regions, [as per the requests of the Resident Coordinators], with an adjusted Programme Management Costs threshold from 18% to 22% within the available country envelope.
- The programme extension until 31 December 2023 as approved by the OSC#19 of 15 March 2022, is applicable to the following programmes: Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund Haiti; Safe & Fair ASEAN; Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund Afghanistan; and Women's Peace Humanitarian Fund Papua New Guinea.
- Approval of the updated Country Programme Document for the Trinidad and Tobago Country Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the updated Country Programme Document for the Papua New Guinea Country Programme, including Phase II.

Operational Steering Committee - 13 October 2022

- The programme extensions for Africa Regional Programme, Ecuador and El Salvador Programmes are approved.
- The Global Platform Programme document and programme budget as well as the extension until 31 December 2023, are approved. The total budget allocation for the Global Platform remains unchanged at a total of USD 767,337.
- Approval of the Phase II allocation and updated Country Programme Document (CPD) for the Haiti Country Programme, including Phase II.

- Approval of the Phase II allocation and updated CPD for the Tajikistan Country Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the Phase II allocation and updated CPD for the Pacific Regional Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the updated CPD for the Jamaica Country Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the updated CPD for the Timor-Leste Country Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the updated CPD for the Vanuatu Country Programme, including Phase II.
- The 2021 Spotlight Initiative Global Annual Report is endorsed.

Operational Steering Committee - 29 November 2022

- Approval of updated CPDs for Belize and Samoa, including Phase II.
- Approval of Phase II allocations and updated CPD and budget for Guyana, including Phase II.
- The OSC will not consider any Phase II programmes for approval after 31 March 2023.
- Acknowledgement of the Mid-Term Assessment for the Ecuador Country Programme and updates of Mid-Term Assessments for the Pacific Regional Programme, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, and Kyrgyzstan Country Programme.
- Acknowledgement of updated CPD for Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund Haiti.

Operational Steering Committee - 21 December 2022

- Approval of the Spotlight Initiative Fund Secretariat Project Document with updated Budget.
- Approval of the Global Platform Programme Document and updated Budget.
- Approval of the Phase II allocation and updated Regional Programme Document (RPD) for the Central Asia Regional Programme, including Phase II.
- Approval of the CPD for the Grenada Country Programme, including Phase II.
- Adoption of the updated Operations Manual Compendium.

In addition to its aforementioned support to the Governing Body and OSC, the Secretariat also regularly coordinates meetings with Heads of Agencies (HoAs) of implementing UN Agencies and other stakeholders across the UN system to foster collaboration, communication and cohesion in programming to end violence against women and girls.

In 2022, the Heads of the core UN Agencies (UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA plus UNICEF) convened twice, once on 21 February 2022 and again on 14 December 2022. During the meetings, stakeholders discussed the Initiative's progress and results, and the continued need to accelerate implementation. Conversation also focused on the future of the Spotlight Initiative (including maintaining the Initiative's key features for Spotlight Initiative 2.0; engaging new partners, donors and EU Delegations; and strengthening local resource mobilisation through UN Resident Coordinators). These meetings provided a valuable space for the Head of Agencies and the Executive Office of the Secretary General to reach a common understanding of the Initiative's progress to date and collectively agree on a way forward.

At the same time, the EOSG and the Secretariat also convened two meetings with the Directors of the core UN Agencies plus UNICEF on 8 March 2022, and 9 December 2022. The purpose of these meetings was to jointly review implementation status, collectively address pending challenges, and discuss the future of the Initiative moving forward. The last Directors Meeting of the year was convened on 9 December 2022, as noted, by the EOSG to discuss a range of issues, including implementation progress; the future of the Spotlight Initiative; the European Court of Auditors Review; and the outcomes of the Spotlight Initiative Global Learning Symposium (held in Mexico in September 2022). This meeting offered an important opportunity to discuss the need for accelerated implementation and programme closure by 31 December 2023, as well as the need to engage new donors and work closely with civil society organisations to shape Spotlight Initiative 2.0.

On 17 October 2022, the Deputy Secretary-General hosted a meeting with Resident Coordinators of Spotlight Initiative countries to highlight the progress made to end violence against women and girls and efforts needed to sustain momentum and support national-level ownership. UN Resident Coordinators from the following Spotlight Initiative countries were in attendance: Zimbabwe, Guyana, Afghanistan, Niger, Uganda, Asia-Pacific Regional Director, Malawi, Vanuatu, Belize and El Salvador, Nigeria, Honduras, Mali, Samoa, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Liberia, Mozambique, Mexico, and Kazakhstan.

Moreover, the SI Secretariat team held regular briefings with the UN Deputy Secretary-General, including to keep the EOSG abreast of developments on the Spotlight Initiative. In 2022, six such meetings were held with a focus on programme implementation rates, the ongoing performance review by the European Court of Auditors (ECA), ongoing work on communications, the future of the Spotlight Initiative and opportunities for partnerships and resource mobilisation, among other topics. The Secretariat supports with ample preparation, servicing and follow-up of these meetings, including agenda-setting, compilation of relevant background documents, drafting of briefing notes and talking points, recording and sharing meeting minutes and engaging in meeting follow-up.

Supporting the engagement of the Civil Society Global Reference Group

Another key governance and coordination mechanism of the Spotlight Initiative is the Civil Society Global Reference Group (the GRG). The GRG is an established institutional mechanism of diverse, peer-selected women's rights activists who advise the fund, advocate and partner for the realisation of its objectives, and hold the Initiative accountable to its commitments to civil society. A Civil Society Global Reference Group representative serves as a full member of the Operational Steering Committee and a member of the Governing Body, as well. As a new model for a Sustainable Development Goal fund, the representation of a GRG member in the highest governance mechanisms embodies a new way of working with civil society and reflects the Initiative's commitment to meaningfully engage civil society at all levels.

In 2022, the Civil Society Global Reference Group continued to work with the Secretariat, identifying bottlenecks in the UN's processes that constrain its ability to fund grassroots groups and creative solutions to enable more effective and inclusive funding (funding that addresses the lived realities of women and girls and responded to the needs of constituency led civil society organisations) were put forward. Through global workshops, consultations and advocacy briefs, the Global Reference Group

and the Secretariat amplified the importance of institutionalising a more inclusive and harmonised approach to civil society funding at the highest levels of the Initiative. In terms of advocacy, the Global Reference Group conducted comprehensive global research on discriminatory laws in Spotlight Initiative programme countries to assess entry points and inform national level advocacy on government accountability. The Global Reference Group also partnered with the Central Asia Regional Reference Group to conduct a Civil Society Organizations Forum that convened implementing partners, as well as survivor-led and grassroots organisations to develop recommendations for the Central Asia Regional Programme.

To enact the accountability role of National and Regional Reference Groups, the Global Reference Group was instrumental in providing dedicated monitoring support to National and Regional Reference Groups; as a result, seven groups developed Advocacy Scorecards, to be finalised in 2023. In response to the Global Reference Group's Scorecard, the Secretariat developed an Accountability Framework in 2022 to directly address civil society recommendations and to report on actions underway. Lastly, the Global Reference Group also continued to play a critical role in supporting the Secretariat and Reference Groups with resource mobilisation efforts at the global and country level through donor outreach and the development of a Reference Group Guide to EU Engagement.

Programme Replenishment

Throughout 2022, the Spotlight initiative Secretariat prioritised the replenishment of programmes. To that end, discussions were held with DG INTPA counterparts regarding a replenishment of funds that would allow the FS and MPTFO to send cash to programmes, further ensuring continuity of programme implementation. In December, as a result of joint negotiations between DG INTPA, the MPTFO and the FS—and owing to the results achieved by the Initiative thus far—the Spotlight Initiative received a substantial replenishment of around EUR 41 million from the European Union, which allowed a large number of programmes to receive full remaining cash transfers shortly thereafter (please see below for further details on the fund transfer process). The majority of programmes from Africa and Latin America had met the threshold to request and receive final tranches of funding. At the same time, the OSC approved a Phase II (worth 30% of the overall budget of programmes) for 14 programmes from Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Further, as part of this process and in line with EU requirements, the FS worked with programme teams to submit a comprehensive supplemental report for fund replenishment, covering the period between Q1 to Q3 2022, to complement all previously submitted Global Annual Reports.

The Secretariat provides extensive support—and works closely with—programme teams throughout the fund transfer request (FTR) process. In collaboration with the MPTFO, the Secretariat worked diligently to replenish these programmes and foster uninterrupted programme implementation, including by developing detailed SOPs on the process. In order to trigger such requests, the Resident Coordinator (or a member of the team, on their behalf) notifies the Secretariat of the programme's delivery rate and makes an official request for a cash replenishment. Once a programme team submits the provisional narrative and financial reports to the Secretariat, the Secretariat team provides targeted support to make sure that both reports are quality assured and ready to proceed to the next round of the FTR process. When the provisional narrative report is cleared by the

Secretariat—and the provisional financial report signed by the programme team is received—the Secretariat prepares a fund transfer request form. This form is then included in a package sent to the EOSG, alongside the signed final provisional financial report, no objection emails from both sections of the Secretariat, OSC minutes with approval of the proposal and the Country/Regional Programme Document with its original approved budget. Once cleared, the Secretariat proceeds to upload the final documents to the MPTFO online platform and updates its internal records and tracking mechanisms accordingly.

The Secretariat stays in continuous engagement with teams, to promptly address any follow-up, as needed. Overall, in 2022, the Secretariat facilitated programmes' replenishment by a total amount of **USD 93,922,568**. Details on fund disbursements processed in 2022 can be found in the table below.

Spotlight Initiative Fund Disbursement in 2022:

Africa	Africa Regional Programme	\$	8,440,239
	Liberia	\$	1,790,286
	Malawi	\$	3,571,429
	Mali	\$	7,714,286
	Mozambique	\$	3,571,429
	Niger	\$	7,285,715
	Nigeria	\$	10,714,286
	Uganda	\$	4,428,571
	Zimbabwe	\$	3,999,999
Africa Sub Total		\$	51,516,240
Asia	Afghanistan	\$	2,602,907
	Asia Regional Programme	\$	-
	Kyrgyzstan	\$	2,014,286
	Safe and Fair	\$	7,017,224
	Tajikistan	\$	2,100,000
	WPHF - Afghanistan	\$	500,000
Asia Sub Total		\$	14,234,417
Caribbean	Belize	\$	1,045,107
	Caribbean Regional Programme	\$	5,731,698
	Grenada	\$	-
	Guyana	\$	-
	Haiti	\$	-
	Jamaica	\$	2,828,571
	Trinidad and Tobago	\$	1,585,714
	WPHF - Haiti	\$	500,000
Caribbean Sub Total		\$	11,691,090
Latin America	Argentina	\$	-
	Ecuador	\$	-
	El Salvador	\$	-
	Honduras	\$	-
	Mexico	\$	2,700,000
	Latin America Regional Programme	\$	-
Latin America Sub Total		\$	2,700,000
Pacific	Pacific Regional Programme	\$	1,767,857
	Papua New Guinea	\$	6,720,000
	Samoa	\$	-
	Timor-Leste	\$	4,242,857
	Vanuatu	\$	1,050,107
	WPHF - PNG	\$	-
Pacific Sub Total		\$	13,780,821
Total		\$	93,922,568

Moreover, following the extension of the Fund—signed by DG INTPA and the MPTFO in February 2022—the Operational Steering Committee approved the extension of Spotlight programmes in the Caribbean, Central Asia and Pacific by one year, from 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2023. This decision took place in OSC meeting #19 on 15 March 2023. Further, on 26 August 2022, the Operational Steering Committee approved the extension of implementation end dates for country and regional programmes in Africa and Latin America, beyond December 2023 as per the table below, with the caveat that further extensions could be requested by the RC as needed, and approved at country level. These programme extensions were also taken into consideration by the FS as part of its work to ensure timely fund replenishments to Spotlight Initiative programmes. More details on the decisions of the Operational Steering Committee, including those related to programme extensions, can be found in the **2022 Operational Steering Committee Key Decisions** section, above.

Africa and Latin America Programme Extended Dates by OSC 22 of 26 August 2022

Africa Programmes	
Liberia	30-Jun-23 [6 months]
Mali	30-Sep-23 [9 months]
Malawi	30-Sep-23 [9 months]
Mozambique	30-Sep-23 [9 months]
Niger	30-Sep-23 [9 months]
Nigeria	31-Dec-23 [12 months]
Uganda	31-Jul-23 [7 months]
Zimbabwe	30-Jun-23 [6 months]
UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in Africa	31-Dec-23 [12 months]
Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) in Africa	31-Dec-23 [12 months]
Latin America Programmes	
Argentina	30-Apr-23 [4 months]
Honduras	30-Apr-23 [4 months]
Latin America Regional Programme	31-Jul-23 [7 months]
Mexico	30-Jun-23 [6 months]
UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in Latin America	31-Dec-23 [12 months]

Reporting on results

As noted above, the Secretariat is responsible for reporting on the Spotlight Initiative's results and for supporting programmes to do the same through required reports, as detailed in Spotlight Initiative's legal and contractual agreements. To that end, the FS produces global annual reports, in line with contractual requirements, and submits them to the MPTFO in accordance with said contracts and agreed deadlines. In addition to this, the FS works closely with programme teams during the production of programme annual reports, submitted for each country/regional programme in adherence to contractual terms and deadlines. In 2022, the FS reviewed all programme reports in a comprehensive quality assurance cycle, as well as worked together with programmes to distil the contents of these reports into 2-page summaries, which were annexed to the [2021 Global Annual Report \(GAR\)](#). More details on the global annual reporting process are included below.

In 2022, the Secretariat produced the [2021 Global Annual Report](#), capturing key results and achievements across all programmes and at global level, and submitted it to the MPTFO on 27 May 2022, to be shared with the European Union ahead of the 31 May 2022 deadline. As part of this exercise, the Secretariat produced global results indicator reporting data (Annex A); a compilation of summaries of each programme's narrative reports (Annex B); and a detailed account of the methodology used to conduct the analysis of civil society funding included in Chapter 5 of the report (Annex C). The Secretariat conducted this in-depth analysis based on programmes' CSO Engagement Reports to assess the distribution of funds delivered by Spotlight Initiative programmes to civil society and ensure targets, thresholds and requirements for funding civil society were met, while also showcasing global and regional trends.

In November 2022, the Secretariat launched the 2022 annual reporting cycle, sharing extensive guidance to support programmes to produce high-quality, results-oriented reports. As with previous (annual) reporting cycles, the Secretariat held a series of webinars to support programmes throughout the reporting cycle, including a session in French, a session in Spanish, and two sessions in English across various time zones. Following the webinars (which focused primarily on narrative reporting), in January 2023, the Secretariat also held a variety of sessions on SMART indicator reporting (as noted earlier) to introduce programmes to the new SMART reporting platform (Secretariat moved from Jotform to ActivityInfo to facilitate streamlined reporting and analysis). The webinars also served as a space for the Secretariat to answer any outstanding questions from programmes on the annual reporting cycle more broadly, as well as to reiterate key criteria and timelines. Submission of the Programme Annual Reports rolling basis from February to March 2022, with the Secretariat providing a round (or two) of exhaustive quality assurance, sharing comments with programme teams for their consideration prior to their report submission to their respective EU Delegations on March 31 2022. This quality assurance process involved a range of preparation and engagement of the Secretariat team - including on results-based reporting and quality criteria - to ensure feedback on reports was relevant and helped strengthen results-based reporting efforts. At the end of 2022, the Secretariat launched the 2022 reporting process to support work on 2022 Programme Annual Reports.

In addition to the global annual report, the Secretariat is responsible for the production of various other reports. On 17 October 2022, the Secretariat coordinated with the MPTF Office to submit a fund

replenishment request to the European Union to replenish the fund, based on delivery rates as of 30 September 2022. In November 2022, the Secretariat and the MPTF Office submitted an additional fund replenishment request, based on delivery as of 30 September 2022. In December 2022, the EU replenished the Spotlight Initiative Fund with about EUR 41 million out of an outstanding amount of about EUR 44 million, and proceeded to disburse funds to programmes as needed to ensure smooth cash flow and minimal interruptions to implementation.

Though most financial reporting is managed at Headquarter (HQ) level directly with MPTF Office, the Secretariat coordinates with programme teams to produce provisional financial reports, which are required to request additional funding from the MPTF Office. The Secretariat provides instructions and report templates to teams and coordinates with the MPTF Office to review requests and the relevant supporting documents. The Secretariat is also responsible for requesting the OSC Chair's signature on fund transfer requests. More details on the Secretariat's role within the fund transfer request process are included in the **Programme replenishment and overseeing strategic investments** section above. As noted earlier in this report, in 2022, the Secretariat facilitated the disbursement of **USD 93,922,568** to programmes through this process.

Finally, in 2022, Agencies submitted quarterly financial reports to allow for regular monitoring of programme implementation status. Each quarter, the Secretariat coordinated with the MPTF Office to analyse the data and course correct as needed, with a focus on programmes that required acceleration measures to expend funding efficiently and on time.

Monitoring and evaluating the initiative for results and recommendations

The key functions of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are to ensure that the right decisions are taken at the right time so that the Initiative's activities: (i) are implemented according to plan; (ii) have the intended impact on rights holders and communities; (iii) effectively deliver results which are sustainably managed and owned by communities; (iv) are relevant to the needs and priorities of rights holders (including those most at risk and facing intersecting forms of discrimination); and (v) are monitored so as to identify bottlenecks or risks early on, course correct as needed, and ensure the Initiative is on track.

In 2022, the Secretariat continued to support the implementation of the Initiative's M&E Strategy, including by supporting the roll out of various studies, assessments and evaluations, and providing targeted advice and guidance to programmes. Advice focused results frameworks and capturing change (through indicators) as well as strengthening participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting (see more below).

To increase accountability toward right-holders, and better ensure alignment with the core principle of leaving no one behind, the Secretariat, together with programmes, played a critical role in advocating for systemic change in how the UN carries out monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities. Building on the work in 2021, in 2022, the Secretariat updated the Participatory Monitoring,

Evaluation and Reporting Guidance Note, providing tailored guidance to programmes on implementing an inclusive, participatory, feminist and rights-based approach to M&E and reporting. To foster cross-regional dialogue, the Secretariat, in collaboration with programmes, hosted several global knowledge exchanges on participatory monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. These dialogues contributed to enhanced multi-stakeholder engagement and learning on tools, methodologies, and promising approaches, and generated practical tips on implementing participatory approaches which have fed into the development of Phase II. As a result, local stakeholders across multiple programmes, including feminist and women's rights activists and organisations, have reported more meaningful engagement in the programming cycle, including in the M&E and reporting dimensions.

The Secretariat also provided targeted support to all programmes in their annual reporting exercise. In 2022, the Secretariat held multiple webinars to address questions and share guidance to strengthen results-based reporting. Throughout 2022, the M&E team supported programmes to monitor progress against indicators and effectively report on indicator progress via the Spotlight Monitoring and Reporting Tool (S.M.A.R.T) platform, by inter alia, providing robust quality assurance of the data entered. As a reminder, the S.M.A.R.T platform is a custom-built reporting system, tailored to the specific requirements of the Initiative's results framework. It continues to contribute to a more integrated way of reporting, and facilitates the consolidation, aggregation and visualisation of high-quality data, allowing the Initiative to communicate its global impact more effectively. More information on support to reporting efforts can be found below.

Representing a critical aspect of its monitoring and evaluation function, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, in collaboration with the European Union, continued to finalise programmes' Mid-term assessments (MTAs) throughout 2022, completing assessments for almost all programmes.

Conducted by Hera, an evaluation and research company based in Brussels, the mid-term assessments offer an opportunity to assess the performance of each programme, as well as Spotlight Initiative's Theory of Change, improve programme management, and identify lessons learned. The assessments also provide critical information to guide the Operational Steering Committee's decision on the allocation and/or reallocation of Phase II funding. The mid-term assessments for Africa and Latin America were completed and presented to the Operational Steering Committee in April 2021. Throughout 2022, the mid-term assessments for the majority of remaining programmes in the Caribbean, Pacific and Asia regions, were completed and presented to the OSC.

These mid-term assessments showed compelling results across the 6 Pillars of the Spotlight Initiative.

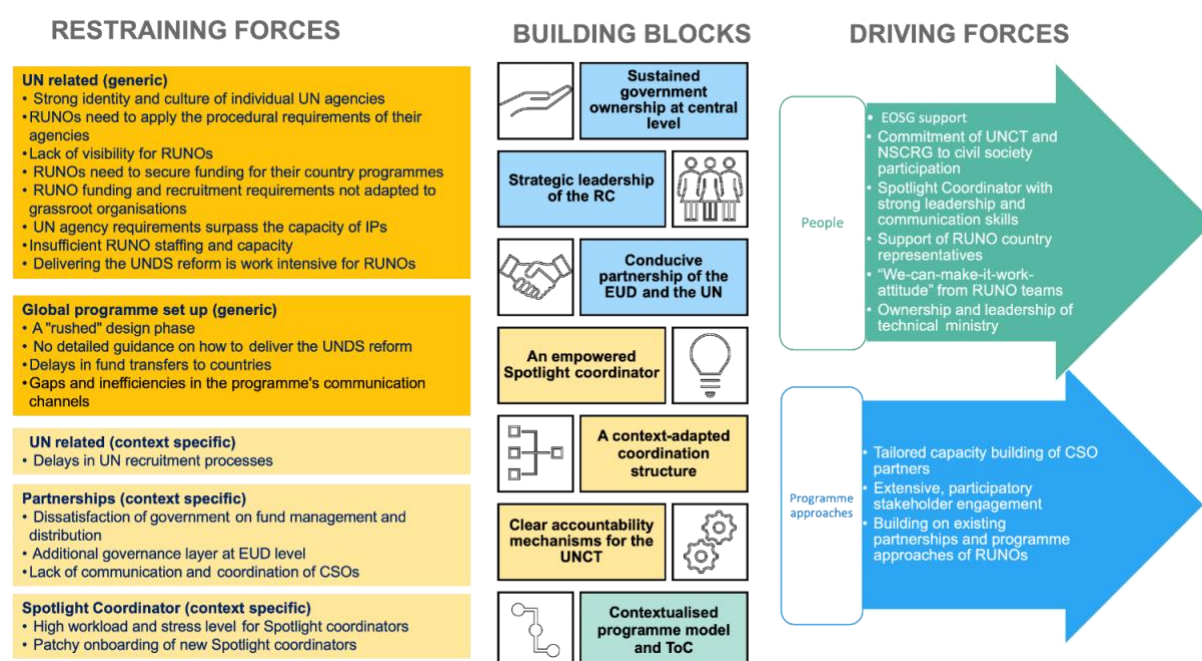
- Overall, the mid-term assessments validate the assumptions and key principles of the Spotlight Initiative: the comprehensive Theory of Change; the participatory and multi-stakeholder methodology; and the central role given to civil society in the governance, design, and implementation of the Spotlight Initiative.
- Programme stakeholders (specifically government, civil society, EU and UN teams) overwhelmingly confirmed, through a survey of more than 1,500 respondents, the gender-transformative, survivor-centred and human-rights based approach of the Spotlight Initiative. In the same survey, a large majority of respondents also expressed the view that they considered the Spotlight Initiative to be in line with the UN Reform's principles and to

contribute to more efficient and better coordinated action on ending violence against women and girls.

- Reports also highlight the efficient and nimble adaptation of programmes to the Covid-19 context, including in ensuring that services for survivors of violence are seen as essential and in seeking new ways to reach communities during Covid-19 restrictions.

The mid-term assessments for Africa and Latin America were followed by a Metareview of the MTAs for said regions. The results drawn from the remaining MTAs will be used to update the study, which should be available by mid-2023. The aim of the Metareview is to summarise learning results of Phase I, analyse how to implement successful programmes, and to give recommendations for the implementation of the next phase of the Spotlight Initiative programme. The specific objectives are to document key determinants of the success of the Spotlight Initiative in different contexts and to analyse and develop an evidence-based understanding of the process of change. Among other things, the Metareview explored the key building blocks and driving forces of successful programmes, as well as the main restraining forces and lessons learnt. These were complemented by an overarching analysis of the role of global stakeholders, including the EU, the Secretariat, the Global Civil Society Reference Group, and the UN Agencies at headquarters level.

Metareview findings are summarised in the figure below.



In addition to the mid-term assessments and the meta-review, during the final quarter of 2022, the Secretariat launched a [thematic assessment](#), covering three interconnected dimensions of the Initiative's work: the meaningful engagement of civil society organisations, particularly local and grassroots groups; the implementation of the principle of leaving no one behind; and support to movement building. The thematic assessment offers the opportunity to surface critical learning on the extent to which the Initiative has progressed in these three transformative dimensions of programming.

Finally, the Secretariat, in partnership with Dalberg Advisors, launched a report that models the potential long-term impact of implementing a comprehensive approach to end violence against women and girls (as modelled by the Spotlight Initiative). The [“Imperative to Invest”](#) study found that investing in a holistic, rights-based approach—one that builds on global best practice, works across mutually reinforcing pillars, and deeply engages grassroots and local actors — has the potential to reduce violence 70-90 per cent more effectively than single-pillar or siloed approaches, concurrently accelerating progress across the Sustainable Development Goals as well. Taken together, the Secretariat’s M&E and reporting function generates relevant knowledge and actionable guidance and recommendations to strengthen the ability of all actors to collectively end violence against women and girls.

Advancing knowledge management and capacity development

The Spotlight Initiative is committed to advancing evidence-based programming and has worked to strengthen knowledge management (KM) efforts and increase exchange across Spotlight Initiative stakeholders. Throughout 2022, the Secretariat continued implementing the Global Platform initiative, rolled out within the knowledge management portfolio in late 2021, which offers the combined power of a knowledge hub, a community of practice and an advocacy platform. The Global Platform Initiative was founded in the practical experience of the Initiative’s programmes and a coalition of diverse stakeholders (the UN, civil society organisations, Governments, researchers and non-traditional partners) to connect and form coalitions around areas of action. The Community of the Spotlight Initiative (COSI) and monthly newsletters continue to enable the Secretariat to share resources with an EAWG network. The KM Focal Points Network increased to over 50 members and was strengthened with regular bi-monthly meetings. The UN HQ Knowledge Management Group on EAWG was pivotal in identifying opportunities for collaboration and strengthening knowledge management efforts on EAWG across the UN system.

In 2022, a series of global knowledge exchanges were organised including one on *Engaging the Private Sector to End Violence Against Women and Girls*, a collaboration with the Spotlight Initiative Zimbabwe. The exchange shared experiences and lessons on how to ethically and effectively engage the private sector through the Spotlight Initiative for the elimination of violence against women and girls and how to strengthen the development and implementation of policies and programmes to eradicate sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls. An exchange on *Resiliency to Crises: Lessons from Civil Society Organizations in the prevention of VAWG* was held, in collaboration with the United Nations Trust Fund on ending violence against women (EVAW), bringing together more than 1,080 participants from the UN, civil society and other stakeholder groups.

In addition, one of the most meaningful and strategic in-person convenings organised by the Secretariat in 2022 was the Global Learning Symposium (GLS), a flagship global and multi-stakeholder convening of the Initiative that drew over 200 participants from the UN, government, civil society, and other stakeholders. A total of 45 plenary and thematic sessions were organised, providing a space for deep reflection and sharing of results, lessons learned and best practices across contexts, which can be leveraged to eliminate violence against women and girls, and to further foster a global community on EAWG. As a follow-up to the GLS, a survey was conducted which highlighted the importance of such convenings and the need for continued learning on the sustainability and transition of the

Spotlight Initiative. Moreover, a [GLS Resource Package](#) was developed summarising key highlights from each session with all presentations, relevant tools and resources from each session, and was disseminated widely.

In addition, following the partnership the Secretariat formed with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women to collaborate on an online hub for global exchange on ending violence against women and girls, [SHINE](#) was introduced to the public on 1 March 2022. Thus far, a total of 1,461 users have registered and 8 online discussions have taken place. Specifically, the Secretariat undertook 3 online discussions on the topics of sustainability, engaging the private sector and civil society engagement. Additionally, demonstrations of SHINE have been conducted with over 100 CSO Reference Group members from Argentina, Latin America and the Caribbean region, the Africa Regional Programme, EU gender focal points, technical agency focal points and participants at the GLS.

Within the framework of the Global Platform, as well, seven knowledge briefs highlighting key results, lessons and good practices on various EVAWG topics through the Spotlight Initiative have been developed and shared widely. These are [comprehensive approach to EVAWG](#), [ending child marriage](#), [engaging the private sector for EVAWG](#), [female genital mutilation](#), [sustaining the gains of EVAWG](#), and [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#)). A critical [Technical Guidance Note: Sustainability of the Spotlight Initiative](#) to support sustainability efforts has also been produced and shared (more information under the Sustainability section). Critically, two repositories—the [Global Knowledge Product Tracker](#) and the [Global Secretariat Technical Repository](#)—consolidating more than 1000 knowledge products from across programmes including the Secretariat have been developed.

Overall, 2022 demonstrated the strategic contribution of the knowledge management portfolio in reflecting on the progress towards ending violence against women and girls through the Spotlight Initiative, supporting programme sustainability as well as evidence-based and quality programme implementation.

Raising awareness and visibility

In 2022, the Spotlight Initiative garnered extensive media coverage, raising the visibility of violence against women and girls. This was particularly important given the significant increases in violence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuing lockdowns. In total, more than 3,850 Spotlight Initiative-specific articles and stories were published by 1,200 media outlets across 100 countries, with an estimated reach of more than 4.1 billion readers⁹. Stories were published in top-tier media outlets including: The BBC, MSN, The Independent, Yahoo News, El País, The Associated Press, The Hollywood Reporter, Clarin, Infobae, Euronews, Forbes, Sohu News, Channels Television and Global Citizen, to name a few.

The Initiative also capitalised on lifting travel restrictions to host in-person events, while continuing with the virtual communications strategies it launched during the COVID-19 lockdowns. For instance, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with [RISE](#), a human rights organisation founded by Amanda Nguyen,

⁹ Meltwater media keyword search (1 Jan - 31 Dec 2022). Raw data of all media hits available [here](#).

on an exhibit in the UN visitors centre in New York. “[What were you wearing?](#)” invited UN visitors and diplomats to observe the outfits worn by survivors of sexual violence at the time of their attacks, subverting a phrase that is too often used to blame survivors for what happened to them. The original 2021 exhibit displayed just five outfits. In July 2022, it re-opened with more than 100 outfits from around the world, representing the 1.3 billion survivors of sexual assault worldwide.

As noted above, the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls continued to meet throughout 2022, kicking off the year with [a discussion](#) on the links between climate change and gender-based violence ahead of the 66th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66). The theme of the commission was “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.” The meeting allowed member states to share what had worked in their own countries and how solutions might be adapted to other contexts. In March, the Group of Friends and Spotlight Initiative presented a television-style [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) Dialogue](#) on the role and responsibility of men and boys in ending gender-based violence, “From perpetrators to allies.” In a video address during the event, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on every member state to develop an emergency plan to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and urged them to draw on the expertise provided by the Spotlight Initiative. The video was published on the United Nations YouTube channel to more than 2.66 million subscribers.

The same month, the Initiative joined forces with leading digital art agency ArtRepublic to curate an [NFT auction](#) featuring globally recognized women photographers. This generated more than \$300,000 for the WithHer Fund, a collaboration between the UN Foundation and the Spotlight Initiative to provide funding to frontline, grassroots women’s rights organisations tackling gender-based violence. Online, the [Spotlight Initiative global website](#) published more than 140 human interest stories, publications and press releases. This included an increased focus on the impacts of climate change on women and girls in support of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) that took place in November. The number of sessions remained consistent with 2021, while the average session duration rose from 1:41 to 1:56. The year also marked increased visibility across other UN platforms, a result of improved collaboration with UN agencies. Spotlight Initiative web stories were republished by UN News, UN Women and DCO.

The Spotlight Initiative’s social media presence continued growing in 2022. The Initiative now has almost 56,000 fans/followers and achieved 7,000,000 impressions across [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Thanks to regular posting and tailored content, the Secretariat managed to grow its audience on all platforms (+7.1% growth on Twitter; +1.4% growth on Facebook; +42.9% growth on Instagram). Additionally, the engagement rate also grew on all platforms: +36% on Facebook; +23% on Instagram; and +92% Twitter. On Twitter, the number of followers has increased by more than 7% compared to the previous year, reaching more than 20,000 individual followers. Twitter recorded almost 350,000 impressions and more than 12,000 engagements in 2022.

The Secretariat recorded a huge improvement in the public’s engagement with our social media accounts. The click-through rate for links has increased by 97% on Facebook and 27% on Instagram due to an increase in video content. This also allowed us to channel social media traffic to our [website](#). The Spotlight Initiative shared more content on its [YouTube channel](#) to make all global and locally

produced videos available to the public. The Spotlight Initiative YouTube channels can now count more than 100 videos and 971 subscribers (+11% increase). In a year, the channels recorded more than 53,000 impressions. Adding to its existing [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts in Spanish, the Secretariat also launched new social media accounts in Russian ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) that aim to reach the public based in Central Asia. These accounts are being administered by the Spotlight Initiative Communications colleagues working in the region.

Mobilising partners and stakeholders to eliminate violence against women and girls

In 2022, the Secretariat coordinated action among international development actors to end violence against women and girls, in line with the UN Secretary General's [call for action](#), issued in April 2020. To that end, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat supported the European Union (EU) and Member States in organising meetings of the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, in accordance with the commitments made by the Group at its launch in December 2020. On 25 January 2022, for example, the Group of Friends [met to discuss the link between climate change and gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#), ahead of the 66th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) which took place under the overarching theme: "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes". Additionally, the Group of Friends and the Spotlight Initiative presented a [high-level dialogue on the role and responsibility of men and boys in ending GBV](#) titled "From perpetrators to allies," within the framework of the SDG Dialogue series. The conversation was moderated by UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Melissa Fleming, and featured EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, Head of the EU Delegation to the UN, Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the UN, Egriselda Gonzales Lopez, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN, Collen Vixen Kelapile, UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem, and UN Global Advocate for Spotlight Initiative, Siya Kolisi. More on this will be shared in the "Raising awareness and visibility" section below.

Sustainability

Fund Capitalisation and Replenishment

Throughout 2022, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat engaged in a broad range of resource mobilisation outreach and activities, aimed at sustaining and scaling up the results achieved by the Spotlight Initiative to date. The Spotlight Initiative Secretariat conducted an extensive donor mapping, in consultation with key UN and external stakeholders. Building on this, several donors were identified as priorities: the United States, Canada, Germany, Sweden, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In addition to this global-level resourcing effort, the SI Secretariat provided support to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to develop partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors to continue to leverage the Initiative's results into a new phase.

Critically, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat’s efforts are supported by the Initiative’s civil society partners. Planning work has been carried out in coordination with the Global Civil-Society Reference Group, and outreach has already been made by the Group with key stakeholders, including targeted donors and the EU Commissioner. The Spotlight Initiative also received support from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls. The Secretariat intends to continue leveraging those partnerships as part of its Resource Mobilization strategy.

Finally, the Initiative continues to consider hosting a mini-replenishment moment, or creating an event platform to showcase new donors and bring in other donors. There is a lack of large funding streams for gender equality, and the Spotlight Initiative believes in dismantling the “confetti” approach to EVAWG funding (in line with the findings of the Imperative to Invest study quoted above). Therefore, with constrained donor budgets—particularly for women’s human rights and gender equality—the Initiative will make the case for integrated, quality donor funding from multiple streams.

Sustainability Guidance to Spotlight Initiative Programmes

As the EU’s initial investment in the Spotlight Initiative will be fully programmed in 2023—and as programmes look toward the future of the Initiative—considerations are being made on how to sustain the momentum, partnerships, resourcing, and impact of the Initiative. A preliminary mapping analysis of mid-term assessments, programme annual reports, Phase II programme proposals and the Secretariat survey was conducted by a working group at the Secretariat to gather any promising approaches and lessons on sustainability across Spotlight Initiative. This exercise informed the development of the knowledge product on [the promising approaches and lessons on sustaining the gains of ending violence against women and girls](#). This knowledge product helped inform an [online discussion](#) that took place on SHINE from 13 June to 30 June 2022 on sustaining the Initiative’s gains and a [summary](#) of the discussion.

Based on these efforts, and in consultation with country and regional programme teams, the Secretariat developed a technical guidance note on how this can be implemented. The [Guidance Note: Sustainability of Spotlight Initiative](#) aims to increase common understanding on the meaning, key elements, principles, and promising approaches to sustainability. The guidance also highlights key principles that need to be integrated such as do no harm, and leave no one behind, including how to strategically include rights-holders and key partners/stakeholders in this process. It also provides suggested activities across the six pillars, as well as on cross cutting issues along with a number of resources including sample sustainability plans from programmes. The Secretariat will continue to conduct various peer exchanges on sustainability, including on this technical guidance note, throughout 2023 to strengthen learning on sustainability.

Sustaining Meaningful Engagement of Civil Society

Civil society partnerships have been fundamental to Spotlight Initiative’s governance, set up and functioning. As programmes are planning their transition and sustainability strategies, civil society partners, especially the Civil Society Reference Group members, will play a critical role in this process. This helps to ensure that plans are responsive to the needs of local communities and rights holders, further fostering sustainability. As such, the Secretariat developed a dedicated [Sustainability Guidance](#)

[Note on Civil Society Engagement](#), informed by a series of in-person and virtual consultations¹⁰ with civil society held throughout 2022. The Guidance Note includes recommendations and considerations for programme teams on the inclusion and participation of civil society partners in the design and implementation of the Sustainability Plan, and the sustainability of the Reference Group mechanism within and beyond Spotlight Initiative.

Navigating Complexity Across the Initiative

In 2022, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat continued to support the Initiative’s programme portfolio to address the impact on implementation and way of working brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the reporting period, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat was able to gradually transition from fully virtual working modality over the past several years to an effective hybrid set-up, in line with UN guidelines on back-to-office modalities and safety measures. A conducive office space, coupled with virtual tools, allowed the Secretariat team to work effectively, maximise synergies between its various team members and collaborate with stakeholders, both in-person and virtually.

In 2022, the Secretariat also navigated the increased need for support to programme teams, particularly in terms of programme management, brought about by the transition process into Phase II for programmes in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Supporting the detailed review and quality assurance of narrative and budget proposals required a significant amount of time and resources, in parallel with other ongoing priorities. Leveraging its team and expertise, the Secretariat was able to respond to these challenges well, drawing on experiences and lessons learned from the Phase II approval process for programmes in Africa and Latin America, carried out in 2021. The Secretariat continued to act as liaison between UN Agency teams at HQ level and other actors, to streamline communications, flag programme-specific issues and, clearly communicate the importance of ensuring staff continuity within programme teams, in support of an effective transition into Phase II.

In addition, within its role as secretariat of the Governing Body and Operational Steering Committee, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat continued to raise key issues at the highest level of governance, to ensure smooth implementation and maximise the potential of the initial investment, in support of ending violence against women and girls. To that end, the Secretariat brought to the attention of the OSC the need to offer programmes an additional year of implementation, up to a maximum date of 31 December 2023 (previously 31 December 2022), responding to the impact of COVID-19 and other contextual challenges on the implementation cycle. As noted above, the OSC approved the extension of all programmes in the Caribbean, Asia and Pacific regions, and allowed for a possible extension of programme end dates for programmes in Latin America and Africa, based upon a request by the Resident Coordinator, to maximise delivery of funding portfolios.

In light of these extended timelines, and to ensure sufficient staffing at programme level, the OSC approved an adjusted Programme Management Costs threshold within the available country envelope for the extension, from 18% to 22%, for small programmes (with Phase II budget envelopes under or

¹⁰ A parallel session was organised at the Global Learning Symposium in September that focused on how to “Sustain the Civil Society Reference Group Functions in Future Programming”, which was followed by virtual regional consultations with Reference Group members and a three weeks’ long online discussion on the SHINE Hub in December 2022.

around USD 2 million), as well as for programmes entering a fifth year of implementation, in order to ease financial tension on staffing. This was coupled with the Secretariat's support to the re-signing of the MOU between the MPTFO and UN Agencies with a matching extended duration.

Finally, the Secretariat continued to provide targeted guidance and support to Spotlight programmes facing challenges in implementation due to a range of complex contextual factors including, notably, high turnover of government personnel, challenging security contexts, conflict, and natural disasters, among others. Programmes facing these challenges included Afghanistan, the Africa Regional Programme, Haiti and Ecuador. While navigating these challenges and complexities, the Secretariat continued to support programme teams to meaningfully engage civil society, deliver effective communications and visibility efforts, and monitor, evaluate and report on their work, capturing and widely disseminating a wealth of lessons learned in knowledge management platforms.

Another challenge faced by the Initiative during the reporting period was the unprecedented currency fluctuation (weakening) of the Euro against the US dollar, which led to additional complexities in terms of fund management and replenishment. In response to this, the Secretariat liaised with the EU to ensure a continued stream of funding to programme teams, in favour of uninterrupted programme implementation.

Despite challenges encountered during 2022, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat ensured the effective support and management of the fund's programme portfolio, contributing to significant results in a context marked by numerous, intersecting political, economic, social, and climate challenges. Through growth and adaptation, the Spotlight Initiative demonstrated its great potential for making strides of progress in ending violence against women and girls, further illustrating that a holistic, rights-based approach has the potential to reduce violence significantly more effectively than single-pillar or siloed approaches.

As programmes enter their final year of implementation of this first funding phase of the Spotlight Initiative, the Secretariat will continue to support programme teams to sustain and scale up results achieved. To that end, looking ahead in 2023, the Secretariat will undertake duty travel to support UN Country Teams in processing operational and financial closure of current Spotlight Initiative programmes, accelerating the implementation of activities, scaling up efforts to end violence against women and girls through discussions on communications, visibility, sustainability and partnerships, supporting civil society in their work, and mobilising resources at country level. The Spotlight Initiative Secretariat is scheduled to visit Honduras and Nigeria in Q1 2023 as part of these efforts, among others throughout the rest of the coming year.