



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



THE SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE IN [COUNTRY X]
CIVIL SOCIETY NATIONAL REFERENCE GROUP
CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide the work of all members of the [Country X] Spotlight Initiative Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG), as they undertake their roles as described in the Terms of Reference (Annex A). The Code of Conduct shall be signed by all members of the CS-NRG.

I. ACT WITH INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND MUTUAL RESPECT

- a. **Integrity:** The CS-NRG members will act without consideration of personal gain and will only make decisions that are in the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative.
- b. **Professionalism:** The appointments to the CS-NRG are made on the basis of their professional experience and local expertise on eliminating violence against women and girls, harmful practices and on gender equality and women's rights. Members are expected to be conscientious and efficient in the advice and support they provide to the programme. Innovative thinking is highly encouraged as a means to resolve the challenges faced by women and girls in [Country X].
- c. **Accountability:** CS-NRG members participate in the Spotlight Initiative as members of the civil society in [Country X]. They are therefore first and foremost accountable to the civil society community in [Country X]. Members will take ownership of their responsibilities and honour their commitments as outlined by the Terms of Reference and annual workplans. The CS-NRG shall hold the National Steering Committee, the highest governance structure for the Spotlight Initiative in the country, accountable for the decisions and commitments made under the country programme.
- d. **Mutual respect:** CS-NRG members shall work together collaboratively and show respect for diverse points of view. Members shall treat one another with dignity and respect and will support all group decisions regardless of their personal opinion.

II. PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIVES

The purpose of the Spotlight Initiative is to promote gender equality through the elimination of violence against women and girls (VaWG). It is therefore imperative for the proper functioning and success of the Spotlight Initiative, and for the maintenance of its integrity and good reputation, that members uphold principles of gender equality and women's rights not only in their professional lives, but also in their personal lives. This means, but is not limited to, respecting human diversity in all its forms, advocating for gender equality, combatting all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices, and recognizing and upholding the rights of others in all circumstances.



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III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members assume their roles on the CS-NRG in their individual capacity, and not as representatives of their organisations. All decisions and actions undertaken by the CS-NRG shall therefore be guided solely by the best interests of the Spotlight Initiative's country programme, goals and objectives.

If a member is presented with a situation whose outcome creates personal benefit for him/herself, family, friends or relations, or the member's organization, at the expense of the Spotlight Initiative and the programme's integrity, there may be a conflict of interest. A member who has a conflict of interest shall without undue delay declare the conflict of interest to the CS-NRG Secretariat¹ and remove itself from any discussions or decisions that may result in personal gain and the gain of its organization, family, friends or other relations.

If a member's organisation is contracted as an implementing partner for the Spotlight Initiative, that member shall recuse itself from carrying out any monitoring activities on its organisation's activities. The member shall also be recused from making any recommendations related to their organisation's participation as an implementing partner.

IV. ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO CS-NRG'S DUTIES

Membership in the CS-NRG cannot be delegated or re-assigned by the member. As such, all members are expected to participate actively in all CS-NRG meetings and undertake related duties as agreed to in annual workplans. While members may at times be unable to partake in CS-NRG activities, this should be on an exceptional basis, rather than recurrently.²

Repeated absences or failure to contribute to CS-NRG activities may prompt a review of that individual's membership by the other CS-NRG members. For the purposes of the CS-NRG, repeated absences shall be understood to mean [two (2)] consecutive absences from the [four (4)] obligatory annual meetings. Members of the CS-NRG may attend the annual meetings virtually.

V. ACT AUTONOMOUSLY IN REPRESENTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN [COUNTRY X]

The purpose of the CS-NRG is to ensure the meaningful representation and engagement of civil society throughout the Spotlight Initiative programme cycle and to ensure sustainability beyond the programme. While the UN facilitates the logistical establishment and functioning of the CS-NRG, the CS-NRG is an autonomous structure that operates in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and Recipient UN Agencies (RUNOs), and not under their instructions.

As members of the civil society community in [Country X], the CS-NRG members shall seek the continuous and inclusive engagement of CSOs throughout the Spotlight Initiative programme cycle. The CS-NRG shall engage and consult with local and grassroots organizations in the country to ensure that they are responding to the needs of the most marginalized women and girls in the country and to uphold the principle of *Leaving No One Behind*.

¹ The CS-NRG Secretariat is the body that established the CS-NRG, e.g. UN Women, the RCO, or an inter-agency group, etc. This constellation depends on the country.

² Excusable absences must be certified by a medical doctor in case of illness.



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The CS-NRG shall widely and regularly disseminate information about the Spotlight Initiative with CSOs in a highly transparent manner and shall advise the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and the RUNOs on how to secure meaningful CSO participation in the programme, in particular grassroots and local organisations.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

The members of the CS-NRG may, in their roles, witness or be entrusted with confidential and/or personal information related to the beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative. The members of the CS-NRG may not disclose any such confidential and/or personal information, during the time they serve as members of the CS-NRG, and beyond.

I hereby agree, as a member of the Spotlight Initiative CS-NRG in [Country X], to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____