To eliminate violence against women and girls
HALFWAY TO 2030
High Impact Initiatives at SDG Action Weekend, 2023

The SDGs are essential but we are off track
World leaders made a historic global promise to secure the rights and well-being of all peoples when they adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This Agenda recognizes that collectively, we can deliver a better future for all. However, the Agenda is a promise, not a guarantee.

Over the past eight years, the world has seen unprecedented mobilization around the SDGs and we have made significant progress on some fronts, laying the critical foundations for our future success. However, now halfway to the 2030 deadline, we are not halfway there – in fact, we are only 15% of the way.

To keep the promise, we need a fundamental pivot
It will take more than rhetoric or increased attention to deliver the promise. We cannot stay wedded to current ways of working. Everything we do, in every corner of our world, will need to evolve for us to advance.

The fundamental pivot we need at the core of the 2030 Agenda demands that countries reorient economies, ways of working and mind-sets to ensure the rights and aspirations of all can be achieved while preserving our climate and natural environment.

This change will take everyone
In many ways, the foundations for transformation are right in front of us - the technical know-how, institutional infrastructure, global financial resources and proven programmes – but we need to channel these resources more effectively. This is the critical moment for political leadership and bold action from national governments; for the international community to come together in common purpose; and for all partners on the SDG journey to take their contribution to the next level. We start tomorrow, by accelerating what works today.

THE HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES AT SDG ACCELERATION DAY
SUNDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER

As we look to the future, our goal is simple: to generate renewed momentum, strengthen political leadership and channel tangible, integrated and coordinated support behind national plans and priorities. As part of the global effort to meet this challenge, the United Nations development system is mobilizing behind 12 high impact initiatives which provide a platform to help take SDG progress to scale. This platform will enable us to learn, evolve and scale what works with greater coordination and collaboration. The platform cuts across three major areas: economic and social transitions, means of implementation, and a core aspect of the cross-cutting issue of gender equality.

- **Energy Compacts**: Scaling up ambition to deliver on SDG7
- **Nature Driving Economic Transformation**: Leveraging the power of **biodiversity and nature** to drive equitable economic progress
- **Food Systems Transformation**: Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger
- **Transforming Education**: Learning to build a better future for all
- **Global Accelerator**: The Global Accelerator on **jobs and social protection** for just transitions
- **Digital Public Infrastructure**: Scaling inclusive and open digital ecosystems for the SDGs
- **The SDG Stimulus**: Scaling up long-term affordable **financing** for the SDGs
- **Transforming4Trade**: Paradigm shift to boost economic development
- **Local2030 Coalition**: Pushing key transitions and achieving the SDGs by 2030
- **FutureGov**: Building **public sector capabilities** for the future
- **Power of Data**: Unlocking the data dividend for the SDGs
- **Spotlight Initiative**: To eliminate **violence against women and girls**
Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is among the most pervasive and serious violations of human rights, inextricably intertwined with broader stability and prosperity. Globally, one in three women have been subjected to violence; the global cost of violence against women has been estimated at approximately US$1.5 trillion\(^1\). The costs of violence against women and girls are borne by all of society and hinder all people from achieving peace and prosperity as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Investing in women and girls is our greatest and most underused path to accelerate the full achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We will only achieve the Goals if every woman and every girl, everywhere, can live a life of dignity and security, free from violence.

Spotlight Initiative is the world’s largest effort to end violence against women and girls. Based on an independent assessment, the Initiative’s approach will have prevented violence for more than 21 million women and girls by 2025\(^2\), saving at least two lives a day. And through its unique comprehensive approach, Spotlight Initiative supports progress on multiple fronts: education, reproductive health, economic empowerment, etc. With years of experience and learning behind us, we can demonstrate the capacity of this holistic model to eliminate violence against women and girls, advance gender equality, and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. If we are to achieve our ambition, scaling up investment and reinforcing efforts at all levels and from all actors is essential.

This High Impact Initiative will drive progress not only on SDG5, but across all SDGs. The 2030 Agenda can only be achieved if women and men are genuinely treated as equals; evidence shows that investing in ending violence against women and girls leads to concrete results across the SDGs\(^3\).

Spotlight Initiative builds off robust evidence for what is effective in addressing violence against women and girls – but also marks a radical shift in international efforts. From previously disconnected and small-scale projects, the Initiative unifies communities, civil society, governments, donors, and experts under a common approach rooted in local needs. Spotlight Initiative mobilizes unprecedented resources, and its position in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General elevates the issue to the highest levels of government. The Initiative’s scale allows us to systematically and simultaneously address mutually reinforcing causes of violence against women and girls – in its myriad forms and contexts – while also investing directly in women’s movements. Built into its design are ways to ensure meaningful participation of groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination, to truly deliver on leaving no one behind.
Spotlight Initiative promotes a multi-sectoral approach to the complex issue of violence against women and girls and its variety of root causes. The Initiative’s workstreams include four main pillars:

1. Laws, policies, institutions
2. Prevention and social norms change
3. Response and services for survivors and perpetrators’ accountability
4. Support to civil society and women’s movements

In the next phase, Spotlight Initiative will expand its universal reach, strengthen its role as a model for localization of the SDGs, and further build on its experience in bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Efforts will also be made to better connect VAWG prevention and response and climate change. The Initiative will continue to expand its partnerships with civil society organizations and “do development differently” – placing communities at the heart of the response, removing barriers to critical funding, and centering local knowledge and expertise.

**PLANS FOR 2023 SDG ACTION WEEKEND**

The Spotlight Initiative session at SDG Action Weekend will be part of a pivotal moment between Spotlight 1.0 and Spotlight 2.0, in preparation for the next funding cycle. The session will rally partners in support of the movement against violence against women and girls, building momentum to ensure that women move from the margins to the center of the Global Agenda. The session will serve as an opportunity to highlight the successes of Spotlight Initiative’s first phase, showcase its model as an accelerator for the SDGs everywhere, and secure commitments from member states.

**ROADMAP TO 2030**

Long-term plans will evolve as we learn and circumstances change; below is our current approach to acceleration through 2030 after SDG Action Weekend.

By 2030, Spotlight Initiative aims to support more than 60 countries directly and to share evidence and knowledge worldwide. Its work is projected to prevent violence for more than 70 million women; help up to 15 million girls stay in school and enroll an additional 30 million; and shift attitudes in favor of gender equality for almost 500 million children by 2030.

Timeline and deliverables for progress: Following the SDG Action Weekend, Spotlight Initiative will expand its universal reach emphasizing developed countries and crisis contexts, strengthen its role as a model for localization of the SDGs, further build on its experience strengthening institutions and civic space, and showcase a model that places women and girls at the heart of sustainable development. The Initiative will also scale up programming, working towards the following milestones:

- **2025**: Roll out a ‘state of the art’ knowledge platform and technical hub to support all UN Member States’ developing emergency response to violence against women and girls, as called for in Our Common Agenda
- **2025**: Bring on board 10 new programming countries and partnerships
- **2025**: Host a replenishment conference for the full scale up of the Fund
- **2025**: Scale-up programs that span the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and connect VAWG prevention firmly within the climate change response
- **2026**: Ensure gender-based violence is reflected in all UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks
- **2026**: Share the lessons learned from the Initiative on strengthening institutions and civic space widely through guidance in the UN System and with partners
- **2027**: Raise USD $1 billion to expand the Initiative’s reach to more than 60 programming countries across the world in addition to universality through technical support
Metrics for success: Spotlight Initiative’s state-of-the-art data, monitoring, and learning framework allows for the collection of detailed metrics that can be shared at annual High-Level Political Forum meetings, including:

- Number of laws and policies signed to end violence against women and girls
- Percentage of national budgets invested in ending violence against women and girls
- Integration of GBV in Governments’ sectoral and development plans
- Number of women and girls who access gender-based violence services
- Number of perpetrators brought to justice
- Number of men and boys who receive education on positive masculinity
- Number of people who are reached by GBV prevention campaigns
- Funding allocated to civil society organizations
- Perceived level of influence reported by women’s rights organizations

Roles and responsibilities of partners: The Initiative employs a comprehensive, whole-of-society and whole-of-UN System approach to end violence against women and girls. This comprehensive approach combined with a new way of working with partners, particularly with civil society, has been found to be ninety per cent more effective than old ways of working.

- Spotlight Initiative is coordinated from the Office of the Deputy-Secretary General at global level and from the Office of the Resident Coordinator at national level. It is implemented by UN Agencies, according to national priorities and needs on the ground.
- Civil Society is involved as full partners in all aspects of programming (design, governance, implementation, and advocacy, as well as monitoring and evaluation).
- In countries, Spotlight Initiative is anchored on coalitions composed of national and local governments, civil society, the UN system, donors, and other development partners.
- The Spotlight Initiative Secretariat is responsible for day-to-day guidance and support, as well as for global communication, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management.
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For an overview of the High Impact Initiatives, visit the Transformative Actions action tab on the SDG Summit website

Photo by Johanna Alarcon