



**Spotlight  
Initiative**



## PRESS RELEASE

### **SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE HOLDS ITS INAUGURAL NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**CITY OF BELMOPAN, FEBRUARY 25, 2021** — The inauguration of the National Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee marked a significant milestone for the Spotlight Initiative as it is the highest level of coordination that stipulates national-level strategic policy direction and mobilizes resources for eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG). During the meeting, key results for 2020 were discussed as well as steps forward for 2021 which lead to the unanimous approval by all members of the Annual Work Plan 2021.

The Inaugural Meeting was co-chaired by Hon. Dolores Balderamos-Garcia, Minister of Human Development, Families & Indigenous Peoples', and Ms Birgit Gerstenberg, UN Resident Coordinator to Belize and El Salvador who extended their appreciation to the committee and their commitment to the initiative. Her Excellency, Marianne Van Steen, Head of the EU Delegation to Jamaica, Belize, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands gave the opening remarks where she highlighted the European Union's support for multilateralism and partnership with all who contribute to the initiative. The Special Envoy for the Development of Families and Children, Mrs Rosanna Briceno was present and extended her gratitude for collaboration. Members from the Civil Society National Reference Group, who support advocacy for CSOs and women's rights groups, were also in attendance. The Government of Belize representatives on the committee included Chief Executive Officers from the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs', Ministry of Finance, Economic Development & Investment, Ministry of Education, Culture & Technology, Ministry of Youth, Sports and E-Governance, Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour & Local Government, and Ministry of Health & Wellness.

The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of family violence and VAWG embarked by the European Union and the United Nations. This Initiative is so named as it brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equity and equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These efforts began in Belize in January 2020 and have included implementing activities that strengthen policy and legislation to increase the protection of women and girls, build the capacity of state and non-state actors to respond to family violence, expand the range of services available, and address social norms and behaviours that promote violence against women and girls. The modality for the delivery in Belize is with the support of the Government of Belize, EU, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNOs) – UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF – with the support of UN Associate Agencies – UN Women, ILO, PAHO/WHO, UNHCR, and OCHCR.

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