



**Spotlight
Initiative**



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

SAN IGNACIO, BELIZE, JULY 30, 2021 — The Spotlight Initiative held a high-level meeting with the Government of Belize on 23 July 2021 at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel. The objective of the meeting was the alignment of the Women’s and Families Agenda within Plan Belize and the United Nations (UN) Women’s and Families Agenda and identify strategies for strengthening and accelerating the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative.

In her opening remarks, Hon. Dolores Balderamos-Garcia, Minister of Human Development, Families & Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, as Co-Chair of the National Steering Committee, mentioned that the issue of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), dishonours women and girls and that the “measure of any country is how we treat our women and girls, and most vulnerable people.” Birgit Gerstenberg, UN Resident Coordinator and Co-Chair of the Committee said the meeting was a space to “listen to the government and see their main points of commitment and how the Spotlight Initiative can support their efforts.” H.E. Marianne Van Steen, Ambassador, European Union Delegation to Jamaica, Belize, and The Bahamas, said political ownership and commitment to finding solutions to the problem of family violence were crucial for the success of current efforts. “We see this programme as an opportunity to spotlight the issues of family violence and GBV because too often, not only in Belize but in the world, it is an issue that remains continuously in the dark,” she said.

High-level government officials as well as policy and decision-makers responsible for leading the implementation of various areas of Plan Belize were present. Key recommendations from the meeting included the development of a Cabinet information paper on Spotlight Initiative to include its’ contribution to the Women’s and Families Agenda and increased commitment and collaboration of respective Ministries. Participants also recognized the need to identify gender advocates from line ministries to support the continuous partnership within the programme and for ongoing dialogue with civil society partners, including the civil society national reference group (CSNRG).

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About the Spotlight Initiative:

The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of family violence and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) embarked by the European Union and the United Nations. The initiative is 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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