



Niamey, 03 December 2019

Press release

Niger, the European Union and the United Nations join forces to eliminate violence against women and girls.

NIAMEY (Niger), December 3rd 2019 - His Excellency Mr. Brigi RAFINI, Prime Minister and Head of Government launched the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the presence of the members of the Government, the Delegation of the European Union in Niger, the United Nations System in Niger, diplomatic representations and missions, traditional leaders, customary and religious leaders, civil society organizations and women's and youth associations.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world. It is a major obstacle to the realization of the rights of women and girls and to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The goal of this Initiative is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030.

Niger is one of eight African countries that are benefiting from the Spotlight Initiative to support the Government in eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, with a focus on ending sexual violence and harmful practices that have a negative impact on women's sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, the program aims to promote and protect the rights of women and girls through a multisectoral approach including education, justice, health, thereby contributing to the implementation of the State's Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the programme aims to promote and protect the rights of women and girls through a multisectoral approach including education, justice, health, etc.

"I highly appreciate this initiative, which is in line with the commitments of the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency Issoufou Mahamadou, to promote and protect the dignity and rights of women", stated His Excellency M. Brigi Rafini, Prime Minister and Head of Government, when officially launching the Spotlight Initiative in Niger.

Do not leave anyone behind

The European Union's \$17 million investment (10.12 billion FCFA) is the first phase of the implementation of the Initiative in Niger. The choice of Niger meets the will of the authorities to improve the situation of women in the country. *"Niger benefits from this programme to support its commitment in this area and which is a prerequisite for the success of the objectives of this initiative. While some forms of violence are more moderate than elsewhere - for example, genital mutilation is estimated at about two percent - the mechanisms put in place and supported by the programme will address this problem as a whole, and leverage elements key to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls,"* said Her Excellency Dr Denisa-Elena IONETE, Ambassador of the European Union in Niger.

Often ignored or lived in silence, violence can only be ended if made visible. For the United Nations, the Spotlight Initiative is thus a new way to achieve gender equality, through the complementarity of actors in the



search for durable solutions, in an integrated and coordinated way through four agencies: UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF.

"For every person to count, no woman should be left behind. This launch is taking place in the context of the "16 Days of Activism campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls", emphasizes Ms. Fatoumata Bintou Djibo Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Niger. "What better opportunity for us to act, together with the common goal of building a more inclusive and equitable world for the next generations?"

This official launch marks the beginning of the first phase of the Spotlight Initiative in four priority regions: Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Zinder. Through actions led by the United Nations and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Protection of Children, the expected key results are:

- strengthening the legal framework to adequately address Gender Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices; strengthening institutions in charge of planning and budgeting to take account of GBV;
- prevention and promotion of social norms conducive to the abandonment of GBV and harmful practices; provision of care services adapted to victims;
- production and dissemination of trend data to measure the effectiveness of actions;
- strengthening women's movements and civil society organizations that fight against GBV and harmful practices.

Notes to editors:

The Spotlight Initiative, launched in September 2017, is a multi-year global partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. It represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality and women's empowerment as a precondition and driver for achieving sustainable development goals.

The Spotlight initiative deploys targeted, large-scale investments to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. **For more information about the Spotlight Initiative, visit <https://spotlightinitiative.org>**

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