

Joint Statement

Executive Board of UNFPA

Annual Report 2020 on the evaluation function in UNFPA, Agenda Item 13

ANNUAL SESSION 2021

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Madam President

I make this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and my own country, Switzerland.

We thank the UNFPA Evaluation Office for its annual report and for the corresponding management response.

First and foremost we commend the Evaluation Office on its flexibility to adapt the evaluation function to the needs in the COVID-19 context. And we fully support the Evaluation Office's continued measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on evaluations and to enable them to function as an accelerator to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

We congratulate the Evaluation Office on its excellent performance in this highly challenging year, achieving almost all the targets of the key performance indicators, as for example regarding evaluation coverage, the quality of evaluation reports, as well as the use of evaluation in programme development.

We are pleased that the decentralized evaluation system has been further strengthened, which resulted in a high implementation rate of evaluations of good quality. We however agree with the highlighted remaining challenge of ensuring the timely delivery of high-quality decentralized evaluations and highly appreciate the Evaluation Office's continued engagement in order to address this challenge.

We also positively noted the progress made in implementing the evaluations' management responses and fully support actions to be taken by the management and the Evaluation Office in order to further enhance in particular the implementation of recommendations of centralized evaluations.

And we will appreciate that the outcomes of UNFPA's evaluations will be taking into account in the final drafting and implementation of the new UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 regarding working areas, strategic priorities and organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

In this context we would like to emphasize the centrality of the evaluation function in furthering an effective implementation of strategic plans and evidence-based decision making. Evaluation and organizational learning are crucial in what must be a continuous effort towards strengthening monitoring and reporting frameworks and as the OAIS report points out there is a need for further focus on relevant indicators and stronger monitoring across the programs. We therefore welcome UNFPA's work with DESA to develop the refreshed QCPR Monitoring and Reporting Framework, for which UNFPA's new indicators should be closely aligned. This is ultimately with improved accountability and an accelerated achievement of Agenda 2030 in mind.

We welcome efforts towards continuous innovation in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment – in particular support towards strengthening the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in all thematic areas.

Against this background we welcome the steady increase of UNFPA's evaluation expenditure ratio over the years, which is getting closer to the 1.4 to 3% of total program expenditure as defined target in the UNFPA evaluation policy. Taking note of the specific reasons for the decrease of the ratio of the evaluation expenditure in 2020, we are looking forward and anticipate to see the general positive trend to continue. In that regard we would be keen to learn more about the projected evaluation expenditure ratio for the years 2022-2025?



On a final note: We highly value UNFPA's Evaluation Office's commitment and active support to the reform agenda and system-wide and joint evaluations on the central, regional and country level. In addition we commend the Evaluation Office on its engagement in supporting the independent system-wide evaluation mechanisms as a member of the UNEG, in particular for contributing to the drafting of the system-wide evaluation policy.

Let me close by re-iterating our commitment to the precious work of the evaluation office in promoting institutional learning and accountability thereby contributing to increased programme effectiveness.