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Item 12: UNFPA Annual Report on Evaluation

7 June 2016

**Statement by Switzerland on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark,
Germany, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand,
Norway, Sweden, UK, USA and Switzerland**

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Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA and my own country Switzerland.

We wish to thank the Director of the Evaluation Office for the annual report and for her comments today. We commend the efforts made by the evaluation office, regional and country offices to translate the evaluation policy into practice, focusing on planning and management, quality and building in-house expertise on monitoring and evaluation.

Regarding **planning and management**, we note with appreciation the use of the comprehensive multi-year budgeted evaluation plan for UNFPA, which enables the Fund to meet its evaluation needs, using a risk-based approach within available resources. We welcome the increased diversity of evaluations conducted at country and regional levels.

We are pleased to note the significant and encouraging improvements in the rating of the **quality of country programme evaluations**. The quality of evaluation and reliability of information provided are key to ensure that UNFPA can best adjust its contribution to the needs of the countries within its strategic mandate. In this regard, we look forward to a **further synthesis study of lessons learned from country programme evaluations** later this year. We also welcome the ongoing work to develop guidance for the conduct of programme-level evaluations to make sure that the decentralized evaluations are conducted in accordance with UNFPA evaluation policy and budgeted evaluation plan.

We welcome initiatives to **increase the dissemination of evaluation results**. Evaluation is not the end in itself – results need to be shared and followed up on. We welcome that some country programmes included stakeholder workshops before the final publication of the evaluation report. A meaningful exchange with stakeholders should be done wherever possible.

Evaluation use and follow-up should be further institutionalised to ensure that lessons learned from past and on-going modes of engagement are reflected in future programming and institutional adjustments. We believe that the **Management Response tracking system** is a key instrument for this, and could be further strengthened to better ascertain the extent to which evaluation results are effectively utilized to support organizational decision-making.

We strongly encourage the Evaluation Office in its efforts to integrate **the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women** evaluation indicator reporting tools into its existing quality assessment system.

We welcome the improvements made to **tracking funds** allocated to the evaluation function, including the decentralized functions, which indicates the level of budget allocated to evaluation is 0.56% this year, while UNFPA's evaluation policy recommends that up to three percent of the total programme budget be allocated for the evaluation function. We welcome efforts by Management and the Evaluation Office to find a practical and implementable approach to further disaggregate and track expenditures for evaluation separately from monitoring expenditures, and we look forward to seeing a more comprehensive picture of evaluation expenditures.

We also welcome the proposed increase in the evaluation office budget in the Mid Term Review of the 2014-2017 Integrated budget.

Nevertheless, we note a worrying trend with significant funding reductions for certain country programme evaluations. We **ask Management to allocate appropriate financial resources to the monitoring and evaluation functions in particular at the country level.** In addition, we support efforts to ensure that non-core funded programmes allocate adequate resources to evaluation in order to take the pressure off the institutional budget resources.

We also note the increased needs in terms of **human resources** to meet the demands of the quadriennial budgeted evaluation plan 2016-2019 and the temporary measures proposed by the Evaluation office to meet the immediate need. While we recognize the steps taken by UNFPA to strengthen the capacity and professionalization of the evaluation function, we highlight the ongoing limited availability of skilled evaluators and urge the Evaluation Office to continue developing both internal evaluation capacity and national evaluation capacity. We welcome the proactive stance of Evaluation Office and Procurement Services Branch to provide advance market notice to improve the consultancy roster. We strongly encourage the Evaluation Office to pursue its reflection within the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and partners to see how best **joint approaches**, such as joint rosters of qualified staff, joint evaluations and/or joint funding, could increase the efficiency and

effectiveness of evaluation capacities at regional and national levels. We recognize the leadership role of the Director of the Evaluation Office of UNFPA within UNEG, and we encourage her to continue her engagement for a stronger evaluation function in the UN System. We also welcome UNFPA's continued engagement with EvalPartners.

As the 2030 Agenda requires a collective effort of the whole UN Family to assist member states with implementation, **independent system-wide evaluations** will be more important than ever. This calls for adequate funding of ISWE. Going forward, certain evaluations that have so far been undertaken by individual agencies may be covered by the ISWE, which could free up scarce financial resources. The upcoming QCPR offers an ideal opportunity to tackle barriers and create incentives for system wide collaboration, including for evaluation.

At the end of the day, evaluations are our instrument to measure what impact UNFPA has in countries and how its efforts can be strengthened. We remain fully committed to working with Management and the Evaluation Office in this endeavor.

Thank you.