

Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS

Annual Session 2021

UNFPA Segment – Evaluation of UNFPA support to gender equality and women’s empowerment

7-11 June 2021, New York

Thank you Madam/Mr President. I deliver this statement on behalf of the following Member States; Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Ireland, Mexico Netherland, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA and my own country Norway.

Let me start by thanking UNFPA for its strong commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment as fundamental to its mandate.

We appreciate the Evaluation report of UNFPA’s support to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment across development, humanitarian, and peace efforts.

We would like to highlight three important achievements the UNFPA has had since 2012:

- First and foremost, we note the clear contribution and support UNFPA has provided on Gender Equality and Women’s empowerment at a global, regional and country level. We also appreciate that UNFPA has heightened the importance of **gender transformative work**, especially at country level, by increasing existing knowledge on gender-based violence and harmful practices to address the three zeros;
- Second, we commend UNFPA’s leadership role in the response to and prevention of gender-based violence; the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights; and the response to and prevention of harmful practices, both in humanitarian and development areas. UNFPA has contributed significantly to the gains made in the past ten years to the benefit of women and girls’ lives; and we encourage UNFPA to continue leading by harmonizing its promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the next Strategic Plan with the other entities;
- Third, we recognize the importance of UNFPA’s cooperation with important partners like UN Women, UNICEF and others in this work. We note the important finding that **integrated intersectional programming** on gender equality is necessary for

accelerating work across the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding nexus. We also note the importance of leveraging partnership with other partners outside of the UN.

The evaluation shows that UNFPAs consistent work for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls have led **to important achievements**. At the same time, the evaluation have generated important lessons to be considered going forward, especially in view of the next strategic plan.

- First, how can UNFPA improve its work on social normative change, also in collaboration with other agencies, such as UN Women and UNICEF? We take note of the Management's response to the current evaluation and look forward to seeing social norm change incorporated across the organization's portfolio in the next Strategic Plan. As UNFPA's leadership in combating gender-based violence grows, greater emphasis on prevention will be necessary, as will engagement of men and harmful norms of masculinity." Engagement with young people and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights will be crucial entry points for this work.
- Second, UNFPA is a critical service delivery provider. The next Strategic Plan should give more attention to women's and girl's decision-making regarding their reproductive health and rights. This requires strengthening work to address existing barriers and inequality of access to sexual and reproductive health services, and follow-up of the recent metrics included in the SDG indicator 5.6.1.
- Third, the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the critical role of UNFPA on the ground, and how important it is to bridge the gaps between agencies and sectors, and break down silos, to foster resilience among groups who are among groups who are in vulnerable situations and who are affected by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We note the Management's recognition of the importance of integrating GEWE across sectoral programming, and the plan to incorporate this approach in the next Strategic Plan.
- Fourth, and finally, prioritizing gender equality requires dedicating **sufficient human and financial resources**, and a focus on increasing core resources. UNFPA has the frameworks and systems in place, but lacks sufficient funding to carry out all its work, including for prevention in humanitarian settings. As in past evaluations and Board proceedings, we reiterate the need to prioritize maintaining keyr gender and GBV

expertise in UNFPA staff positions at all levels to deliver on commitments under the next Strategic Plan and for all staff in UNFPA to deliver on gender commitments, not just those in gender-related roles..

To conclude, we would like to reiterate our support for the next phase of UNFPA's work towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, in all their diversity, and we look forward to the development of the new Strategic Plan.