



**Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
Annual Session 2021 – agenda item #13**

**UNFPA Management Commentaries on
Annual report on the evaluation function, 2020
Report of the Director, Evaluation Office**

Ms. Diene Keita, Deputy Director (Programme)

10 June 2021

Madam Chair,

Distinguished members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to briefly provide the management commentaries to the 2020 annual report on the evaluation function.

Without a doubt, a strong evaluation function is key to helping UNFPA deliver on the promise of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of UNFPA three transformative results.

For that reason, UNFPA has been making sustained investments in the evaluation function.

Indeed, Management has seen the strengthening of its independent oversight and assurance activities as a key priority with investments growing in this cluster at a higher rate than the income projections.

For instance, investment in the Independent Evaluation Office has grown from \$4.2m in 2010-2013 cycle to \$17.2m (or 308 percent) in 2022-2025 cycle. At the same time, the overall UNFPA income projections have grown by 64.4 percent.

That investment is continuing to yield results, as evidenced by the progress made in 2020, especially with regard to the quality and use of evaluations and follow-up and implementation of recommendations.

UNFPA is particularly pleased to see the impact the 2020 achievements of the Evaluation Office are having on the implementation of UNFPA's strategic plan, 2018-2021.

Madam President,

We benefit enormously from the evidence and lessons learned generated through evaluations on what worked and what did not, and why.

This type of insight has been instrumental in the design of UNFPA country programmes, UNFPA's regional and global interventions, and the development of the new UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

With regards to centralized evaluations in particular, we especially appreciate that the Evaluation Office is continuing to make sure that they remain relevant to the changing needs and priorities of UNFPA.

For example, the 2018 evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices, has helped UNFPA to strategically position its work in this area and within the United Nations System and has

prompted it to develop and publish the Gender Equality Strategy.

Likewise, in response to the recommendations of the 2019 Evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis, UNFPA has equipped the Arab States Regional Office and the Syria regional response hub to better respond to the challenging demands.

Moreover, UNFPA continues to take forward the recommendations from the evaluations which were presented to you within the last year:

Developmental evaluation of results-based management at UNFPA;

Evaluation of UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action;

Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to South-South and triangular cooperation.

UNFPA appreciates the Evaluation Office's efforts to ensure high-quality and evaluative evidence during the pandemic by developing the guidance on how to adapt evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic and the good progress on evaluation indicators in spite of the pandemic. UNFPA also appreciates the Evaluation Office ongoing effort to make evaluation results more accessible to broad audiences.

The implementation of recommended actions, which is tracked by UNFPA Policy and Strategy Division, reached 90 per cent, the highest in six years, with a marked improvement in the implementation of centralized evaluation actions as well.

The quality of evaluations remained high, with 100 per cent of evaluations issued in 2020 having been rated as 'good' or 'very good'. It is, therefore, not a surprise that the use of evaluation in programme development reached 100 percent as well, as there is strong correlation between the quality and the use of evaluative evidence.

Lastly, the evaluation coverage remained strong, almost reaching the target. This is important because it is critical to have a large body of evidence to make informed decisions, especially in the context of the country programme development and of

making corporate initiatives more focused.

That said, Management agrees with the Evaluation Office that there is room for further improvement in some areas, especially regarding the recommendations coming out of centralized evaluations which, while improved noticeably, has still not met the target. We fully support the Evaluation Office's efforts, in collaboration with UNFPA business units, to come up with solutions in this regard.

This includes Management's strong commitment to fostering coherence and synergies among the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations Development System, including in the area of evaluation.

We also recognize the Evaluation Office's impactful contribution to the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group and in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group.

The Management also commends the Evaluation Office in enhancing the demand for and use of country-led evaluations by national policy-makers with the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation, and support of initiatives and events to bring together demand and supply of country-led evaluations.

Moreover, the Management recognizes the value added of the Evaluation Office's engagement in joint evaluations, with 8 out of 14 centralized evaluations managed by the Office in 2020-2021 being either joint or system-wide, for having 'exceeded requirements' of the evaluation performance indicator for the second year in a row.

The Management also recognizes the active role of the Evaluation Office for actively supporting Cooperation Framework evaluations by providing technical and financial support in all regions.

Madam President,

Let me turn to the Evaluation Office's programme of work for 2021.

UNFPA Management welcomes continued progress in strengthening UNFPA evaluation function and reaffirms its commitment to greater accountability, transparency, evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning.

The Management takes note of the Evaluation Office's programme of work and budget for 2021, and affirms its commitment to working with the Evaluation Office to carry out its important role in supporting organizational results.

I thank you all on behalf of UNFPA management for your continued guidance and support.