



UNFPA Management Response
on
Annual report on the evaluation function, 2019
Report of the Director, Evaluation Office
(DP/FPA/2020/3)

by
Dr. Julitta Onabanjo
UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme), a.i.

Agenda item 16: UNFPA – Evaluation

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
Annual session 2020, 1 to 5 June 2020
New York

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

It is my pleasure to address you today.

Allow me, on behalf of the UNFPA Senior Leadership, to present management response to the **Annual Report on the Evaluation Function for 2019** and seek your support in endorsing the **Evaluation Programme of Work for 2020**.

But first of all I would like to acknowledge the complex circumstances we operate in, given the COVID-19 pandemic and impact it has on every aspect of our work. We are glad to learn from the Evaluation Office that despite the crisis and completely new modality of work there are no major disruption foreseen so far for the work of the Evaluation Office.

Mr. President

A **strong evaluation function** is a key contributor to achieving the results of the strategic plan 2018-2021 and supporting the realization of its three transformative results.

As noted by our Executive Director in her opening remarks it is for this reason that UNFPA has been **investing an ever-increasing share of its programme budget in the evaluation function** and is glad to note that **this investment is already yielding results**. We recognize the far-reaching benefits of Evaluation for the organization and beyond – strengthened transparency and accountability to our member states, partners and fundamentally to those that we serve – responding to the question are UNFPA programmes/interventions making that positive difference as envisaged and how can we do better?

So let me take this opportunity to highlight and welcome the increase in **evaluation coverage** - from 90 percent in 2018 to 97 percent in 2019 - and a solid performance with regard to the **percentage of programme-level evaluations implemented as planned** .

This will provide the organization with a large body of knowledge to further support evidence-based informed decision-making when developing new programmes; to reflect on lessons learnt and to identify positive practices that can inform a whole of organization approach..

As in the past years, increased evaluation coverage was made possible, in part, through the use of the **financial ring-fencing mechanism for evaluation budgets**. The mechanism was put in place by the Evaluation Office in collaboration with the Policy and Strategy Division and the Division of Management Services, in response to the Executive Board decision 2019/1.

We are committed to continue to set aside annually half a million US\$ through the Resource Allocation System to ensure that smaller country programmes benefit from programme evaluations as well.

Recognizing that quantity without quality would be inadequate, I am also pleased to note that the **quality of evaluations has improved significantly**, with 100 percent of programme-level evaluations rated ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in 2019.

Given that there is a **direct correlation between the quality of evaluations and the quality of future programmes**, it is not a coincidence that the **use of evaluation in programme development** was up in 2019 as well, to a record 100 percent.

UNFPA Management also recognizes that there is **room for further improvement**, especially with regard to **implementation of evaluation recommendation actions**.

While - at 84 percent - the **overall implementation rate was solid**, we recognize that the 59 percent implementation rate of **centralized evaluations** was **low**.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure member states that we take this issue seriously and that we are putting in place additional remedial measures to address it. The measures include enhancing our guidance to business units and starting to monitor progress through UNFPA's corporate dashboard.

With regard to communication and knowledge management, we acknowledge efforts made by the Evaluation Office to develop a **Strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management**, which focuses on providing targeted evaluative evidence to decision-makers.

In this context, Management also welcomes the new practice of **making evaluation results much more accessible and available** to broad audiences by accompanying each centralized evaluation with a '**minimum communication package**', elements of which were funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Furthermore, we welcome the **synthesis of findings from 57 country programme evaluations which have** aggregated existing knowledge on what works and what does not. The findings will support our country offices to create more effective evidence-based programmes, use resources optimally and maximize impact for those we serve, especially women and girls.

We also acknowledge the contribution of the Evaluation Office to fostering national evaluation capacity development and enhancing meaningful leadership

and participation of youth in evaluation. These efforts lead to increasing demand, availability and utilization of country-led evaluations by national policy-makers and other stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Going forward, we note the **programme of work of the Evaluation Office and its budget for 2021**, and we affirm our commitment to working together to carry out the important role of the Evaluation Office in supporting the achievement of the organizational results.

We also welcome the commitments of the Evaluation Office towards greater UN coherence exemplified by their planned participation in **joint or system-wide evaluations**.

UNFPA Management welcomes this trend, noting it is in line with the principle of our Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to make partnerships one of the key modes of engagement and it resonates with the overall vision of the UN Development System Reforms for a whole of system approach.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to re-emphasize that UNFPA Management acknowledges the progress made by the Evaluation Office in 2019, and reaffirms its commitment to greater accountability, transparency, evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning.

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