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

(DP/FPA/2021/5)

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Management response to the annual report on the evaluation function, 2020

I. Introduction

1. UNFPA management is pleased to present its response to the annual report of the Director of the Evaluation Office on the evaluation function for 2020 (DP/FPA/2021/5).
2. Recognizing that a strong evaluation function is key for UNFPA to accelerate the achievement of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, the Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of the three transformative results, UNFPA has been making a sustained investment in the evaluation function. That investment is continuing to yield results, as evidence of the progress made in 2020 demonstrates, especially concerning the quality of the evaluations and implementation of management responses, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. This management response addresses the evaluation function's progress in four key areas: (a) evaluation as an accelerator to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (b) performance of the evaluation function; (c) enhancing coherence in the United Nations system evaluation functions; and (d) multi-stakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development.

II. Evaluation as an accelerator to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and delivery of the 2030 Agenda

4. Evaluation plays an important role in providing all levels of the organization with evidence and lessons learned on how results were achieved and what did not produce the desired results. Management especially appreciates the strategic evaluative evidence that the thematic and strategic evaluations have provided over time. The findings are instrumental for the design of the UNFPA strategic plan for 2022-2025.
5. Management also acknowledges the Evaluation Office's efforts to continue to ensure high-quality and relevant evaluative evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic by developing guiding principles on how to adapt evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as its continued efforts to make evaluation results more accessible to broad audiences.
6. Furthermore, Management recognizes the value-added of the Evaluation Office's engagement with the Eval4Action campaign, which aims to enhance the role of evaluation in accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda as well as the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and empowering young or emerging evaluators around the world.

III. Performance of the evaluation function

7. Management takes note of good progress in key evaluation performance indicators despite the COVID-19 pandemic and is especially pleased to acknowledge:
 - (a) Implementation of management responses to evaluations reached 90 per cent, the highest level in six years, with a marked improvement in the implementation of centralized evaluation actions as well. Management will continue to oversee the dedicated business units assigned to implement management response actions, including for centralized evaluations;
 - (b) Quality of evaluations continued to be maintained at 100 per cent of programme-level evaluations rated 'good' or 'very good';
 - (c) Evaluation implementation rate, overall at 88.9 per cent;
 - (d) Use of evaluation in programme development, at 100 per cent.
8. Concerning centralized evaluations, Management appreciates that the Evaluation Office continues to make sure that they remain relevant to the changing users' needs and priorities of UNFPA.
9. The *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. In response, UNFPA has published the Gender Equality Strategy in 2019, strengthened technical and financial capacity and invested in strengthening gender-based violence inter-agency coordination, cluster-leading capacities and relevant UNFPA staff structures at all levels.
10. In response to the recommendations of the *Evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis*, UNFPA has strengthened its humanitarian response: the Arab States Regional Office is now better equipped to process and use outcome-level quantitative data and systematize its impact assessments. The terms of reference for the Syria regional response hub have been expanded to include knowledge management and extend its geographical coverage to all humanitarian operations in the Arab States region.

IV. Enhancing coherence in the United Nations system evaluation functions

11. Management reiterates its 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. To that end, management recognizes the Evaluation Office's impactful contribution to the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group, particularly to the new policy for system-wide evaluations, which articulates the roles and responsibilities concerning system-wide evaluations at country, regional and global levels, and in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) steering group.

12. Management also 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. The Evaluation Office has further 'exceeded requirements' of the evaluation performance indicator for the second year in a row and actively supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluations by providing technical and financial support in all regions.

V. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development

13. Management reiterates its commitment to strengthening national evaluation capacities, together with major stakeholders, including United Nations entities. To that end, Management commends the Evaluation Office for its contribution to enhancing the demand for and use of country-led evaluations by national policy-makers with the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation, meaningful participation of youth in evaluation through its support to EvalYouth and support of initiatives and events to bring together demand and supply of country-led evaluations.

VI. Conclusion

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