



UNFPA - because everyone counts

Statement by Marco Segone
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on
Item on evaluation

Evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis (2011-2018)

UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board
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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

It is my pleasure to present to you the main results of the evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the contribution of UNFPA to the Syria humanitarian crisis response while generating findings and lessons learned that would be of value across UNFPA and for other stakeholders.

Covering the period 2011-2018, the evaluation assessed all UNFPA supported humanitarian interventions targeting affected populations within Syria as well as in neighbouring countries.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me to present the key conclusions of the evaluation.

Despite a slow start, the UNFPA response to the Syria humanitarian crisis has been appropriate to the needs of affected populations over time, with priority to hardest-to-reach populations. Overall, UNFPA has been more effective at provision of response services than prevention, both in the field of sexual and reproductive health and in the field of gender-based violence.

The UNFPA gender-based violence response within the framework of the Whole of Syria approach has been exceptionally good, thanks to the high-quality products developed by the UNFPA regional response hub, such as Voices and the gender-based violence dashboard. However, the inconsistency of inclusion of men and boys in gender-based violence programming across country offices has impeded the ability of UNFPA to fully exercise its leadership in this area.

The UNFPA regional response hub has generated high returns on investment in terms of (a) mobilizing significant multi-year funding; (b) advocacy and representation at Whole of Syria strategic steering group level, thus increasing the credibility of UNFPA as a humanitarian actor; (c) raising the profile of GBV as a life-saving intervention; and (d) coordination for the Whole of Syria approach. However, UNFPA has not adequately reviewed and revised where necessary the role and functions of the hub in line with the increasing capacity of country offices.

Finally, the evaluation found that UNFPA operational and financial systems and structures have not fully supported the effectiveness of the response to the Syria crisis. The increasing reliance of country offices on other resources, less flexible than regular resources, has impaired their responsiveness to a rapidly evolving crisis. The lack of flexibility in UNFPA systems and structures has also led country offices to make inconsistent and, at times, inadequate use of fast-track procedures, surge and emergency commodities.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me now to turn to the recommendations of the evaluation.

The evaluation made seven recommendations for the UNFPA Syria response.

First, UNFPA is recommended to recognize the current limitations with monitoring and utilize its expertise in population dynamics to contextualize results data.

Second, UNFPA should review the functions of the Syria regional response hub in light of changing circumstances and agreeing the future role of the regional response hub.

Third, UNFPA is invited to clarify and ensure consistency in its position on the inclusion of men and boys in gender-based violence programming within the regional response and ensure organizational consistency in gender-based violence language and programming in relation to the inclusion of men and boys.

Fourth, UNFPA should review the use of fast-track procedures, surge, and emergency commodities, and continue advocating with Member States and donors for an adequate level of regular resources, to increase the efficiency of the Syria regional response.

Fifth, UNFPA should recognize the vacuum around youth leadership and step up youth programming and coordination across the Syria regional response.

Sixth, UNFPA should commit internally to resourcing and supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights coordination within the Syria regional response to the same level as gender-based violence coordination.

Seventh, UNFPA should increase documentation of gender analysis and adherence to international humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law in the Syria regional response.

Two additional recommendations were made for UNFPA globally

First, UNFPA should use the Whole of Syria gender-based violence sub-cluster as a blueprint for UNFPA coordination responsibilities globally.

Second, UNFPA should use the evaluation regional response hub case study, together with a further rapid appraisal of the effectiveness of hub mechanisms of other agencies, to develop a blueprint for the establishment of other potential hubs in the future.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

After eight years of conflict, more than 13 million Syrians are still in need of humanitarian assistance. The commitment of UNFPA management to learn from and act upon the recommendations of this evaluation should help to enhance further the response that UNFPA provides to those most in need in one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time.

This concludes my presentation, Mr President. I thank you and the Executive Board for its continued support and guidance, and I am at your disposal for any questions or clarifications.