



UNFPA - because everyone counts.

Statement by Andrea E. Cook

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on

Item X

UNFPA Quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan, 2016-2019

UNFPA/ UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board

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**Señor Presidente,
Members of the Executive Board,**

It is my pleasure to present to you today, on behalf of UNFPA, the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan for 2016-2019. The plan provides a framework for the commissioning, management and use of evaluations across the organization. The evaluations proposed for the first two years are firm, should the Executive Board endorse the Plan. Proposals for the final two years, on the other hand, are indicative and subject to review in 2017 to ensure alignment with the strategic planning and budget cycle.

Señor Presidente,

The plan has been developed on the basis of a number of principles. First, it applies the selection criteria set out in the UNFPA evaluation policy. Second, it provides balanced thematic and geographical coverage of UNFPA interventions. Third, it ensures a balance between accountability and learning. Fourth, it addresses the issue of the human and financial resources required for its implementation. Finally, the quadrennial evaluation plan results from a transparent and consultative process.

Señor Presidente, distinguished Delegates,

The development landscape in which UNFPA operates is changing fast. Well-designed and timely evaluations play an important role in informing evidence-based programming and decision-making. The maturation of the UNFPA evaluation function and gradual strengthening of the Fund's systems and capacities over the recent years, allow for a necessary diversification of the range of evaluations. To this end, the plan proposes a variety of new approaches to better respond to the organization's needs in terms of lesson learning and accountability:

- First, the Evaluation Office proposes to develop a *cluster approach to country programme evaluations*, to effectively pool resources to facilitate cross country learning;
- Second, the Evaluation Office will increase efforts to strategically engage in *joint or system-wide evaluations*;

- Third, taking into account the proliferation of increasingly severe and complex humanitarian crises, it is proposed to *assess performance of humanitarian interventions* through a number of modalities;
- Fourth, the quadrennial plan proposes a *mix of synthesis and meta-evaluations* with a view to maximizing the use of learning from both corporate and programme-level evaluations;
- Fifth, the Evaluation Office will work to identify *partnerships and financial resources to support the commissioning and use of impact evaluations* in the area of adolescents and youth;
- Finally, while we anticipate a *reduction of the geographical coverage of UNFPA country programmes*, this should be counterbalanced by a more diverse range of thematic and programme evaluations commissioned and managed by regional and country offices.

Señor Presidente,

Please allow me to provide a brief overview of the 12 corporate evaluations planned for 2016-2019. A three step development process was undertaken to ensure alignment with the outcomes and outputs set out in UNFPA Strategic Plan. They include:

- Five thematic evaluations, two institutional evaluations, and five programme evaluations. This includes a number of joint evaluations.;
- The Evaluation Office will also pilot two cluster country programme evaluations;
- A number of cross-cutting evaluation products are proposed with an emphasis on learning. These will consist in: (i) a synthesis of the results of the country programme evaluations for the periods 2014-2015 and 2016-2017, as well as (ii) a meta-evaluation of UNFPA work focused on the marginalized and most vulnerable groups;
- The Evaluation Office will participate in a number of other studies in partnership with other United Nations agencies, including system wide evaluations and the evaluation of level three crises;

- Finally, the plan proposes a United Nations Evaluation Group peer review of UNFPA evaluation function in 2017.

Señor Presidente,

Let me now turn to the programme-level evaluations. Overall it is anticipated that *55 country programme evaluations* will be conducted by country offices across all six UNFPA regions during the period 2016-2019.

Finally, *regional and country offices* are working to expand the number and range of both *programmatic and thematic evaluations* to increase the supply of evaluative evidence to better inform decision-making, strengthen accountability, and enhance transparency across UNFPA.

Señor Presidente, distinguished Delegates,

Experience in implementing the evaluation policy since June 2013 has provided a clearer understanding of the level of human resources required to support the commissioning and management of good quality evaluations.

While there has been a noticeable increase in the number of monitoring and evaluation officers in country offices, staffing levels in the Evaluation Office and regional offices have remained unchanged. The staffing and structure of the Evaluation Office is not commensurate with the wider range of responsibilities since the adoption of the revised evaluation policy. The Evaluation Office will be reorganized, and the number of mid-grade staff will be increased to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Zero or low-cost options will also be explored to enhance capacity.

Señor Presidente,

Please allow me to say a few words on the important matter of financial resources. As you know, the revised evaluation policy sets an overall target of 3 per cent of programme expenditure to be invested in evaluation. In 2014, the budget dedicated to evaluation represented 0.37% of UNFPA expenditure. There is still some way to go; although this is challenging in the current resource environment.

In view of the recent financing trends, the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan proposes that resourcing of evaluation is guided by a number of principles:

- First, all evaluations must be adequately budgeted from the outset;
- Second, the Evaluation Office has management authority over the evaluation budget contained in the decentralized evaluation plan;
- Third, efforts should be made to pool resources to evaluate cross-cutting issues of strategic value to UNFPA;
- Fourth full transparency on the allocation of resources for evaluation will be provided through annual reporting;

UNFPA will fund the evaluation function from a blend of resources, combining: institutional budget allocations; regular resources; extra-budgetary resource allocations to specific programmes; and voluntary support – whether financial or in-kind -- made by member states and donors and specifically dedicated to UNFPA evaluation function.

The estimated budget for the evaluation function for the period 2016-2019 amounts to US Dollars 21,445,000.

The Evaluation Office will monitor the implementation of the quadrennial evaluation plan and will keep the Executive Board informed through the annual report on the evaluation function. Close attention will be required: insufficient financial and human resources could adversely affect the capacity of UNFPA to deliver the plan as envisaged.

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

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