



Statement

Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS – Agenda Item 11

ANNUAL SESSION 2017

Annual report on Evaluation

7 June 2017

Mr President

I make this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country Switzerland.

We welcome the nomination of an experienced candidate as new Director for Evaluation and look forward to working with him.

We thank the Evaluation Office for its annual report and management for its response.

We would like to focus on three elements from the report.

1. Corporate and programme-level evaluations

We would like to start by congratulating UNFPA on the stark improvement in the quality of its evaluations. This trend was already clear in the annual report last year and has been confirmed with the quality assessments since then. This is an important achievement and marks real progress in the work of the Evaluation Office.

We note with some concern however the high cancellation rate of evaluations planned, with almost 50% of planned evaluations in 2016 cancelled or postponed. We are also concerned about the decline in decentralized evaluations at the country office level. The report also notes that the capacity of the Evaluation Office is not adequate to deliver on the 2017 workplan commitments. We would welcome further elaboration as to why the delivery falls short of the planning. We welcome

management's call for increased coordinated interaction between the evaluation office, regional offices and programme division throughout the evaluation planning and management process. This will certainly help. In addition, in a time of constrained financial resources, we urge the Evaluation office to prioritise improvement in its implementation rate, with a particular focus on programme-level evaluations.

2. Use of evaluations in Policy and Learning

Secondly, we are pleased with the improved implementation of evaluation recommendations by management. It is our firm belief that the systematic and thorough implementation of management actions recommended by evaluations is the key element to ensure that evaluation findings lead to learning and ultimately to better results on the ground. In this regard, we welcome the new Management Response Tracking System and urge UNFPA to continue to shift the focus from proving results to improving results.

3. Resource Allocation

Thirdly, to improve the identified deficits in implementation and coverage of evaluations addressed before, it is crucial that sufficient resources are allocated for the evaluation function and that these resources are used most efficiently.

We welcome management's decision to maintain the planned funding levels for the evaluation function last year, despite austerity measures. We also welcome that the number of country offices staffed with dedicated monitoring and evaluation officers has increased to 50%, and urge that efforts are taken to achieve gender parity across monitoring and evaluation staff. We continue to note that the budget level is at 0.75% in 2016, well below the 3% established by the revised evaluation policy and a decrease compared to the previous year in absolute terms. In particular, given the lower implementation rate for decentralised evaluations we are concerned to see that the budget for decentralised evaluations has decreased. We look forward to the newly launched Global Programming System which should enable to better capture the programme resources allocation to evaluation, particularly decentralised evaluations. However, we stress that we expect the evaluation function to be adequately resourced in the Integrated Budget 2018-2021.

We note in terms of operational efficiency that only 44.1% of the evaluation budget was allocated to operational costs. We expect to see further improvement in this regard over the course of the next strategic plan.

Finally, we welcome UNFPA's engagement in the independent system-wide evaluations as well as its active participation in the United Nations Evaluation Group, including UN SWAP, and encourage the Evaluation Office to continue its engagement over the course of the next strategic plan.

We remain committed to supporting UNFPA in its continued efforts for evidence based programming, through a strengthened evaluation function.

Thank you very much.