



UNFPA - because everyone counts

Statement by Andrea E. Cook

Director, Evaluation Office

United Nations Population Fund

on

Item 11

UNFPA annual report on evaluation (DP/FPA/2015/6)

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

It is my pleasure to present to you today the annual report on the state of the UNFPA evaluation function in 2014. The report provides a comprehensive and candid analysis of progress and challenges, and proposes recommendations to further improve the function.

Señor Presidente, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me to provide an overview of progress against six key dimensions of evaluation performance.

First, on planning and management.

In 2014, the Evaluation Office completed two independent evaluations of the Lebanon country programme (2010-2014) and of the Turkey country programme (2011-2015). The joint evaluation of joint programmes on gender equality in the United Nations system was finalized under the leadership of UN Women. The findings and recommendations of these evaluations were presented in various fora.

In 2014, the Evaluation Office launched three thematic evaluations to assess UNFPA support to: (i) family planning (2008-2013); (ii) adolescents and youth (2008-2014); and (iii) population and housing census data (2005-2014). The inception phase for each evaluation was completed in 2014, and the evaluations are currently in the data collection stage, including field visits in a number of programme countries.

In 2014, 16 country programme evaluations were commissioned by country offices. The results from these evaluations are used to inform the new country programmes submitted to the Executive Board. Over 90 percent of country offices starting a new programming cycle in 2015 conducted an evaluation of their previous programme. It is anticipated that 20 country programme evaluations will be conducted in 2015.

Second, regarding quality of evaluation.

Over the period 2010-2014, we observe a slow, yet steady improvement in quality: with an increase of good quality reports and a corresponding decrease of poor reports. In 2014, in conformity with the revised evaluation policy, the Evaluation Office introduced quality assurance of terms of reference and pre-qualification of the teams of evaluators.

UNFPA has also adopted other measures to strengthen capacity and to improve planning and resourcing. However, a number of challenges still persist. In 2015, efforts are being made to strengthen procurement and to further improve the evaluation quality system.

Third, regarding dissemination and use of evaluation results.

Effective dissemination and communication of evaluation results is critical to ensure transparency and accountability to stakeholders, and improve learning and use throughout the organization. Evaluation follow up is also of critical importance. In 2014, the management response tracking system indicates that the implementation rate of accepted recommendations was 76.5 per cent.

Fourth, on financial resources and human resources.

It is estimated that, in 2014, the budget allocated to the evaluation function at UNFPA was approximately USD 3.7 million, representing an overall increase of 20 per cent from 2013. However, this budget represents only 0.37 per cent of UNFPA expenditure. This is well below the budget norm of up to three per cent of the total programme budget stated in the revised evaluation policy.

Given the decentralized nature of the organization, it is yet not possible to report with precision the full **budget and expenditure for UNFPA evaluation** outside the Evaluation Office, and this report only provides partial figures.

The USD 2.4 million budget of the Evaluation Office was entirely funded from the institutional budget. This is not optimal, and the Evaluation Office is looking into diversifying sources of funding, including through cost recovery of evaluation costs of non-core funded programmes. At the second regular session, the Evaluation Office will present the new budgeted evaluation plan to

the Executive Board. This will be an opportunity to reflect on funding modalities to meet growing demands on the evaluation function at both central and decentralized levels.

In 2014, the percentage of **professional monitoring and evaluation staff** to overall UNFPA staff increased to three per cent. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the number of monitoring and evaluation officers in country offices. This is a positive trend. However, staffing in the Evaluation Office and regional offices has remained unchanged; despite the increased workload related to the implementation of the revised evaluation policy.

Señor Presidente, let me briefly turn to evaluation capacity and partnerships.

Strengthened capacity and professionalization of evaluation staff in decentralized units is crucial. UNFPA has continued to build on the initiatives introduced since 2012. In 2014, the Evaluation Office created regional focal points to provide backstopping and *ad hoc* advice to regional offices in their support of country office needs in evaluation.

The Evaluation Office is an active partner in the United Nations Evaluation Group. It is also working in partnership with other organizations in the areas of gender equality and in humanitarian assistance (a field of growing importance for UNFPA). Finally, considering that it is through partnerships that the development of strong national capacities will be best addressed, the Evaluation Office joined EvalPartners, a global network which works to advocate for, and strengthen country-led evaluations systems and capacities.

Señor Presidente, Distinguished Delegates,

In 2013, the adoption of a revised evaluation policy clarifying roles and responsibilities, the creation of an independent Evaluation Office and the adoption of a budgeted biennial evaluation plan have set solid a foundation for evaluation at UNFPA. Progress towards a more mature and effective evaluation function has been acknowledged in two recent independent reviews conducted by the Multilateral Organization Performance Network (MOPAN), and by the Joint Inspection Unit. However, this is work in progress and there are a number of challenges. My report sets out specific recommendations to address them:

1. *On planning and coverage of evaluations:* UNFPA should clarify the range of evaluations to be conducted at both central and decentralized levels. Proposals will be set out in the next budgeted evaluation plan to ensure adequate alignment and coverage of the UNFPA strategic plan.
2. *On financial resources and budget allocation:* I would like to stress three points: (a) First, financial investment in evaluation should be commensurate with an adequate level of coverage; (b) Second, all evaluation expenditure should be monitored including at decentralized levels; (c) Finally, a clear normative framework should guide resource allocation for evaluation.
3. *On human resources:* Staffing and structures at both central and decentralized levels should meet the needs of the evolving evaluation function. This should be framed within a capacity development strategy for monitoring and evaluation staff.
4. *Finally, on the management response tracking system:* UNFPA should strengthen the system for evaluation follow-up with reference to good practices in other organizations.

This concludes my presentation, **Señor Presidente**. I thank the Executive Board for continued support and guidance.