



**Remarks**

**by**

**Ms. Diene Keita**

**United Nations Assistant Secretary-General**

**and**

**UNFPA Deputy Executive Director, Programme**

**Item 16 on evaluation**

**Management commentaries on  
Annual report on the evaluation function, 2023  
Report of the Director, Independent Evaluation Office**

**UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board**

**Annual Session 2024**

**5 June 2024**

- **Mr. President,**
- **Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,**
- Good afternoon, and thank you for joining us today to hear UNFPA Management’s commentaries on the Annual report on the independent evaluation function, 2023.
- **Mr. President,**
- A strong evaluation function continues to be a priority at UNFPA because it plays an essential role in providing UNFPA decision-makers with evidence and lessons learned on what works and what does not work - a knowledge critical for accelerating progress on the three UNFPA transformative results:
  - Ending unmet need for family planning;
  - Ending preventable maternal deaths; and
  - Ending gender-based violence and other harmful practices against women and girls, including child marriage and female genital mutilation.
- For this reason, Management is committed to continuing to invest sustainably in the evaluation function. For instance, in the last ten years, UNFPA’s investment in evaluation ([financial resources invested in the evaluation function] (KPI 1) nearly tripled in absolute terms, from \$3.7 million in 2014 to a historic high of \$9.8 million in 2023.
- While the overall percentage of total resources spent on evaluation in 2023 remained at 0.8 per cent of total programme expenditure, evaluation expenditures increased in absolute terms compared to the preceding year. The percentage remained at the same level owing to an increase in total programme expenditure—mostly the expenditure of non-core resources.
- Indeed, considering only the regular resources, which are unrestricted and their use entirely depends on management's decision, the proportion of resources spent on evaluation is 2.56 per cent.
- Furthermore, as part of the integrated budget, 2022-2025, midterm review, evaluation was one of the priorities that received additional funding, to the tune of \$1.3 million, to cover one additional position to strengthen the humanitarian evaluation team and provide funding for enhancing centralized evaluation activities. With this additional investment, the ratio of regular resources spent on the evaluation function to the total regular programme expenditure would grow to 2.78 per cent.

- **Mr.** **President,**
- UNFPA management commends the Independent Evaluation Office’s vision of becoming more strategic, agile, and responsive to an ever-changing context and delivering high-quality evaluations that inform the acceleration journey. This vision is timely and critical, given that progress toward several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is off track.
- Management welcomes the **revised Evaluation Policy** you endorsed at your first regular session 2024. The Policy has brought more clarity, as a result of the updated definitions, principles, norms, standards, and descriptions of the roles of all concerned entities. We trust that, with its consistent application, the quality of UNFPA evaluation will only improve.
- Management appreciates that the Independent Evaluation Office is continuing to ensure that **centralized evaluations** remain relevant to UNFPA's changing needs and priorities.
- For example, in response to the recommendations of the *Formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system (2017-2022)* issued in 2022, the UNFPA drafted a strategy on how to leverage UNDS for the achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs and issued an internal guidance note for the country and regional offices to implement the Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System.
- Likewise, the recommendations of the *Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls* issued in 2020 led to the strengthening of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action.
- Management also acknowledges that **decentralized evaluations** continue to inform the development and implementation of country programmes.
- **Mr.** **President,**
- Management notes with appreciation that the overall **progress in key evaluation performance indicators** of the evaluation function continues to be good.
- Specifically, management is pleased to note that all new country programme documents submitted to the Executive Board for approval were informed by evaluative evidence for the fifth year in a row [*use of evaluation in programme development (KPI 9)*]; that the

*management response submission* (KPI 7) remains at 100 per cent; and that all planned country programme evaluations were implemented [*evaluation implementation rate* (KPI 4)] for a second year in the row.

- Management also notes that the *implementation of management responses* (KPI 8) remained strong at 94 per cent – four percentage points above the target. In this regard, UNFPA is proud of its staff efforts to sustain this positive trend over the past four years.
- Management also recognizes that the implementation of centralized evaluation actions – a subset of management responses to evaluations that for many years lagged – reached 94 per cent in 2023, maintaining a positive three-year trend.
- Furthermore, Management notes that the quality of evaluations (*percentage of programme-level evaluations rated 'good' or 'very good'*) (KPI 5) reached the target of 90 per cent and that the *evaluation coverage* (KPI 3) markedly improved, from 80 per cent in 2017 to 97.3 per cent in 2023.
- Management reiterates its commitment to sustained investment in *human resources for monitoring and evaluation* (KPI 2). In this regard, Management notes that evaluation practices are inconsistently applied in some countries and settings, most often due to capacity limitations. Management will continue exploring ways to ensure every country office can access the necessary M&E expertise, including by leveraging the opportunities allowed by the closer geographical and time-zone proximity resulting from the Independent Evaluation Office and the Programme Division relocating to Nairobi.
- Finally, we are pleased that, over the past three years, UNFPA met or exceeded all performance areas of the System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SWAP). UNFPA was also part of the twelve-entity Task Team that developed the System Wide Gender Acceleration Plan launched on 8 March 2024 by the UN Secretary-General, following the Independent Gender Review of the UN.
- Management is strongly committed to fostering coherence and synergies among the United Nations Development System's agencies, funds, and programmes. To that end, management recognizes the Independent Evaluation Office's substantial contribution to UNEG's work and its active collaboration with other agencies through joint and system-wide evaluations.
- Management also recognizes IEO's efforts at fostering a culture of innovation and embracing digital transformation, including through the ethical and responsible use of

artificial intelligence (AI).

- **Mr. President,**
- Let me now turn to the **Evaluation Office's programme of work for 2024.**
- UNFPA 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 2024 and affirms its commitment to working with the Independent Evaluation Office to carry out its important role in supporting organizational results.
- **Mr. President,**
- **Members of the Executive Board,**
- This concludes my presentation. On behalf of UNFPA management, I would like to appreciate the continued guidance and support of both the Board and the Independent Evaluation Office.
- Thank you for your kind attention.