



Statement by Marco Segone

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on

Item on evaluation

2022 Annual Report on Evaluation by the Director, Evaluation Office

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**Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,**

It is my pleasure to present the 2022 annual report on the evaluation function. The annual report presents performance of the evaluation function across centralized and decentralized evaluations; contribution to coherence in evaluation across the United Nations system; and contribution to national evaluation capacities development.

The report also updates on the process for the peer review of the UNFPA evaluation function and the revision of the evaluation policy. Finally, the report presents the 2023 programme of work and budget for the Evaluation Office.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

Please allow me to begin with a few words on the positioning of the evaluation function as an accelerator to advance the implementation of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In tandem with the call for action in the United Nations Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda, the Evaluation Office has repositioned itself and contributed to enhancing global solidarity and multilateralism, furthering human rights, and providing evidence on emerging mega-trends. For stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateralism, the Evaluation Office has expanded its work on national evaluation capacities and systems by building stronger multi-stakeholder and intergenerational evaluation partnerships, including with young people as well as Parliamentarians. The Evaluation Office also continued to strengthen a human rights-based approach in evaluation including through its latest guidance on integrating dimensions on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind.

The Evaluation Office continued to deliver timely and high-quality evaluation evidence and knowledge across the UNFPA strategic plan priorities, including on emerging megatrends. The recently concluded evaluations on UNFPA support to the reform of the United Nations development system, adolescents and youth, and

population dynamics and data, are a few examples that generated substantive knowledge and learning in support of accelerating progress towards realizing the three transformative results.

To enhance evaluation function's real-time responsiveness and increase efficiency, the Evaluation Office, in collaboration with Information Technology Solutions Office (ITSO) and the Innovation Unit, is preparing to undertake a feasibility study on leveraging Artificial Intelligence to enhance the UNFPA evaluation function. In particular, the study will determine feasibility of Artificial Intelligence solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the production of evaluations in its various phases. The study will also explore Artificial Intelligence powered automation to increase efficiency and speed to produce meta-synthesis of existing evaluations, which will enhance evidence discovery, extraction and synthesis. The study will provide a roadmap towards implementation of an Artificial Intelligence platform for the Evaluation Office.

Mr. President and distinguished delegates,

I will now present highlights on the ongoing independent peer review of the evaluation function and the subsequent revision of the current evaluation policy.

In conformity with the requirement of the current evaluation policy, the Evaluation Office commissioned an independent peer review of the UNFPA evaluation function in 2023. The revision is driven by a geographically and intergenerationally diverse peer review panel, including a young evaluator from Mexico, a parliamentarian from Sri Lanka, as well as evaluation experts from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and South Africa. This diversity is the first of its kind among peer review panels in the United Nations evaluation group.

The peer review report will be presented by the Peer Review Panel Chair to the Executive Board in an informal meeting. Based on the panel recommendations, the current evaluation policy will be revised and presented for Executive Board's approval at the first regular session in 2024.

Mr. President and distinguished delegates,

I will now present a summary of the status of the performance of the evaluation function measured through nine key performance indicators.

I am pleased to report that capitalizing on the strengths established over time, all key performance indicators for the evaluation function indicate a positive trajectory in 2022, with 9 out of 10 indicators achieved. The steady and continued investments over the years have brought sustained results in improving the quality, coverage, and utility of evaluations.

Regarding evaluation coverage, 95 per cent of offices have conducted at least one country programme evaluation within two cycles. For the first time, all planned country programme level evaluations were implemented.

Regarding quality of evaluation reports, 95 per cent of evaluations were quality-assessed as 'good' or higher, signaling that the multi-layered quality assurance support was effective. Significant improvement has also been seen in the extent to which UNFPA evaluations are gender and disability responsive.

Like previous years, the submission rate of management responses continued to be 100 per cent, representing a stable trend over time. The annual implementation rate of management responses also continued to demonstrate a positive trend, reaching 95 per cent implementation in 2022.

Furthermore, all country programme documents were informed by evaluative evidence, reflecting growing utility of evaluations at all levels, and 100% of country offices were staffed with either a monitoring and evaluation officer or focal point.

Finally, in terms of financial investment, mirroring the rising income of UNFPA, expenditure on evaluation function continued to steadily increase and reached a historic high level. Overall, the investment in the evaluation function nearly tripled from 2014 to 2022. The actual expenditures for the evaluation function in 2022

amounted to \$9.7 million, representing 0.80 per cent of the total UNFPA programme expenses. Although this ratio is below the evaluation policy norm of 1.4 per cent to 3 per cent, the total evaluation expense in 2022 witnessed a 7 per cent boost from the preceding year.

On the other hand, when the evaluation function expenditure is computed against the UNFPA regular resources programme expenses, the ratio of evaluation expenditure accounted for 2.5 per cent. This places the investment in evaluation to be in the upper bounds of the target established in the evaluation policy.

These achievements were made possible through a multi-path and multi-layered approach that combines rigorous quality assurance, targeted backstopping, availability of various guidance and tools and tailored capacity development support by the Evaluation Office and regional monitoring and evaluation advisors. Most importantly, these achievements have been possible thanks to the great collaboration with other HQ divisions and Regional Offices and, above all, concrete commitment and support by UNFPA senior leadership. For this, UNFPA senior leadership has to be commended.

While significant progress has been made on several fronts, further efforts are needed to strengthen evaluation capacity particularly at the decentralized level. Additional efforts are also required to bolster the capacity of the Evaluation Office and Regional Offices to manage and conduct humanitarian evaluations, given the significant increase in humanitarian funding, which demands more accountability.

At the corporate level, I am pleased to report that 100% of centralized evaluations scheduled in 2022-2023 have been either completed or are on track to be completed as planned.

Evidence and lessons from centralized evaluations have been instrumental in informing corporate policies, strategies and decisions.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

Capitalizing on the momentum built over the past years, UNFPA strengthened its commitment to evaluation coherence within the UN system by actively leading and contributing to several system-wide and joint evaluations and meta-synthesis. For example, the Evaluation Office co-led together with UNICEF the second system-wide synthesis of the United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth 2030), capturing what works and what does not work in United Nations youth interventions, focusing on peace and resilience building. UNFPA is also an active member of the SDG Global Evidence Coalition. As a member of the management group, the Evaluation Office will participate in four evidence synthesis ‘pillars’ – on partnerships, people, planet and peace. In addition, UNFPA is a member of the management group of the UN Women-led synthesis of SDG 5 on gender equality. In doing so, UNFPA supports joint accountability and strengthens joint analysis, synthesis, and system-wide learning for collective results, while enhancing efficiency.

In alignment with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) Monitoring and Reporting Framework, requesting UN agencies to collaborate in at least one joint or system-wide evaluation at corporate level, UNFPA continued to exceed this commitment, as 61 per cent of centralized evaluations are either joint or system-wide.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

Now please allow me to say a few words on the evaluation function’s work on supporting national evaluation capacity development and multi-stakeholder engagement, a central pillar of UNFPA evaluation policy.

For stronger, more networked, and inclusive multilateralism, the Evaluation Office has expanded and deepened its work on national evaluation capacities and systems by building stronger multistakeholder evaluation partnerships, including with United Nations entities. Enhancing intergenerational solidarity with youth in evaluation through sustained advocacy co-driven by young evaluators remained

the key focus of the evaluation function in 2022, particularly through the Decade of Evaluation for Action, also known as the Eval4Action advocacy campaign.

The Evaluation Office also continued to co-lead the Eval4Action campaign at the global and regional levels and supported strategic initiatives and events to mobilize a range of stakeholders, including parliamentarians to strengthen inclusive national evaluation systems.

At the global level, the Evaluation Office continued to be an active member of several global evaluation coalitions.

Mr. President,

For 2023, the Evaluation Office programme of work will continue to generate learning and knowledge, especially in areas where evaluation evidence is required to support the acceleration of the three transformative results.

In the transition to a new way of working post-pandemic, the Evaluation Office will continue to adjust evaluation processes and approaches. This will include investments in developing and testing innovative approaches, including leveraging Artificial Intelligence to increase efficiencies in the evaluation function.

The Evaluation Office, together with regional offices, will also redouble its efforts to strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, by delivering differentiated technical and capacity development support.

Finally, the peer review of the evaluation function will inform the revision of the evaluation policy. The adoption the revised evaluation policy is expected to shape a stronger and more integrated evaluation function to support UNFPA in achieving its mandate in the context of the changing internal and external environment.

This concludes my presentation, Mr. President. I thank the Executive Board for the continued support and guidance.