

Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Annual Session, 1-9 June 2015, New York

Item 9: UNFPA Annual Report on Evaluation

Statement by Switzerland on behalf of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States and Switzerland

Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States and my own country Switzerland.

We wish to thank the Director of the Evaluation Office for the annual report and for her comments today. We welcome the efforts made by the evaluation office, regional and country offices to translate the evaluation policy into practice focusing on evaluation planning and management, quality of evaluations and building in house expertise on monitoring and evaluation.

Regarding **planning and management**, we welcome the increased diversity of evaluations conducted at country and regional levels. This diversity will lead to increased evidence based decision making, programming and accountability. We recognise the need for clear guidance and overview of various evaluation and review options and priorities to be set according to selection criteria and resources available. We strongly encourage the Evaluation Office, in coordination with Management, to provide clearer guidance to sharpen the strategic planning and management of evaluations in line with the criteria guiding the selection of evaluations, at both central and decentralized levels.

The quality of evaluation and reliability of information provided are key to ensure that UNFPA can best adjust its contribution to the needs of the countries within its strategic mandate. We note an encouraging improvement in the rating of the quality of evaluation even though the limited number of country programme evaluation rated in 2014 (3) prevent us from drawing definite conclusions.

We strongly encourage and support the Evaluation Office in its efforts to integrate **the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women** evaluation indicator reporting tools into existing quality assurance mechanisms. **Regarding the promotion of gender equality in the United Nations System, we welcome the joint evaluation on joint programmes on gender equality. We encourage UNFPA to further cooperate with UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP to build on the lessons learned and make further progress in making joint programmes coherent, efficient, relevant and sustainable in the respective national contexts.**

We welcome initiatives to increase the dissemination of evaluation results. **Evaluation use and follow-up** should be further institutionalised to ensure that lessons learned from past and on-going modes of engagement are reflected in future programming and institutional adjustments. We believe the **Management Response tracking system** is a key instrument for this and **could be further strengthened to better ascertain the extent to which evaluation results are effectively utilized to support organizational decision-making.**

Mr. President, we would like to stress two related important issues: **financial resources and human resources.**

As we know, the revised evaluation policy set a budget norm up to 3% of total programme budget for the evaluation function. The current budget on evaluation is currently well below this threshold (0.37%). At the same time, we note that it is not possible to track evaluation related expenditures outside the Evaluation Office. Financial reporting systems do not capture evaluation expenditures yet. We welcome efforts by Management and the Evaluation Office to find a practical implementable approach to further disaggregate and track expenditures for evaluation separately from monitoring expenditures. In addition, we support efforts to ensure that non-core funded programmes allocate adequate resources to evaluation in order to take the pressure off the institutional budget resources.

The level of quality driven evaluation coverage will depend on resources available both core and non-core as well as on human expertise. We acknowledge the use of JPO and strategic secondment to support the strengthening of decentralised evaluation. This is indeed one useful approach that can address some of the **immediate needs.** We welcome the recruitment of regional monitoring and evaluation advisers as well as the proposed elaboration of a capacity development strategy for monitoring and evaluation staff. **Strengthening evaluation capacity at country level, including implementing partners is a highly resource intensive engagement and there is a need to ensure a coherent approach that values networks building among national and regional pool of expertise to further build evaluation capacity.**

On a medium term perspective, we would strongly encourage the Evaluation Office to pursue its reflection within the United Nations Evaluation Group and partners, such as EvalPartners, to see how best joint approaches, such as joint evaluation and joint funding, could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of increased evaluation capacities at regional and national levels. Indeed the **2015 Year of Evaluation** should open new avenues of cooperation and knowledge sharing among communities of practice at country, regional and global levels.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to see that the Evaluation Office is taking the appropriate measures to strengthen the evaluation function according to the revised evaluation policy. We acknowledge the achievements made so far but also the constraints, challenges and issues stated in this candid evaluation report that stresses that none of the challenges will be addressed by quick fixes.

We agree with the recommendations mentioned in table 3 of the annual report on evaluation. Coherent priority setting in evaluation planning needs to be further pursued within our business model and strategic plan. **We ask Management to elaborate a comprehensive guidance to inform evaluation planning, management and use at all levels and allocate appropriate financial resources to the monitoring and evaluation functions to enable meaningful coverage and diversity of quality driven evaluations.**

At the end of the day, evaluations are our instrument to let us know what difference UNFPA support makes in the respective countries through its different modes of engagement and how its efforts can be further enhanced and strengthened. This will be possible only with sufficient capacity in

monitoring and evaluation that takes into account the existing theories of change to set up credible baseline and track changes along presumed results chain. Only then are we fully able to further demonstrate that UNFPA strategic interventions did indeed contribute to the expected outcomes of the Strategic Plan. Management and the evaluation office can fully count on our support in this challenging endeavour.

Mr. President,

Thank you for your attention.