



UNFPA - because everyone counts

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on

Item 11:

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**Monsieur le Président,
Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants au Conseil d'Administration,
Mesdames, Messieurs,**

It is my pleasure to present to you today the first annual report on evaluation. For UNFPA, this marks a departure from previous years when UNFPA reported to the Executive Board on a biennial basis. We are pleased and encouraged by this change introduced with the revised evaluation policy of June 2013. This is a clear sign of the importance that the Executive Board places on the role of evaluation at UNFPA. The present report reviews the evaluation function for the 2012-2013 biennium.

Monsieur le Président,

Please allow me to provide you with a brief overview and to highlight matters that may be of particular interest to the Board.

First, on corporate evaluations

The Evaluation Office independent evaluations provide thematic coverage and address organization-wide issues emanating from the UNFPA Strategic Plan. The purpose is to demonstrate accountability, support evidence-based programming, and contribute important lessons learned to the knowledge base of the organization.

During 2012-2013, the Evaluation Office completed a thematic evaluation of *UNFPA support to maternal health (2000-2011)* and a joint evaluation of *the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on female genital mutilation and cutting (2008-2012)*. It also participated in the joint evaluation of *joint gender programmes on gender equality in the UN system* which was led by UN Women. The main conclusions and recommendations of these evaluations, as well as their management responses were presented to the Executive Board at diverse informal and formal sessions in 2013 and 2014.

The Evaluation Office also completed two independent country programme evaluations: *Madagascar (for the period 2008-2013)* and *Lebanon (covering 2010-2014)*.

Second, on programme-level evaluations

The geographical coverage of UNFPA interventions is largely ensured through programme-level evaluations managed by UNFPA country and regional offices. In 2012-2013, 30 programme-level evaluations, including 24 country programme evaluations, were produced.

The Evaluation Office quality assessment of country evaluation reports indicates some improvement in quality since 2010-2011. However, quality remains a concern and this poses challenges to the credibility and usefulness of programme-level evaluations. It should be noted that during this period, the financial resources allocated to programme-level evaluations varied dramatically from one country office to another and were, overall, insufficient to produce high-quality evaluation reports. The biennial evaluation plan and budget approved by the Board in January 2014 sets out a more consistent approach to budget allocation for the 36 programme-level evaluations to be conducted by UNFPA regional and country offices in 2014-2015. The Evaluation Office welcomes this plan. However I wish to stress that, although an important factor, increased financial resources alone are not sufficient to deliver quality evaluations.

Regarding evaluation capacity, use and learning at UNFPA

UNFPA has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen evaluation capacity and promote evaluation use and learning within the organization. In 2012-2013, a series of webinars and training workshops took place to strengthen evaluation capacity in country offices. Since the adoption of the revised evaluation policy, the Evaluation Office has been working to strengthen systematic outreach to the regions to better support country offices in partnerships with regional offices. The role of regional monitoring and evaluation staff is indeed pivotal, especially considering that, in 2013, 62 per cent of UNFPA country offices rely on a focal point, rather than a dedicated officer for monitoring and evaluation.

Through these capacity building initiatives, the objective is to create the conditions for the production of a body of high-quality programme-level evaluations which can be used with confidence. To ensure that evaluations results are, in turn, used consistently to improve programming, the Evaluation Office suggests that mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on evaluation follow-up are enhanced. As part of this effort, the Evaluation Office will prepare a summary of lessons learned from country-programme evaluations completed since 2010 with a view to strengthening the evidence base of UNFPA work.

On UNFPA evaluation partnerships

The Evaluation Office is an active partner in the UN Evaluation Group composed of 42 evaluation offices, working together to harmonize norms, standards and practices across the UN system. The Office contributes to, and benefits from building closer ties with evaluation colleagues across the United Nations, including the conduct of joint evaluations. It is also through working in effective partnership with other United Nations organizations, that the development of strong national capacities will be best addressed.

Monsieur le Président, Distinguished Delegates,

Under the leadership of the Executive Board, 2013 was a year of transition for evaluation at UNFPA. 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 the basis for a strong evaluation function. There is now a more solid foundation for evaluation across UNFPA under the guardianship of the Evaluation Office, in close collaboration with UNFPA senior management and staff.

This is still work in progress, and more attention and continued effort is required to: (i) improve the quality and credibility of UNFPA evaluations; (ii) strengthen coordination between the Evaluation Office and regional offices in providing support to country offices; (iii) develop evaluation capacity and professionalize the evaluation function across UNFPA; (iv) and, last but not least, to enhance the use and follow-up of evaluations.

This concludes my presentation, **Monsieur le Président**. I Thank the Executive Board for its continued support and guidance.