



Statement by Marco Segone
Director, Evaluation Office
United Nations Population Fund
on
Item on evaluation

2021 Annual Report on Evaluation by the Director, Evaluation Office
UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board
Annual Session 2022

7 June 2022

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

It is my pleasure to present the 2021 annual report on the evaluation function.

The annual report captures: a) the performance of the evaluation function as measured through a set of key performance indicators, b) the continuous adaptation of the evaluation function to the COVID-19 pandemic; c) the evaluation function's contribution to coherence in evaluation across the United Nations system, and d) its support to national evaluation capacities development.

Further, the report presents the 2022 programme of work and budget for the Evaluation Office.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Please allow me to begin with a few words on the evaluation function's alignment with the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025 provides a strong corporate commitment to evidence-based learning and decision making, highlighting evidence and data as critical levers to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results of UNFPA: ending preventable maternal deaths, ending unmet need for family planning, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices.

To support this commitment, the Evaluation Office has developed three new evaluation frameworks for the period 2022 to 2025, namely, (a) the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan; (b) the evaluation strategy and (c) the strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management.

First, **the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan, 2022-2025**, which was adopted by the Executive Board in February 2022, sets out a coherent framework for the commissioning, management and use of centralized and decentralized programme-level evaluations.

Second, by positioning evaluation as an accelerator of the implementation of the UNFPA strategic plan, the Evaluation Office developed **an evaluation strategy**. The strategy offers a clear, strategic, forward-looking and utilization-focused vision for the evaluation function by delivering increasingly responsive, adaptive, diversified and innovative evaluation processes and products.

Third, firmly anchored in the evaluation strategy, the Evaluation Office developed the **strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management**. The strategy aims at further enhancing the utilization of evaluations through strategic communications of relevant, innovative and diversified evaluation knowledge products for decision-making, adaptation and learning.

Taken together, these frameworks constitute an intimately entwined enhancement to make the evaluation function fit to support the delivery of the strategic plan.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

As part of its commitment to United Nations development system reform, the Evaluation Office is enhancing coherence among the evaluation functions across the United Nations system by actively engaging and collaborating with other agencies through joint and system-wide evaluations, and the UNEG network.

At strategic level, the Evaluation Office, within the UNEG network, has contributed to the review and the revision of the draft system-wide evaluation policy. The Evaluation Office also took part in several system-wide initiatives related to the response to COVID-19 pandemic, including the UNEG working group on COVID-19; the Global COVID-19 Evaluation Coalition; and the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the COVID-19 humanitarian response.

Regarding collaborating in at least one joint or system-wide evaluation, I am pleased to report that UNFPA continued to significantly exceed this commitment, as 57 per cent of centralized evaluations were either joint or system-wide.

UNFPA also continued to co-lead or actively contribute to the United Nations Regional Evaluation Groups and in collaboration with other agencies, actively supported

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) evaluations through technical and financial support across regions.

Mr. President,

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

Over the years, the Evaluation Office has undertaken a broad range of actions to enhance capacities, systems and tools for evaluation. These investments have yielded significant results, especially in terms of increasing the coverage, quality and utility and use of evaluations.

As the COVID-19 crisis continued in 2021, the Evaluation Office enhanced its agility, adaptability and responsiveness. Regular technical support and constant real-time adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that the UNFPA evaluation function remained on track and continued to deliver high quality evidence to frame the response and recovery from the pandemic. In this context, I am pleased to report that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, all key performance indicators (KPIs) have retained strong performance.

Regarding quality of evaluation reports; for the third year in a row, all evaluations were quality-assessed as 'good' or higher, signaling the multi-layered quality support was effective.

Substantial progress has also been made on increasing evaluation coverage. In 2021, 96.5 per cent of offices have conducted at least one country programme evaluation within two cycles.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, a record 23 centralized and decentralized programme level evaluations were completed in 2021, compared to 10 in 2018. The implementation rate of planned evaluations consistently met the target since the introduction of the 'ringfencing' mechanism in 2018.

The annual implementation rate of management responses demonstrates a positive trend, reaching 95 per cent implementation in 2021. Further, the design of all new country programme documents was clearly informed by evaluation, marking a

significant improvement from 2018, when only 79 per cent of country programme documents met this requirement.

Human resources for the evaluation function remained strong, with increased monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country office level. In 2021, all country offices were staffed with either a monitoring and evaluation officer or focal point.

In terms of financial investment, UNFPA's commitment to provide sufficient resources for the evaluation function is reflected in the steady increase in investments over the years. The actual expenditures for the evaluation function in 2021 grew by 5.5 per cent, from \$8.5 million in 2020 to \$9.03 million. This represents 0.83 per cent of the total UNFPA programme expenditure. In absolute terms, investment in evaluation more than doubled from 2014 to 2021.

Although this still falls short of the Evaluation Policy target of 1.4 per cent to 3 per cent against the overall UNFPA programme expenses, the regular resources expenditure of the evaluation function (including net institutional budget) was \$5.2 million, representing 2.0 per cent of the UNFPA regular resources programme expenses, which is within the bounds of the target established in the evaluation policy.

In addition to the nine key performance indicators, significant improvement has also been seen on the extent to which UNFPA evaluations are gender and disability responsive.

At the corporate level, I am also pleased to report that 100% of centralized evaluations scheduled in 2021-2022 have been completed or are on track to be completed as planned.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,**

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

In alignment with the commitment to accelerate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Decade of Action, the Evaluation Office, together with EvalYouth and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation (GPFE), continued to implement the 'Eval4Action campaign'. Following grassroots mobilization and a highly inclusive and participatory approach, the campaign rallied more than 150 partners all over the world in less than two years.

In addition, UNFPA continued to support strategic initiatives and events in order to mobilize a range of stakeholders and share good practices and lessons learned on how to strengthen inclusive national evaluation systems. The Evaluation Office also continued to promote the meaningful participation of young people in evaluation and build their professional capacities.

Mr. President,

Looking ahead to the implementation of the new strategic plan, the Evaluation Office will: 1) implement the three intertwined frameworks on evaluation; 2) exercise flexibility and adaptability to respond to new demands for evidence and to respond to the dynamic environment; 3) enhance evaluation coherence within the UN system and leverage multi-stakeholder and intergenerational partnership for national evaluation capacity development; and 4) further strengthen the relevance, quality and use of evaluations to support evidence-based decision-making to accelerate the progress towards the three transformative results.

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