Swiss Joint Statement
on the UNFPA transitional biennial budgeted evaluation plan, 2014-2015
Executive Board 1st Regular Session 2014

Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Denmark, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Sweden and my own country Switzerland.

The Executive Board and UNFPA have come a long way in strengthening the evaluation function within UNFPA. Last year the Revised Evaluation Policy was adopted and the new independent Evaluation Office was created. Today, it is with great pleasure that we warmly welcome the newly appointed Director of the independent Evaluation Office, Ms. Andrea Cook. We trust that under her lead, the working relationship between the Evaluation Office and the Executive Board can be maintained and further developed. We are open to a more regular and strategic dialogue on how to continue to strengthen the evaluation function, and to make best use of evaluation results for more evidence-based decision making. We wish Ms. Cook all the best in her new function and look forward to collaborating with her and her team.

Many tasks will have to be addressed by the Evaluation Office in the coming months when implementing the Revised Evaluation Policy. We understand that this process implies organizational changes within UNFPA which will require time, resources, and focused work plans, which balance evaluations with other important related activities such as capacity building, coaching and training. We will continue to follow with interest the implementation of the Revised Evaluation Policy and the ongoing professionalization of the evaluation function. In this regard it will be important for us to see how the evaluation function can be strengthened throughout the organization - at headquarters, at the regional level and at country level. We expect this development to translate into a stronger evaluation culture within the organization, which improves the delivery of development results on the ground. In this regard we thank the Executive Director, Mr. Babatunde Osotimehin, for his continued personal commitment for a strong evaluation function and culture within UNFPA. And we look forward to the Executive Director's continued engagement as Champion of evaluation in the institution.

Mr. President,
We would like to thank the Evaluation Office for the informative presentation and documentation on the transitional biennial evaluation plan for 2014-2015. We consider the plan an important means to ensure the implementation of the Revised Evaluation Policy and we appreciate the good quality of the plan and its alignment with the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. We appreciate the budget provided with the evaluation plan and encourage UNFPA to align future budget allocations to the evaluation function with UNEG standards and best practices. Furthermore, we welcome the clarity provided on the criteria for selecting evaluations.

We consider it crucial that the findings and recommendations from the planned evaluations be available to inform the Mid-Term Review of the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Therefore, we see a need for a clear reporting timeframe and we would like to encourage UNFPA to ensure that the respective evaluation reports and management responses are shared with the Executive Board on timely manner to feed into the MTR. Also, we encourage a more explicit utilization of UNEG guidance on Human Rights & Gender Equality when conducting evaluations.

With regard to corporate level evaluations, we consider the chosen topics relevant. We think that the scope of the planned evaluations is adequate. However, we see some potential for overlap and we trust that evaluations will be conducted in a complementary way avoiding duplication. This will be needed for example in the case of the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security which is part of the evaluation on family planning and is also the object of a separate evaluation proposal for the period 2016-2017. Furthermore, we appreciate the proposal for a corporate evaluation on the regionalization process for 2016-2017. Given the fact that this important process has not yet been evaluated we expect UNFPA to assure that the results of this evaluation will be available in time to inform the elaboration of the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

Regarding programme-level evaluations we appreciate the inclusion of the three-tiered quality-enhancement process in the plan, which we hope will professionalize the evaluation function specifically at country and regional levels. We commend UNFPA for including UNDAF and “Delivery as one” evaluations in the evaluation plan and we strongly encourage UNFPA to continue to play an active role in these evaluations.

We appreciate that consultations were undertaken by UNFPA in order to identify possible joint evaluations. However, we note that no further joint evaluations are planned for the cycle 2014-2015. While we look forward to the results of the ongoing “joint evaluation of joint gender programmes in the UN system” we are confident that the next evaluation plan will again present proposals of joint evaluations, in accordance with the selection criteria laid out in the Revised Evaluation Policy. We thus request UNFPA and other Funds and Programmes to ensure that all the Executive Boards of the agencies participating in a joint evaluation are addressed
equally and in a coherent manner when results and joint management responses are presented.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the role played by funds and programs, including UNFPA in the dynamic developments within the United National Evaluation Group to promote a stronger evaluation culture in the UN development system towards more transparency, accountability, and learning.