Annual Session of the Executive Board of UN Women
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Statement of Switzerland
on the 2013 Report on the Evaluation Function of the
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
and the Joint Evaluation of
Joint Programs on Gender Equality in the United Nations System

Mr President
Madam Executive Director

Switzerland thanks the Director of the Evaluation Office of UN-Women for the interesting presentation and excellent Report on the Evaluation Function. The report gives us a good and comprehensive overview of the progress made in the implementation of the evaluation policy and the increasing consolidation of the evaluation function in 2013. We also welcome the table on completed evaluations, the information provided on Evaluation in the Trust Funds managed by UN-Women and the Corporate Evaluation Plan. Given UN-Women’s central role in promoting system wide accountability on gender equality and the empowerment of women, we consider it very important that the Evaluation Office strives to expand and multiply its impact through joint evaluations and system-wide coordination on evaluation. We would also appreciate more information of how the Evaluation Office cooperates with the Trust Funds to optimize the use of capacities and tools between them.

We welcome the introduction of the global evaluation oversight system and find the presentation of key performance indicators very useful. In regards to evaluation expenditure, we appreciate
the information on the expenditure and the Evaluation Office’s recognition of the need for guidance to ensure more systematic and accurate reporting of the expenditure as well as the commitment to address this issue. In relation to evaluation capacity, we note that important efforts have been made to increase it at all levels and welcome the intention to continue to considerably strengthen the human resources in the multi-country and country offices. In this regard, we encourage the Evaluation Office to define and communicate clear objectives on the percentage of decentralized Monitoring and Evaluation Officers or Specialists targeted. We welcome the Evaluation Office’s call for continuous and systematic capacity development on monitoring and evaluation, particularly at the decentralized level. As Switzerland has done before, we are willing to continue to provide targeted support to this end. Moreover, we would like to underline how important it is that monitoring and evaluation specialists also have or acquire sufficient gender expertise.

Switzerland is highly satisfied and compliments UN-Women for making 100 per cent of the evaluation reports publicly available by uploading them on the website of the global accountability and tracking system. We recognize that this system will greatly contribute to transparency and facilitate the dissemination and tracking of evaluation use.

We would also like to commend UN-Women for their efforts to strengthen the decentralized evaluation function in a number of key areas by implementing a systemic approach and promoting joint work of the Evaluation Office with the Program Division of UN-Women and the regional offices. We are pleased that the Evaluation Office started a revision of the internal guidelines, roles and responsibilities as well as the quality assurance
system to ensure a systematic and mandatory review of terms of reference and evaluation reports of the field offices.

We note that in 2013 the percentage of management responses for completed evaluations decreased to 85 per cent. In that regard, we encourage UN-Women to take the necessary measures to reverse this trend. Overall, the quantitative figures provided in the report give a good sense of the achievements of the Evaluation Office. However, in regards to the various percentages and numbers presented, in order to facilitate the reading and interpretation of the results, we would appreciate if targets were mentioned and an appreciation of the numbers was made, such as in regards to the implementation rate of management responses.

We thank UN-Women for the excellent Corporate Evaluation Plan, which covers in our view all the important areas. In terms of the timing of the evaluations, we would have been interested that the thematic evaluation on governance and national planning and if possible the one on women's political participation and leadership be carried out earlier, such as in 2015, in order to allow a more rapid capitalization of experiences and lessons to be learned for more rapid use in programming. We could imagine a switch of at least one of these evaluations with the evaluation on global norms, policies and standards. Moreover, in regards to the budget of the evaluation on global norms, policies and standards, we wonder whether the cost could not be reduced given that this involves essentially the analysis of reports.

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director

I will now say a few words to the Joint Evaluation of Joint Programs on Gender Equality in the United Nations System.
We highly appreciate that this joint evaluation is presented to the Executive Board of UN-Women, notwithstanding that at least Management Responses should also be presented to Executive Boards of other agencies concerned. The evaluation contains many valuable insights to be taken into account in future planning also in view of the post-2015 agenda. It shows well the potential of joint programs on gender equality but also the tremendous challenges. The challenges are doubled by the fact that they are joint programs and that the programs intend to advance gender equality. The evaluation helps to clarify where joint gender programs are recommendable, but also where they are not necessarily the best option.

We note that many findings and conclusions of the evaluation could be relevant not only for joint gender programs, but for program planning and design in general and it should also be diffused for this purpose. We strongly welcome the practice of joint evaluations in the spirit of advancing UN reform and efficiency.

We appreciate that the evaluation addresses well the particular challenges in fragile or post-conflict contexts and the principles to be respected in such contexts. We agree that the joint program modality may only be recommendable in these contexts if certain conditions are fulfilled.

The evaluation shows the importance of gender expertise and the importance of the role UN-Women can play. However, both need to be strengthened and at the same time other agencies have to be open to receiving the technical input and expertise provided, which has not always been the case. Although the role that UN-Women can play needs to be clarified, depending on the context, the need for increased gender expertise needs to be taken into account in any case.
The findings of the evaluation demonstrate the strong need to advance with the harmonization of procedures for joint programs. Otherwise, the efficiency of joint programs is jeopardized. This confirms the importance of the implementation of the QCPR. In the same line, the role of the Resident Coordinator is crucial and the potential of Gender Theme Groups should be fully exploited. Moreover, the principles of development effectiveness should be taken into account.

In conclusion, we consider that the evaluation provides an excellent basis for future planning and propose that the findings be used to develop a guidance note for the development of joint programs on gender equality and maybe even a guidance note on joint programs in general.

Thank you