Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

Annual Session 2015

Session “Annual report of the UNFPA Evaluation Office (decision 2013/21) and management response”

Presentation of Management Response by Ms Kate Gilmore, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director

3 June 2015

New York
Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to present in this session, covering the Annual Report of the Evaluation Office of UNFPA, the Management Response to the findings and recommendations of the report.

UNFPA places enormous value in having robust performance and results evidence, necessary for us to learn and make decisions, and be transparent and accountable as an organization to our partners and beneficiaries for the resources entrusted to us.

We consider high quality, action-oriented and rigorous evaluations – both independent and decentralized– as essential inputs into management decisions to improve performance in programme delivery and enhance quality of our results. Robust and actionable evaluations are pre-requisites to development effectiveness, efficiency, credibility and strong positioning among development actors. We therefore welcome every opportunity to strengthen our evaluation function and policy.

To that end, UNFPA Management welcomes the United Nations Population Fund annual report on evaluation and appreciates the recommendations to address key challenges to further strengthen UNFPA’s evaluation capacity and culture. Management commends the Evaluation Office for strengthening the evaluation function and is pleased with the progress made under its leadership in 2014.

Evaluation function at UNFPA is getting more mature resulting from the fund wide efforts on strengthening evaluation capacity, promoting evaluation culture, ensuring better quality of evaluations and their credibility; engaging into thematic evaluations that are critical for the organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

The annual report highlights key issues for action by UNFPA Management, some of which we have already acted upon. There are positive changes in availability and effective use of evidence and lessons learned generated by evaluations.

Management is pleased with the positive changes in the area of human resources and particularly with a significant increase in the number of M&E officers at the country level and welcomes a wide scope of capacity development initiatives already undertaken by the Evaluation Office and being planned for the future.
Management encourages forging ties with other evaluation groups and partners including UNEG and other global communities and active engaging in joint evaluation studies and other initiatives.

We welcome the report’s recommendation that the anticipated UNEG Peer Review in 2016 provides an excellent opportunity to have an external independent assessment of the progress of the evaluation function at UNFPA against the revised evaluation policy.

Management is aware of the challenges highlighted in the report and will work to address them. Given the importance of maintaining adequate evaluation coverage Management will work closely with the Evaluation Office to ensure that the range of evaluations to be conducted at both, central and decentralized levels, meet organizational accountability and learning needs. In this regard, UNFPA will develop comprehensive guidance to inform evaluation planning, management and use at all levels.

The report pointed to issues with the current financing of evaluation function. UNFPA fully recognizes that, despite consistent improvements reported over the past several years, there are weaknesses to be addressed. Management will ensure alignment of financial investments in evaluation with UNFPA Strategic Plan and business model and will make this a priority in the budget revision that will be carried out as part of the Mid-Term review of the Strategic Plan. A clear framework will be prepared to guide resource allocation. Necessary provisions will be made to enable systematic monitoring of expenditures for the decentralized evaluation function.

Mr. President,

UNFPA is committed to ensure that our evaluation function is consistent with best practices across development organizations and the UN system. We must have a strong results management culture, including through good reporting capacity in country offices and through evaluations that inform strategic management decisions. Management will continue to further promote behavior and culture of learning and to enhance, diversify and make more effective the process of dissemination of evidence and lessons learned from evaluations. To that end, UNFPA is currently revising the organizational knowledge management strategy to specifically address the approaches to changing behaviors and the culture.
The use of evaluations and follow up on their recommendations is currently being tracked through a management response tracking system (MRTS) which has some limitations and does not fully respond to the organizational needs. The system is being improved and will become more user-friendly, fully open to public, conducive to more nuanced and in-depth analysis of the status of implementation of evaluation management responses, and will have in-build stronger quality assurances functions.

We will continue to protect the evaluation resources, consistent with maintaining the necessary fiscal discipline and the integrity of the organization budget.

In conclusion, we look forward to engaging with the Board on constructive proposals by which the independence of the Evaluation Office can be preserved and the accountability of management upheld.

Thank you.