



The Executive Director

19 December 2014

Excellency,

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, wishes to express its appreciation for the 2014 MOPAN Common Approach Assessment Report. We sincerely appreciate the effort made by the 19 donor Governments to unify one joint assessment instrument and we are very pleased to observe that the findings of the report are overall positive and rates UNFPA's performance under the majority of dimensions as 'adequate' or 'strong'.

UNFPA appreciates the close collaboration with the MOPAN Secretariat, the Institutional Lead as well as Universal Management Group throughout this process. This year is the first year of the implementation of UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2014-17, and as an organization we are in a transition phase with many changes underway, and thus we welcome the validation and verification of the MOPAN assessment.

UNFPA values the opportunity to review and provide comments to the draft report prior to the submission of the final report and we thank for the frank and fruitful discussion on the report that we had on 5 December.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin
Under-Secretary-General

His Excellency
Mr. Ib Petersen
Permanent Mission of Denmark to
the United Nations
New York, New York

UNFPA's Management response to the 2014 MOPAN Common Approach Assessment report

1. General comments

UNFPA is pleased to observe that the findings of the report are overall positive and rates the organization's performance under the majority of dimensions as 'adequate' or 'strong'.

UNFPA is particularly pleased to note the report's positive ratings of UNFPA's performance in the six countries - Bangladesh, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Kenya, and Tanzania - assessed which evidences the strength of UNFPA's engagement with our implementing partners.

UNFPA is happy to see that the organization continues to be recognized for the relevance and clarity of its mandate and the Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 is found as suitable to further strengthen the alignment of the strategy with our mandate. The report acknowledges that UNFPA has strengthened the systems and processes to report on results, and the implementation of related measures is underway.

Furthermore, it is recognized that UNFPA is effectively integrating the cross-cutting priorities that fall within our mandate, such as gender equality, human rights-based approaches, and HIV/AIDS. The mainstreaming of humanitarian programming is assessed as work in progress but it is acknowledged that the required policies to guide our humanitarian work exist, while UNFPA has limited human and financial resources to fully engage in humanitarian and emergency settings. The report also recognizes that UNFPA has made notable improvements in systems for accountability, has continued to update methods for allocating resources, and has improved results-based budgeting.

2. Evaluation

UNFPA notes with appreciation the acknowledgement by MOPAN that UNFPA has made significant progress in strengthening its evaluation function; particularly in respect of alignment of the evaluation function with the strategic direction of UNFPA and reflection of best practices in the United Nations.

The MOPAN assessment was undertaken early in the implementation of the revised evaluation policy and Transitional Biennial Evaluation Workplan and Budget for 2014-15 and UNFPA notes that it is still too early to demonstrate whether these changes and associated measures will have the desired impact on all aspects of the evaluation function. UNFPA has committed to a UNEG Peer Review in 2016, to ensure that there is objective, independent scrutiny of the evaluation function. The Peer Review is timed to ensure that lessons are reflected in the review of the 2014 -2017 Strategic Plan, and inform the implementation of the Biennial Evaluation Workplan and Budget for 2016-2017.

In relation to evaluation use and follow up: UNFPA appreciates how MOPAN has drawn on UNFPA evidence from corporate and programme evaluations to inform the review. Corporate evaluation of UNFPA support to family planning; adolescent and youth and population and

housing census data will complete evaluation coverage of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan. The Biennial Evaluation Workplan and Budget for 2016-2017 will be aligned with the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, and will be presented for approval by the Executive Board in September 2015. The establishment of the Management Response Tracking System is promising, and UNFPA recognizes that there is further work required to ensure that it is well utilized to ensure that there is timely and effective follow up to evaluations, in line with the expectations of the Executive Board to build a stronger evaluation culture at all levels of the organisation.

UNFPA agrees with MOPAN and have taken steps to improve coverage and quality of programme evaluations.

- UNFPA fully recognizes the role of programme evaluations in meeting accountability and lesson learning requirements, particularly at country level. However, it is important to acknowledge the growing importance of UNDAF/ DaO evaluations in a number of settings, which has implications for the use and coverage of UNFPA programme evaluations, particularly Country Programme Evaluations. UNFPA will keep this issue under review. UNFPA agrees that there is a lack of clarity related to other forms of programme evaluation and will seek to clarify expectations in the Biennial Evaluation Workplan and Budget for 2016-2017.
- MOPAN notes that UNFPA has put in place a number of measures to strengthen quality of country programme evaluations. In addition, since the beginning of 2014 UNFPA has introduced entry level quality assessment; increased financial resources; and improved coordination between the Evaluation Office, Regional Offices and Country Offices in relation to evaluation planning and management. It is anticipated that these measures will lead to a general improvement in the quality of programme evaluations over time, particularly of Country Programme Evaluations. UNFPA points out that there are also a number of systemic challenges that are faced by most bilateral and multi-lateral commissioners of decentralized evaluations. These challenges primarily relate to the capacity and availability of specialist, skilled evaluators, which is particularly challenging in light of the highly specific mandate of UNFPA. This points to the need for UNFPA to engage more effectively in efforts on national evaluation capacity development related to its area of mandate both within the United Nations, and with other partners at global, regional and country levels. UNFPA will build on existing initiatives focused on building capacities to evaluate gender and human rights, but will aim to increase the level of engagement in new partnerships and global communities of practice in line with available human and financial resources.

3. Managing Human Resources

UNFPA is happy to note that MOPAN finds the policies and systems to manage staff performance adequate and we appreciate the acknowledgement of the ongoing process to ensure that the existing systems are used to its full advantage. We duly note MOPAN's findings regarding Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 10 "Managing human resources to improve performance". This KPI focused on the question whether results focused performance assessment systems are used to make decisions on human resources and whether there is a transparent system in place to manage staff performance. Regarding these two questions,

survey respondents, all of them donors at HQ, found the systems in place to be inadequate while the document review found the systems in place to be adequate.

This discrepancy between the document review and the survey results indicates an issue of perception rather than an actual problem with UNFPA's performance management systems which is supported by the fact that 47% of respondents reported to having a lack of knowledge regarding these systems. This large percentage suggests that even some of those who claimed to have some knowledge in this area may not have a full picture of UNFPA's human resources infrastructure. This issue of perception is further highlighted in other areas, for example the question regarding UNFPA's technical knowledge and expertise where 16% of direct partners recognized our technical knowledge and expertise (second most frequently noted strength in the survey), while 20% of donors at headquarters, typically not as directly involved with implementation, cited lack of technical expertise/capacity among areas where UNFPA needed to improve (amongst the top 5 most frequently noted areas needing improvement).

UNFPA is happy to note that the current performance evaluation system is the benchmark within the UN system and other organizations have adopted the system already or are in the process of doing so. In addition, action to follow up on the assessment results and to effectively address under-performance is being taken, reflected by the fact that 33% of staff members identified as under-performing in the last two years have in the meantime been separated, their contracts were not extended on grounds of poor performance, or they have otherwise left the organization, including staff members on permanent appointments. At the same time remaining cases are being monitored and few, if any, other organizations in the UN system has separated more staff on grounds of under-performance than UNFPA.

UNFPA will continue to improve management of the organization's human resources and we agree that there is a need to have a new system for recognition and rewards in place that places a premium on team performance. DHR has committed to define our approach to recognition and rewards, including a review and update of policy, practice, communication and system, adding measures to incentive teamwork, courageous behavior and innovation as part of DHR's 2015 Action Plan. To this end, in 2014 UNFPA staff members were interviewed and as a result of this survey realistic, financially viable and effective short and long term business recommendations in this area were developed. Further, UNFPA will examine what steps could be taken to better communicate the results achieved in the areas of managing performance, not only within the Organization but also to our member states.

4. Evidence of progress towards country-level results

UNFPA is pleased to see that our ongoing efforts to strengthen our systems and processes for reporting on results are acknowledged by MOPAN. With regards to the limited documented evidence of UNFPA contributions to outputs and outcomes, this is addressed with the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017, through mainly two prongs:

1. The Strategic Plan 2014-17 has a stronger results framework based on output indicator baselines and targets specified at country level;
2. UNFPA has developed an online results planning, monitoring and reporting system, *myResults*, which country programmes will use to not only systematically and

consistently document achievement of programme outputs, but also, on a quarterly basis, record progress (milestones) towards achievement of output targets. This system will ensure availability of data and narratives on achievement of programme outputs, including challenges and lessons learned.

The current UNFPA strategy is to track outcome result trends biennially. Evidence of contribution to these results will mainly come from evaluations. Evaluations will also improve as evidence on achievement of outputs becomes regularly available from *myResults*. In addition, where applicable, UNFPA will use modelling to estimate the contribution of its programme interventions to outcome results. Both modelling and improved evaluations will enhance availability of evidence of the Fund's contribution to outcome results.

Overall, UNFPA is very pleased with the positive ratings of the MOPAN assessment which we believe are both fair and accurate. We welcome the validation and verification of the MOPAN assessment which comes at an important time: 2014 is the first year of the implementation of UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2014-17, and as an organization we are in a transition phase with many changes underway. UNFPA wishes to thank the MOPAN team once again for the privilege of being part of the 2014 exercise and ongoing collaboration to further improve performance.