



Statement by Marco Segone

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on

Item on evaluation

Formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform
of the United Nations development system

UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

It is my pleasure to present the main results of the formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system. The purpose of this evaluation was to help UNFPA provide more effective support to the further development and operationalization of the reform, while ensuring that the reform is also conducive to delivering on the three transformative results that UNFPA is committed to achieving by 2030.

Covering the period from 2017 to 2022, the evaluation assessed the contribution of UNFPA to the design, development, and operationalization of the reform as well as the effects of the reform on the strategic positioning, the ability to deliver and the institutional efficiency of UNFPA.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me to present the key highlights of the evaluation.

The evaluation found that UNFPA has provided major support for the repositioning of the United Nations development system throughout the design, development, and operationalization of the reform elements. All levels of the organization have engaged actively to advance the reform, including by being constructively critical when appropriate.

Although some elements of the reform are still under development or implementation, UNFPA has, for the most part, been able to capitalize on the reform for the benefit of its stakeholders. Engagement in the reform has helped to emphasize the strategic positioning of UNFPA, making the organization more effective and efficient in delivering its mandate.

Yet, engagement in the reform does come with costs as well as risks, and while benefits may outweigh them, efforts need to be made to reduce costs and manage risks. The efficiency agenda, and particularly the establishment of local shared service centers, is likely to have implications on the jobs and career paths of UNFPA staff, for which UNFPA

is not fully prepared. The new regional development coordination offices and the revamped resident coordinator offices also cost UNFPA more than prior to the reform.

The evaluation found that UNFPA senior management has provided strong and timely information and guidance on the reform, in its messages to staff and statements to the Executive Board. However, the organization has not provided an explicit strategy for engagement to maximize the benefits. Moreover, beyond the essential areas of operationalizing the reform, organization-wide ownership of the reform has not occurred, and potential benefits to leverage the reform have not been fully implemented in the humanitarian work of UNFPA.

In addition to broadening the ownership of the reform, now is the time for UNFPA to focus on addressing its organizational culture with a view to integrating the spirit of the reform into the everyday work of all staff.

Moving forward, it's important to highlight that, given the nature of the reform, further strengthening of UNFPA contributions to, and benefits from, the reform, requires a collective effort of the wider UN system.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me now to turn to the six recommendations of the evaluation.

First, UNFPA should provide stronger strategic direction to enhance even further its staff engagement with the reform.

Second, UNFPA should work towards broadening the ownership and deepening the institutionalization of the reform at all levels of the organization.

Third, UNFPA should address human resource challenges arising from the reform and incentivize more staff to work in collaboration with their colleagues from other United Nations agencies.

Fourth, UNFPA should address the reform-related challenges and risks.

Fifth, UNFPA should re-assess the way it works in multi-country environments to deliver impact and accelerate the implementation of the commitments made to the multi-country office review.

Sixth, UNFPA should make special efforts to ensure that those working in humanitarian contexts make the best use of the reform, especially leveraging the reform in working with partners across the development-humanitarian-peace continuum.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

Given the unprecedented and complex global challenges facing the world today, and the challenges in the progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the repositioning of the United Nations development system is even more crucial than in the past. This evaluation demonstrated that UNFPA has provided major support to the reform, while also capitalizing on the reform for the benefit of its stakeholders. For this, UNFPA has to be commended.

However, the evaluation also highlighted lessons learned and recommendations to enable UNFPA to engage in the reform even further. I am confident that the evidence contained in this evaluation will help UNFPA to contribute more effectively to the operationalization of the reform, while furthering its own strategic objectives with the aim to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, so that 8 billion people in the world thrive equally.

This concludes my presentation, Mr President. I thank you and the Executive Board for your continued support and guidance, and I am at your disposal for any questions or clarifications.