



Statement by Marco Segone  
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on  
Item on evaluation

Formative evaluation of the UNFPA support to adolescents and youth

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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 support to adolescents and youth. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the implementation of the UNFPA Adolescents and Youth Strategy to inform future implementation in this area of work.

The evaluation assessed all thematic aspects of UNFPA adolescents and youth programming from 2015 to 2022, with a particular emphasis on the period since the current strategy's launch in 2019.

**Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,**

Inclusive and meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation provides an exceptional opportunity to make development programmes more responsive to the distinct needs and perspectives of youth; and empowers them to lead and contribute to a sustainable world. When youth meaningfully engage in evaluation, it can lead to increased innovation, higher quality and relevance of the evaluation and make evaluation a powerful tool for transformative change.

This is why, for the first time in UNFPA and, to my best knowledge, in the UN system, this evaluation engaged young people in practical and innovative ways throughout the exercise, not only as important sources of evidence and insight, but most importantly as co-manager of the evaluation, through the establishment of a Youth Steering Committee. The Youth Steering Committee comprised of seven young professionals from Ghana, Kenya, Peru, the Netherlands, Tunisia, and Türkiye, who worked alongside the Evaluation Office throughout the evaluation process. The Youth Steering Committee ensured that young people had a voice in each stage of the evaluation to reflect the priorities, values and identities of young people.

These measures align with our own commitments in the Evaluation Policy on youth engagement in evaluation, and to the Decade for Evaluation for Action campaign. More importantly, this engagement helped amplify the voice and agency of young

people in the evaluation process, while promoting intergenerational learning and exchange.

**Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,**

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

The evaluation found that the UNFPA Adolescents and Youth Strategy is the cornerstone to UNFPA programming, and articulates change dimensions that are needed to fully realise the three transformative results. The evaluation notes that the strategy is aligned with human rights based approaches and the principles of gender equality and leaving no one behind. However, the evaluation also indicates that a deeper examination of underlying factors of discrimination and inequality is necessary to ensure all young people in their diversity are reached.

The evaluation commends the holistic and multisectoral nature of the strategy, recognizing its potential to fundamentally change the way UNFPA addresses the intersectional needs of adolescents and youth. However, the evaluation also recognizes that the integrated and multisectoral nature of the Strategy has yet to be fully operationalized.

The evaluation also found that UNFPA support to adolescent and youth has positively contributed to each of the three dimensions of the strategy - *My Body, My Life and My World* -, particularly in areas where UNFPA traditionally leads, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sexuality education and youth participation. Moreover, the strategy provides UNFPA a framework to further enhance its support in these areas by integrating non-traditional areas of work such as youth economic empowerment, mental health, and climate resilience.

The evaluation also recognizes the multiple leadership roles UNFPA has undertaken in the global adolescents and youth agenda and the fact that it is often seen as the de-facto lead United Nations agency on youth. However, at the country level its capacity to lead in the various thematic areas of the adolescent and youth agenda is limited, and more clarity is required to ensure its strategic leadership and

participation in specific areas of work, leveraging its resources and partnerships within the country.

While the evaluation notes that these results indicate progress in the efforts of UNFPA to support adolescent and youth work, it also emphasizes the need for a more robust results framework with clear outcome and impact level indicators. In addition, the evaluation notes an opportunity for UNFPA, as the lead agency on population data and dynamics, to generate comprehensive data analytics and evidence on the impact of adolescent and youth programming on its three transformative results. Collectively, this will help to establish a stronger case for investing in youth.

Lastly, the evaluation notes the institutional setup of UNFPA, in particular the positioning of the adolescent and youth team within the organization which does not support the multi-sectoral and integrated vision of the strategy. Further, challenges of limited staffing and capacities, together with high turnover, greatly impede the ability of UNFPA to accelerate its efforts and influence the global adolescent and youth agenda.

**Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,**

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

First, UNFPA should enhance the operationalization of the integrated and multisectoral nature of the strategy, by ensuring efficient rollout, implementation, and use of the *My Body, My Life and My World* operational guidance and expanding corporate learning, experience sharing and cross-fertilization for improved programming.

Second, UNFPA should further enhance each of the three dimensions of the strategy using the evidence provided in this evaluation. For the *My Body* dimension, UNFPA should revitalize efforts to deliver youth responsive sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV services that are appropriate, accessible, and of quality for young people. For the *My Life* dimension, UNFPA should continue to support the adaptation of comprehensive sexuality education to country and regional contexts, while maintaining focus on international standards. For the *My World*

dimension, UNFPA should ensure a common, uniform understanding of meaningful participation of young people within UNFPA programming and enhance synergies between the three dimensions of the strategy.

Third, UNFPA should fully integrate adolescents and youth within UNFPA humanitarian response and leverage youth, peace and security and climate resilience within nexus programming.

Fourth, UNFPA should ground all adolescent and youth interventions in human rights and gender transformative approaches to ensure inclusion across all groups of adolescent and youth, and moreover, address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination.

Fifth, UNFPA should identify its corporate priorities and approaches for leadership, coordination, and partnership, within adolescent and youth programming for all levels.

Sixth, UNFPA should leverage population data and analytics in the adolescent and youth area to enhance policy advocacy capabilities, including through strong investment cases.

Seventh, UNFPA should review its corporate structure and the capacities of staff working on the adolescent and youth agenda, to ensure availability of the required capabilities to implement the strategy.

Eighth, within the framework of the recently launched People's Strategy, UNFPA should develop a specific Human Resources workplan for meaningful participation of young professionals in UNFPA, focused on increasing the recruitment and strengthening the careers of young professionals, as well as creating an enabling environment for intergenerational leadership, learning and contribution.

While this evaluation did not assess UNFPA contribution to youth meaningful engagement in evaluation, the Youth Steering Committee independently decided to develop the ninth recommendation based on their experience in this evaluation. They recommend that UNFPA should increasingly engage young people in UNFPA evaluations, and continue to advocate with partners for the meaningful engagement of young people in evaluation.

**Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,**

Among the 8 billion people on the planet, the youth population is significant, diverse, and growing exponentially. Now more than ever, adolescents and youth also face a multitude of complex challenges across intersecting areas of their lives. The COVID-19 pandemic and several humanitarian crises have disproportionately affected young people and has resulted in worsened gender and power inequalities, further exacerbating the challenges faced by youth. In this context, the work of UNFPA to support adolescent and youth remains extremely relevant and crucial.

I am confident that the evidence in this evaluation will support UNFPA in its leadership and efforts to help young people realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights; thus contributing to the achievement of its transformative goals and the acceleration of progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This evidence may also contribute to the global review of International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action as it commemorates its 30th anniversary in 2024.

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.