



Statement by Joel Rehnstrom

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on

Item on evaluation

Independent evaluation of UNFPA support to the integration of the principles of
'leaving no one behind' and 'reaching the furthest behind' 2018-2024

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 and recommendations of the independent evaluation of UNFPA's support to the integration of the principles of 'Leaving no one behind' and 'reaching the furthest behind', covering the period 2018 to 2024.

This evaluation is the first of its kind at UNFPA. The evaluation assesses how the principles of leaving no one behind have been conceptualized, integrated, and implemented across the organization's programming and operations, at global, regional, and country levels, in both development and humanitarian settings. Its findings are particularly timely as UNFPA begins implementing its Strategic Plan for 2026–2029.

Allow me to highlight four key messages from the evaluation.

First, the evaluation finds strong and widespread commitment to the principle of leaving no one behind across UNFPA, viewing it as integral to its mandate and human rights-based approach. UNFPA is recognized as a leader within the United Nations system in advancing intersectional approaches to exclusion, particularly through its work in collection and generation of population data, and through its sustained engagement with civil society, including rights-holder organizations.

At the same time, awareness and operational use of the LNOB Operational Plan remain uneven. While the core concepts, in particular the shift from population groups to intersecting factors of exclusion, are broadly endorsed, their practical application is not yet consistent across all contexts.

Second, the evaluation confirms that UNFPA has implemented diverse interventions that are responsive and, in some cases, transformative. These efforts are evident across all thematic areas of UNFPA's mandate and are often grounded in context-specific strategies and adapted to national priorities. UNFPA's convening role emerges as a distinctive added value, enabling the voices of those furthest behind to be heard at national, regional, and global levels.

However, the evaluation also finds that commitments to leaving no one behind are not yet systematically reflected in financial allocations, human resource planning, or performance and accountability systems. This limits the organization's ability to consistently prioritize those furthest behind, particularly in resource-constrained and humanitarian settings.

Third, the evaluation highlights the need for greater conceptual clarity and coherence of leaving no one behind within UNFPA's broader human rights-based approach. Questions remain about how leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind, and other efforts to address structural inequalities relate to one another in practice. Strengthening conceptual clarity would enhance coherence across corporate guidance, reduce ambiguity at country level, and support consistent implementation especially where multiple inclusion-related strategies coexist.

Fourth, the evaluation underscores that fully embedding the principle of leaving no one behind requires sustained attention to organizational culture and institutional accountability. Moving beyond rhetoric and "tick-box" approaches requires deliberate investment in leadership, capacity development, knowledge management, and inclusive workplace practices. These dimensions are essential to ensure that leaving no one behind is a lived organizational value.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Based on these findings, the evaluation provides practical recommendations focused on strengthening institutional accountability, enhancing guidance and learning to support context-responsive implementation, and better aligning internal systems with commitments to leave no one behind.

I am confident that this evaluation provides a sound evidence base to reflect on UNFPA's past performance and inform the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 as UNFPA prioritizes those most at risk of being left behind.

This concludes my statement, Mr. President. I thank the Executive Board for its continued support and welcome any questions or comments.
