



Statement by Marco Segone
Director, Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Population Fund
on
Item on evaluation

2024 Annual Report on Evaluation

UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board
Annual Session 2025

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

It is my pleasure to present the 2024 annual report on the evaluation function.

Amid growing challenges to the 2030 Agenda, IEO is strategically enhancing the UNFPA evaluation function to drive progress towards the achievement of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, the ICPD Programme of Action, and the SDGs. Informed by the Pact for the Future and the 2024 QCPR, IEO is strengthening evaluations to be more responsive and forward-looking.

To achieve this, IEO has boosted evaluation capacities, especially in decentralized and humanitarian contexts; increased collaboration with UN entities; pioneered the ethical integration of Artificial intelligence into evaluation and provided global leadership; built strong multi-stakeholder partnerships and prioritised youth engagement in evaluation.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

Implementing the 2024 Evaluation Policy has strengthened evaluation independence, quality, and coverage.

The Evaluation Office was rebranded as the Independent Evaluation Office, reinforcing its independent positioning and visibility.

The decentralized evaluation function was strengthened through global and regional evaluation workshops; M&E job descriptions and reporting lines revised; a phased approach for integrating project-level evaluations into the evaluation quality assurance system developed; costed evaluation plan guidance updated; and a new tool for monitoring decentralized evaluations developed.

Humanitarian evaluations were prioritized with the establishment of a new dedicated specialist, and quality assurance support was provided to all ongoing country programme evaluations with a humanitarian component. IEO also started to centrally manage humanitarian country programme evaluations.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

The ten key performance indicators show that the evaluation function remained strong, with eight of ten indicators meeting or exceeding targets.

Building on the positive trend of the past decade, investment in evaluation continued to grow at both decentralized and centralized levels. In 2024, total expenditure on the evaluation function reached \$10.04 million, representing 0.79 per cent of UNFPA's total programme expenditure. Although this proportion remains below the target, the total real-term expenditure on evaluation increased by approximately 2.5% compared to 2023, reaching the highest level ever. M&E staffing remained stable, with 98% of offices staffed with a M&E officer or focal point.

Evaluation coverage was robust, with 96% of offices conducting at least one country programme evaluation within two programme cycles. Despite a more rigorous quality assessment system, all centralized evaluations and 91% of regional and country programme evaluations were rated at least 'satisfactory'.

While the management response submission rate decreased to 89%, the implementation rate reached 98% - a record high.

All country programme documents were informed by evaluative evidence. Last but not least, 59% of centralized evaluations were conducted as joint or inter-agency initiatives, exceeding the commitment under the QCPR framework.

Overall, key performance indicators remained strong due to IEO restructuring, collaboration, capacity development and digital innovation. However, challenges persist in decentralized capacity for evaluation management and quality assurance, supply of skilled national evaluators, humanitarian evaluation capacity, and the timely completion of country programme evaluations.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

100% of centralized evaluation are completed or on track to be completed as planned.

To foster UN system-wide coherence, IEO actively participated in joint and inter-agency evaluations, contributing to management groups and evidence synthesis exercises, across development and humanitarian contexts.

IEO also provided vital support to the UN System-Wide Evaluation Office: loaned a senior evaluation advisor; contributed to the QCPR evidence summaries; and participated in the Evaluation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. IEO also played a key role in shaping the System-Wide Office's evaluation policy.

IEO engaged closely with the UNEG working groups, co-convening those focused on data and AI, and young evaluators, in addition to vice-chairing the network.

Mr. President, and distinguished delegates,

IEO continued to advance multi-stakeholder engagement for stronger national evaluation capacities, actively participating in global evaluation coalitions.

Co-leading the Eval4Action advocacy campaign, IEO championed the Youth in Evaluation initiative. Youth engagement in evaluation remained a core focus with young evaluators contributing to 18 regional and country programme evaluations. The Youth in Evaluation Standards were promoted, and support was provided to the EvalYouth Network. These efforts led to IEO receiving the Youth in Evaluation Super Champion Award.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

this is my last Executive Board session. As already communicated, effective 31 August, I will take early-retirement due to family reasons.

Over the last seven years, the performance of the evaluation function in UNFPA has experienced a significant improvement, as reported by the recent MOPAN assessment. The UNEG independent peer review commended the high value of the UNFPA evaluation function.

Evaluation is an agent of change, within UNFPA and beyond. This is why, in addition to enhancing the evaluation function of UNFPA, my priority has always been to contribute to the coherence among evaluation functions in the UN system, and fostering multi-stakeholders and intergenerational partnerships to develop national evaluation capacities.

All of the above has been possible thanks to an exceptional team at IEO and the full support by UNFPA senior management. UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, Chief of staff Samuel Choritz, Deputy Executive Directors Diene Keita and Andrew Saberton, have always demonstrated commitment to an independent evaluation

function, using evidence generated by evaluation to inform decision making.

Excellency, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Board for its rigorous and consistent support to the independence of the evaluation function in UNFPA, and to the IEO's initiatives throughout the years of my tenure as Director.

Reply joint statement

- Appreciate strong words of appreciation
- Fully agree that at times of challenges, including financial ones, evaluation is more important than ever.
 - 1% invested in evaluation makes sure the remaining 99% is spent effectively and efficiently
- Specifically, appreciate appreciation and continuous support and guidance on i) innovation and ii) youth engagement in evaluation.
 - Just back from the Summit on the future of evaluation co-organised by IEO, EvalYOUTH, GPFE and IOCE
 - True partnership with EvalYouth
 - Fully aligned to the UN Pact for the Future
 - Opened by Sri Lanka PM, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs Felipe Paullier and UNFPA ED (video recorded)
 - Focused on youth co-leadership (and not simply engagement) and ethical use of AI
- Significant results and progress in the last 8 years have been possible thanks to
 - responsiveness of evaluation function
 - excellent relationship with management
 - continuous support and guidance by the Board