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REVISED UNFPA EVALUATION POLICY

Summary

The Executive Director is pleased to present the revised UNFPA evaluation policy. UNFPA developed the revised policy in response to Executive Board decisions 2009/18 and 2012/26, and obtained input from Executive Board members during informal consultations in 2012 and 2013. UNFPA also undertook extensive internal consultations and commissioned a substantive quality review by an international evaluation expert. It took into consideration guidance provided by UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The revised policy ensures that the evaluation function is aligned with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group and with international best practices. It takes into account the review, in 2012, of the UNFPA evaluation policy by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, as well as General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

The revised policy ensures that the roles and responsibilities related to evaluation tasks are clearly articulated. An independent Evaluation Office will report administratively to the Executive Director and will report directly to the Executive Board on the evaluation function at UNFPA. The Evaluation Office will be the custodian of evaluation functions at UNFPA, including corporate evaluations and programme-level evaluations, as well as all evaluation-related core tasks. UNFPA has placed stronger emphasis in the revised policy on strategic planning and quality assurance, on prioritizing evaluation, and on ensuring that there are sufficient resources for it.

Section I of the present document provides the background for the revision of the policy and describes the role of evaluation as an integral part of the UNFPA drive to achieve development results. Section II defines key terms and concepts. Section III lists the principles and norms that guide the policy. Section IV delineates the roles and responsibilities in evaluation. Section V provides guidance on quality assurance, capacity development and resources. Section VI addresses the dissemination, follow-up and reporting of evaluation results. Section VII focuses on operationalizing the policy. Section VIII provides the elements of a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board. An annex that provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities in evaluation at UNFPA may be accessed at www.unfpa.org/public/home/exbrd/pid/12130.



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I. OVERVIEW

A. Background

1. In June 2009, following approval by the Executive Board in decision 2009/18, UNFPA adopted its first evaluation policy (DP/FPA/2009/4). Pursuant to decision 2012/26 of the Board, UNFPA revised its evaluation policy to provide greater clarity about: (a) the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and the definition of roles and responsibilities; and (b) how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and resourced. The revised policy thus provides a clearer and enhanced institutional basis for the evaluation function in UNFPA. It also demonstrates UNFPA commitment to public accountability, transparency and knowledge sharing.

2. The revised UNFPA evaluation policy responds to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The resolution emphasizes the importance of independent, credible and useful evaluation functions with sufficient resources, and the importance of promoting a culture of evaluation that ensures the active use of evaluation findings and recommendations in policy development and in improving the functioning of the organizations.

3. General Assembly resolution 67/226 calls on the United Nations development organizations to further increase institutional and organizational capacity for evaluation and to align evaluation planning with strategic plans. It also calls for: (a) the full participation of national governments in monitoring and evaluation activities of the United Nations; (b) strengthening capacity-building for monitoring and evaluation and, when appropriate, the use of national public and private systems for monitoring and evaluation; and (c) the promotion of collaborative approaches to evaluation among United Nations organizations.

4. In 2012, the Executive Director, UNFPA, requested the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services to undertake an independent review of the UNFPA evaluation policy. In its report on the review of the UNFPA evaluation policy (DP/FPA/2012/7), the Office of Internal Oversight Services suggested a number of steps that could be taken to improve the existing policy, including: (a) more explicit links between evaluation activities and the mandate and goals of UNFPA; (b) better delineation of the scope of corporate and programme-level evaluation activities; (c) better articulation of the independence of evaluation; (d) a more explicit description of roles and responsibilities in evaluation; (e) addressing gaps related to planning and prioritizing evaluations, resources for evaluation, follow-up procedures, incorporating gender and human rights perspectives in evaluation, and capturing, storing, sharing and utilizing lessons learned and best practices; and (f) better recognition of and allowance for different country needs and contexts. In developing the revised policy, UNFPA has considered and addressed each suggestion.

5. The revised UNFPA evaluation policy is consistent with the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2013 (DP/FPA/2007/17), and its 2011 midterm review (DP/FPA/2011/11). In formulating the revised evaluation policy, UNFPA has also taken into account the ongoing work for the new

strategic plan, 2014-2017. To ensure that the revised evaluation policy is aligned with the strategic direction of UNFPA and best practices within and outside the United Nations, UNFPA will review the policy at regular intervals and revise it as needed, prior to the conclusion of each strategic plan.

B. UNFPA goals, strategic direction and the purpose of the evaluation function

6. Two overarching frameworks guide UNFPA development efforts: (a) the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 [International Conference on Population and Development](#); and (b) the [Millennium Development Goals](#). In September 2011, following an extensive review by UNFPA of its work and the changing context within which it operates, the Executive Board endorsed, in decision 2011/39, the future directions of UNFPA as contained in the midterm review of its strategic plan (DP/FPA/2011/11), with a focused set of outcomes and outputs.

7. Advancing the right to sexual and reproductive health by accelerating progress towards [Millennium Development Goal 5](#) to improve maternal health is at the centre of the revised UNFPA strategic plan. With this sharpened focus, UNFPA seeks to improve the lives of underserved populations, especially women and youth, including adolescents. These efforts are guided by UNFPA expertise in population dynamics, human rights and gender equality; driven by country needs; and tailored to the specific country context.

8. Evaluation at UNFPA serves three main purposes that support the organization's drive to achieve results. First, evaluation is a means to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders on performance in achieving development results, and on invested resources (for example, with respect to governing bodies, donor Governments, partner Governments, partner United Nations organizations and UNFPA beneficiaries). Second, evaluation supports evidence-based decision-making. Utilization-focused evaluations (which enhance the utility and use of evaluations) provide credible information to support decision-making by management, where such information guides planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting, as well as improvements in policies and programmes. Third, evaluation contributes important lessons learned to the existing knowledge base on how to accelerate implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in particular, on how best to advance sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and on how UNFPA can best support the achievement of the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

II. DEFINITIONS

9. According to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms for evaluation, an evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It seeks to determine the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful,

enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into decision-making processes.

10. Evaluations usually consist of six phases: (a) scoping and design; (b) data gathering (through desk studies and field work); (c) analysis; (d) reporting; (e) dissemination; and (f) the follow-up of recommendations. Evaluations ask four key questions: (a) Are we doing the right thing?; (b) Are we doing it right?; (c) Are we achieving our goals?; and (d) Are there better ways of achieving them? The first question is addressed by examining the rationale and relevance of the undertaking; the second by assessing efficiency, with a view towards optimizing the use of resources; the third by measuring the results achieved (effectiveness); and the fourth by identifying and comparing alternatives, seeking best practices, and providing lessons learned.

11. A prerequisite for evaluation and monitoring is a coherent results framework. Results frameworks are developed when interventions are planned; they include statements of the expected results and the logical sequence of those results. They indicate how the activities undertaken lead to the expected results, and identify relevant specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound performance indicators (so-called 'SMART' indicators), baselines and targets. Evaluations inform the development of results frameworks.

12. Consistent with the UNFPA oversight policy (DP/FPA/2008/14), evaluation is distinguished from other oversight functions. However, evaluation findings draw from and inform the products of other oversight functions. Key definitions are provided below to differentiate evaluation from other selected oversight functions:

(a) Oversight is the general process of review, monitoring, evaluation, supervision, reporting and audit of UNFPA programmes, activities, policy implementation and results. Oversight ensures organizational, financial, operational and ethical accountability, the effectiveness of internal controls, and the prevention of fraud and malpractice;

(b) Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It assesses and contributes to the improvement of: (i) governance; (ii) risk management; and (iii) control processes that respond to risks regarding the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information; the effectiveness and efficiency of operations; the safeguarding of assets; and compliance with regulations, rules, policies and procedures;

(c) Monitoring is a continuous management function that provides managers and key stakeholders with regular feedback on the consistency or discrepancy between planned and actual activities and programme performance, and on the internal and external factors affecting results. Monitoring provides an early indication of the likelihood that expected results will be attained;

(d) Reviews are closely associated with monitoring and are periodic assessments of the performance of an initiative and do not necessarily apply the due process and methodological rigour of evaluation.

13. UNFPA evaluations cover activities funded by both regular and other resources. Their selection is guided by the criteria in paragraph 14, below. They fall into two main categories: (a) programme-level evaluations; and (b) corporate evaluations.

(a) Programme-level evaluations of country, regional and global programmes are conducted by independent external evaluators that are pre-qualified by the independent Evaluation Office, but are managed by the business unit responsible for the programme being assessed. Such evaluations are designed and managed in consultation with national stakeholders, United Nations organizations and other donors, to the extent possible. Country, regional and global programme evaluations are conducted in time to inform the development of the subsequent programme. Programme-level evaluations are key inputs for corporate synthesis evaluations and for evaluations of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Country programme evaluations will be conducted at least once in every two programme cycles. To ensure the highest possible quality of the programme-level evaluations, the Evaluation Office approves the terms of reference of the evaluations;

(b) Corporate evaluations are independent assessments undertaken or commissioned by the Evaluation Office. Usually, such evaluations are commissioned to external independent evaluators; however, the Evaluation Office may decide to conduct selected evaluations itself, particularly synthesis evaluations. Corporate evaluations are undertaken to assess issues of corporate strategic significance that contribute to achieving the goals of the strategic plan with regard to development effectiveness and organizational performance. They are carried out independently from managers who are responsible for the results and the programmes being evaluated. Corporate evaluations may have a global, thematic or strategic scope, and may address organization-wide issues. They may also have a country, regional and/or other geographical or programmatic focus. In order to ensure that corporate strategic issues are well covered, at least one evaluation will be focused on each outcome of the strategic plan during its cycle. The results of corporate evaluations are normally presented to the Executive Board, at the discretion of the Executive Board.

14. The following criteria and questions, in order of priority, guide the selection of corporate and programme-level evaluations:

(a) Strategic relevance of the subject: (i) Does the evaluation cover issues of corporate strategic significance that contribute to the achievement of the strategic plan?; (ii) Is the subject of the evaluation a socioeconomic or political priority?; (iii) Is the subject of the evaluation part of the annual priorities of UNFPA?; and (iv) Is the subject of the evaluation a priority for UNFPA in a specific geographical region where, for example, there is high maternal mortality, low contraceptive prevalence, or high teenage pregnancy rates?

(b) Risk associated with the subject: Are there political, economic, funding, structural or organizational factors that present a potentially high risk for the non-achievement of results or for which further evidence is needed for decision-making by management?;

(c) Potential for joint or United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluation: Does the evaluation present an opportunity to evaluate jointly with other partners (United Nations country teams, national Governments, donors, etc.) or contribute to a United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluation to avoid duplication and promote coordination?;

(d) Significant investment: Is the subject considered significant in relation to the portfolio of activities of UNFPA?;

(e) Feasibility for implementing the evaluation: (i) Is the evaluability of the intervention sufficient to conduct an in-depth study that can provide sound findings, recommendations and lessons learned?; and (ii) Does the commissioning office (the Evaluation Office, the regional office or the country office) have the resources available to conduct or manage a high-quality evaluation within the time period indicated?;

(f) Potential for replication and scaling-up: (i) Would an evaluation provide the information necessary to identify the factors required for the success of an intervention and determine the feasibility of its replication or scaling-up?; and (ii) Is the intervention a pilot and/or an innovative initiative?;

(g) Knowledge gap: Will the evaluation help to fill a vital knowledge gap in relation to the thematic focus of UNFPA?;

(h) Formal commitments to stakeholders: (i) Are stakeholders requesting the evaluation (for example, through donor requirements in co-financing arrangements)?; and (ii) Can the request for the evaluation be satisfied through an evaluation that is already planned?

15. The Evaluation Office will ensure that all key areas of the strategic plan are evaluated during its cycle. The Executive Board may also request areas to be evaluated, in line with the priority criteria in paragraph 14, above.

16. UNFPA systematically plans and budgets all evaluations. The Evaluation Office prepares a budgeted biennial evaluation plan that includes programme-level and corporate evaluations. The Evaluation Office prepares the plan through a consultative internal and external process, including through consultations with the Executive Board, before it submits the plan to the Executive Board for approval.

III. PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

17. The guiding principles of evaluation at UNFPA emanate from decisions taken by the General Assembly and the Executive Board, from the commitment of UNFPA executive management to nurture an evaluation culture, and from the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards and code of conduct for evaluations. These principles are as follows:

(a) Evaluations are planned and conducted ensuring national ownership and leadership of evaluation processes by rights holders and duty bearers. They are undertaken with a view to strengthening national evaluation capacity and to increasing the participation of national counterparts, including beneficiaries, through inclusive and participatory approaches, and in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness, specifically the principles of national ownership and mutual accountability;

(b) Evaluation abides by universally shared values of equity, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity. The United National Evaluation Group guidelines on the integration of human rights and gender equality in evaluation will also be a part of this guiding principle;

(c) Evaluation supports UNFPA in managing for results by assessing the extent to which UNFPA processes, products and services contribute effectively to: (i) achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning; (ii) promoting reproductive rights; (iii) reducing maternal mortality; and (iv) accelerating progress in achieving the goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals. Evaluations depend on the quality of the design of programmes, so that results are clear, measurable, and able to be monitored and evaluated. By generating evidence, evaluation enables informed management and decision-making;

(d) Management ensures that evaluation is an integral part of the organizational standards of UNFPA. As a part of a culture of accountability and managing for results, UNFPA seeks empirical evidence on the results achieved, using lessons learned to improve programme design and effectiveness, and to meet the needs of beneficiaries;

(e) The Evaluation Office, with support from the Executive Director, is accountable for implementing the evaluation policy;

(f) With the increasing engagement of UNFPA in global initiatives and partnership programmes with other donors, non-governmental organizations and civil society, joint evaluations have become more important, because such evaluations enhance global partnership and ownership. UNFPA harmonizes and aligns its evaluations with the evaluation efforts of United Nations system partners. It undertakes these efforts in the context of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and ‘delivering as one’, and through country-led evaluations and joint evaluations with United Nations system partners and with other development partners. These evaluations seek to improve ownership and effectiveness and reduce transaction costs for development cooperation;

(g) Management, through the budget approved by the Executive Board, ensures that adequate human and financial resources are allocated for evaluations.

18. UNFPA evaluations adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system, as follows:

(a) Independence and impartiality. The UNFPA Evaluation Office reports administratively to the Executive Director. It is independent from the operational, management and decision-making functions in the organization, and is therefore impartial, objective and free from undue influence. The Evaluation Office has the authority to determine the scope of, design, conduct and commission evaluations, and to submit reports directly to the appropriate decision makers, including the Executive Board. Programme-level evaluations are independent from programme management since the Evaluation Office approves the final design and selection of consultants, even though management may participate in the design and commissioning of such evaluations. Management cannot impose restrictions on the content and recommendations of evaluation reports. To avoid conflicts of interest, remove biases and maximize impartiality and objectivity, evaluators must not be directly involved in policy-setting, design, implementation or management of the subject of the evaluation before, during and at least two years after the evaluation. In addition, evaluation teams should have relevant expertise as well as gender and geographical balance;

(b) Intentionality and quality. The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions that will be based on it should be clear from the start. This promotes evidence-based decision-making. The scope, design and plan of the evaluation should generate relevant, cost-effective and timely products that address the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, and ensure the usefulness of the findings and recommendations. Balancing technical and time requirements with practical realities, while providing valid and reliable information, is central to ensuring that the evaluation function supports managing for results. The interpretation of findings should be grounded in the realities of the country and programme context, and the recommendations should be practical and realistic. All evaluations should meet the minimum quality standards and criteria defined by the Evaluation Office. To ensure that such standards and criteria are met, the professionalism of evaluators and their intellectual integrity in applying standard evaluation methods is of critical importance;

(c) Transparency. The Evaluation Office shares full information on evaluation design and methodology throughout the evaluation process to build confidence in the findings of the evaluation and to understand the utility and limitations of the findings in decision-making. UNFPA makes evaluation plans, terms of reference, reports and management responses available to the public in order to enhance transparency;

(d) Ethics. Evaluation should not reflect personal or sectoral interests or biases. Evaluators must have professional integrity and respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and to verify statements attributed to such institutions or individuals. Evaluations must be sensitive to local social and cultural beliefs and customs and must be conducted legally, with due regard to the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as

well as those affected by its findings. In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

19. All organizational units of UNFPA have distinct roles and responsibilities in ensuring that evaluation supports accountability, evidence-based decision-making and learning. Working together, the organizational units contribute to a coherent and effective evaluation function. Roles and responsibilities are delineated in paragraphs 20-28, below. The annex to the present document (available at: www.unfpa.org/public/home/exbrd/pid/12130) provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities in evaluation.

20. The Executive Board is the custodian of the revised UNFPA evaluation policy. The Executive Board approves the evaluation policy of UNFPA. It also approves the biennial budgeted evaluation plan and considers the annual reports on evaluation, which the Evaluation Office submits to the Executive Board, and which include issues such as: (a) compliance; (b) coverage; (c) quality; (d) findings; and (e) recommendations. The Executive Board considers the Executive Director's annual report on the use and follow-up of evaluation recommendations. The Evaluation Office consults the Executive Board in a timely manner on evaluation priorities and plans. The Executive Board uses and draws on the findings and recommendations of evaluations for its oversight and approval of UNFPA policies, strategies and programmes.

21. The Executive Director is accountable for the work of UNFPA, and is the principal champion of evaluation in UNFPA. The Executive Director provides the political support and enabling environment to enhance the evaluation culture in UNFPA. He or she is responsible for safeguarding the independence of the Evaluation Office by appointing, through a competitive recruitment process, the director of the Evaluation Office and of renewing or dismissing the director of the Evaluation Office. The Executive Director ensures that the Evaluation Office is adequately staffed and that sufficient resources are available for it to fulfil its role. The director of the Evaluation Office is appointed for a fixed term of five years, renewable once. After completion of service, the incumbent can no longer be employed by UNFPA in any position.

22. The Executive Director ensures the development and implementation of management responses and action plans that result from evaluations. The Executive Director also ensures that the managers of business units respond to and utilize evaluation in their operational, strategic, policy and supervisory functions, and that relevant units take appropriate follow-up action on evaluation findings and recommendations. The Executive Director reports regularly to the Executive Board on the use of and follow-up of all evaluations, as part of his or her annual report to the Executive Board.

23. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Executive Director, considers and provides inputs to the biennial budgeted evaluation plan; monitors follow-up on evaluation recommendations as outlined in the management responses; and uses evaluation findings to inform its decision-making.

24. The Evaluation Office is the custodian of the evaluation function at UNFPA. It reports administratively to the Executive Director. The main functions of the Evaluation Office are as follows:

- (a) Prepares, reviews and updates the UNFPA evaluation policy;
- (b) Develops the UNFPA biennial budgeted evaluation plan for all evaluations, based on inputs from and consultations with the Executive Board, the Executive Committee, UNFPA offices and other stakeholders, in accordance with paragraphs 13 and 14, above;
- (c) Reports directly, on an annual basis, to the Executive Board on the evaluation function at UNFPA, including compliance, coverage, quality, findings and recommendations of evaluations conducted by UNFPA;
- (d) Conducts, or commissions to companies or to individual consultants, corporate evaluations and approves the terms of reference and pre-qualifies evaluators for programme-level evaluations;
- (e) Presents, at the discretion of the Executive Board, the results of selected evaluations;
- (f) Regularly alerts senior management to emerging evaluation-related issues of corporate significance, without taking part in decision-making;
- (g) Sets evaluation standards and criteria;
- (h) Develops methodological guidance and maintains evaluation quality-assurance mechanisms in order to continuously improve and enhance the quality and credibility of UNFPA evaluations, and the overall evaluation function;
- (i) Promotes joint evaluations, national ownership and leadership of evaluations, and capacity development in evaluation;
- (j) Plans and provides the necessary training for UNFPA staff on issues related to evaluation policy, standards, criteria, quality assurance, and the design and management of evaluations;
- (k) Provides support and technical advice to business units managing programme-level evaluations;
- (l) Actively disseminates and shares knowledge generated by evaluations through the UNFPA knowledge-management networks and practices;
- (m) Maintains a publicly accessible repository of evaluations and their management responses;

(n) Engages in partnerships with professional evaluation networks, such as the United Nations Evaluation Group, and supports the harmonization of the evaluation function in the United Nations system;

(o) Assesses the quality of evaluation experts and consultants, and maintains a roster of qualified evaluation professionals.

25. The UNFPA Programme Division: (a) coordinates management responses to corporate evaluations; (b) supports the preparation of the management response to the Evaluation Office's annual report on evaluation to the Executive Board; and (c) coordinates the preparation of the annual report of the Executive Director to the Executive Board, including the management response and the follow-up to evaluations.

26. The Programme Division also supports, monitors and reports on follow-up action, ensuring that evaluation recommendations are implemented and integrated into strategic policy, planning and decision-making at the global level. It promotes a culture of results-based management by: (a) promoting and supporting the evaluability of programmes, including those it manages; (b) conducting capacity-building activities, including training UNFPA staff, and sharing knowledge on theories of change, results frameworks, and performance-monitoring frameworks and indicators; and (c) establishing programme documentation systems.

27. Senior management (including the deputy executive directors, division directors, regional directors and country representatives) promote the use of information from evaluations in decision-making and ensure that adequate human resources are available to support evaluations. Senior managers are responsible for creating an enabling environment to strengthen the evaluation culture. They are also responsible for: (a) managing programme-level evaluations under the guidance and supervision of the Evaluation Office; (b) contributing inputs to reports on the use and follow-up of evaluations; (c) ensuring that, at the programme planning stage, adequate results frameworks are developed for programmes, including, where appropriate, a component for national or regional capacity-building in evaluation; (d) promoting the full and active participation of implementing partners and national, regional and global counterparts in the evaluation process; (e) increasing the involvement in joint evaluations with partners, donors and programme countries; and (f) supporting, as necessary, corporate evaluations.

28. Regional monitoring and evaluation advisers report to their respective regional directors. They advise them of the evaluability of regional and country programmes within the context of results-based management. They assist regional and country offices in preparing high-quality terms of reference for evaluations prior to their approval by the Evaluation Office and also help to identify evaluators for pre-qualification by the Evaluation Office. They assist, where appropriate, in the management and follow-up of evaluations. In addition, they provide guidance and assistance to country offices in their regions in establishing robust monitoring frameworks to ensure the collection of high-quality monitoring data, through partnerships with national partners and through capacity-development.

V. QUALITY ASSURANCE, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

29. Key elements of the quality assurance mechanisms include: (a) guidance and tools for conducting and managing evaluations; (b) approval by the Evaluation Office of all terms of reference for evaluations; (c) centralized pre-qualification of all evaluators; (d) centralized, high-quality criteria for assessing all evaluation reports; and (e) a quality assessment of all evaluations, processes and the evaluation function commissioned by the Evaluation Office. Specific tools and guidelines should be consistent with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.

30. UNFPA evaluations are carried out in a manner that enhances national capacity through the participation of governments and key stakeholders in evaluations; through support for country-led evaluations; and through the use of national evaluation systems. Capacity-building initiatives include guidance, training, and the sharing of good practices and lessons learned. In addition, UNFPA will work actively with United Nations organizations and other partners to strengthen the national capacity for evaluations, including country-led evaluations and joint evaluations, as well as evaluations undertaken in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

31. To respond appropriately to the needs of programme countries, UNFPA funds monitoring and evaluation advisers at country, regional and global levels, where appropriate. Regional monitoring and evaluation advisers support capacity-building in country offices and among programme countries. UNFPA ensures that all programme and technical staff are knowledgeable about the evaluation policy, standards and criteria. Partnerships with evaluation networks, professional bodies, national and regional institutions, United Nations partners and other development partners will further reinforce evaluation capacity.

32. UNFPA will allocate funds for the Evaluation Office and the evaluations using separate budget lines in the UNFPA integrated budget. It will allocate up to 3 per cent of the total programme budget for the evaluation function. To achieve cost-effectiveness, UNFPA will undertake coordinated and joint evaluations with national partners, United Nations system partners and other development partners. The Evaluation Office will manage the budget for the staffing and operational costs of the office. The Evaluation Office will present the biennial budgeted evaluation plan to the Executive Board at the same time that UNFPA presents its integrated budget, to ensure the alignment of requirements with budget allocations. Programmes that are funded by other resources rather than by regular resources will allocate funds for evaluation within their programme budgets.

VI. DISSEMINATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, FOLLOW-UP AND REPORTING

33. UNFPA is committed to public accountability and sharing knowledge. With regard to disclosure, UNFPA will:

(a) Post evaluation plans, terms of reference, final evaluation reports and management responses on the public UNFPA website within eight weeks of their finalization. UNFPA will disclose final evaluation reports concurrently with the corresponding management responses, which UNFPA will provide within six weeks of the submission of the evaluation reports to UNFPA management. However, UNFPA will not delay the posting of a final evaluation report if it has not completed the management response to that report. UNFPA will post other dissemination products upon their finalization, and will disseminate lessons learned from evaluations through various knowledge-management platforms;

(b) Maintain a publicly accessible repository of evaluations and management responses, through the Evaluation Office, and will highlight good evaluation practices and lessons learned. This repository will be an integral part of the UNFPA public website.

34. UNFPA seeks to strengthen accountability for results and ensure that evaluation findings are used to inform decision-making by management and contribute to more effective programming. The Evaluation Office contributes to this process by disseminating and sharing knowledge generated by evaluations through various UNFPA knowledge-management platforms, networks and practices, including: (a) *Fusion* (a UNFPA knowledge-sharing platform); (b) webinars; (c) summaries, thematic briefs and policy briefs; and (d) an evaluation newsletter that emphasizes lessons learned and best practices in programme design, programme implementation and performance monitoring.

35. As stipulated in the UNFPA accountability framework, managers are required to prepare management responses to evaluation recommendations and undertake necessary follow-up. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Executive Director, will monitor progress in implementing evaluation recommendations.

36. The Executive Director reports regularly to the Executive Board on the use and follow-up of evaluation, including on the implementation of recommendations. The Evaluation Office submits a report to the Executive Board on evaluation activities and results each year.

VII. OPERATIONALIZATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

37. The revised UNFPA evaluation policy calls for the creation of an independent and adequately funded Evaluation Office. Planning for such an office will begin in 2013 and take effect as soon as the Executive Board has approved the policy. In 2013, UNFPA will manage the funding and staffing of the office with existing resources. The Executive Board will decide future resource and staffing levels in subsequent integrated budgets. The Evaluation Office will present the first transitional biennial budgeted evaluation plan to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2013. UNFPA will adjust the mandate and funding of the remaining units of the

Division for Oversight Services or its successor office in order to carry out the necessary audit and investigation functions.

38. UNFPA will further operationalize the revised policy by amending related policies and procedures. Relevant guidelines, handbooks and tool kits will be updated, as necessary, in conformity with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. This work will be reflected in the first annual workplan, 2014, of the Evaluation Office.

39. UNFPA will review the evaluation policy at regular intervals and revise it as needed, including prior to the conclusion of each strategic plan. The review will seek to extract lessons and improve the policy. As part of the revision process, UNFPA may request, in 2016, a peer review of its evaluation system by the United Nations Evaluation Group or the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

40. UNFPA will amend its oversight policy, its accountability framework, and its financial regulations and rules to reflect the revised UNFPA evaluation policy.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

41. **The Executive Board may wish to approve the revised UNFPA evaluation policy contained in the present document (DP/FPA/2013/5) and provide further guidance to UNFPA.**
