

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MRS. BOLA ASAJU  
MINISTER, PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS**

**On behalf of African members of the Executive Board of  
UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS  
Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho,  
Nigeria, Tunisia,**

**First regular Session of the Executive Board**

**29 January – 02 February 2024**

**Statement on Agenda Item 8: UNFPA evaluation**

**CR 2 – United Nations**

**1 February 2024**

**Mr. President, H.E.Amb. Muhammad Abdul Muhith**

**Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. Natalia Kanem**

**Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of African Members of the Executive board, namely, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, and Tunisia and my country Nigeria.
2. We thank the Executive Director of UNFPA, **Dr. Natalia Kanem** and **Mr. Marco Segone**, Director of the UNFPA evaluation Office for presenting the report on the Funds' evaluation policy. We appreciate UNFPA for finalising the Evaluation policy per the timeline provided in the previous session of the Board.
3. We noted the efforts made to balance flexibility and predictability while making sure evaluations are adaptive and innovative, independent, impartial and use rigorous methodology. With a rigorous evaluation policy in place, we also recognise the need to carefully time evaluation activities to make sure we have adequate period of stabilization for new programmes and change initiatives.
4. The group also notes with appreciation the establishment of an integrated Programme and Strategy Division in Nairobi and the relocation of the Evaluation Office from New York to Nairobi. These organisational changes, based on extensive reviews, are consistent with UNFP's mandate and operation considering that over 50% of UNFPA's resources are invested in Africa. The African Group encourages the establishment or relocation of agencies closer to the field, to better be able to deliver on their mandates.

**Mr. President,**

5. The Group takes note of the principles and norms of the evaluation policy, which includes “Universally shared values “. In this regard, we support the efforts made to align the evaluation policy with the treaties and other instruments widely adopted by member states. Furthermore, the national contexts and values, laws, policies and institutional frameworks should guide implementation of UNFPAs strategies and programmes.
6. The Group also notes with interest the decentralised evaluation system that prioritizes mainstreaming of evaluation and monitoring capability to country and regional offices. We believe this decentralised approach has a potential to allow the Fund to improve programme implementation efforts by early detection of performance and implementation gaps. It is our hope this decentralised approach would also enhance capacities needed to conduct country level evaluation as provided under UNGA resolution 77/283 on strengthening voluntary national reviews through country-led evaluation. We look forward to the timely staffing of the regional evaluation mechanism as indicated in para 46 of the policy.
7. In addition, we note the evaluation norm of “national evaluation capacity” reflected under the policy. We are of the view that creating opportunities for experience and knowledge sharing, upon the request of governments, enhances performance and the implementation of the Fund’s programmes. The efforts to align evaluation activities with government planning cycles and evaluation mechanisms would also support this overall effort.

**Finally, Mr. President,**

8. I would like to conclude by raising one important element from the evaluation policy which we believe requires sufficient attention. This has to do with the utilization of advanced technologies, such as responsible and ethical artificial intelligence, and other innovative methods and approaches in the evaluation process. We would like to hear more information on this topic, especially on how AI will be used to gather reliable data and produce analysis in the

prevailing digital divide. This is especially useful for regions like Africa that is disadvantaged when it comes to availability of accurate and reliable data on the digital space.

9. We look forward to successful deliberations on this important agenda item.

**I thank you**