



Remarks

by

Ms. Diene Keita

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General

and

UNFPA Deputy Executive Director, Programme

Item 16 on evaluation

**Management response to the
Formative evaluation of the organizational resilience of UNFPA in light
of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS Executive Board

Annual Session 2024

5 June 2024

- **Mr. President,**
- **Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,**
- The COVID-19 pandemic served as an important test of UNFPA's resilience. Management notes what worked well during the pandemic and commits to learning and addressing the identified areas for further strengthening.
- **First, Management acknowledges the importance of adapting UNFPA's operations post-COVID-19 to strengthen resilience in key mandate areas and ensure sustainability and preparedness for future crises. [RE: Recommendation 1]**
- UNFPA has already developed Minimum Preparedness Actions to facilitate rapid and efficient responses by UNFPA country offices during crises.
- To further strengthen UNFPA resilience in key mandate areas, UNFPA will invest in research analyzing the impact of climate change on these areas.
- UNFPA will also integrate explicit resilience-building measures into existing and new country programmes, strengthen the capacity of local actors, such as women-led and youth-led organizations, and collaborate with United Nations agencies to support the development of resilient data systems that can withstand future pandemics.
- **Second, Management agrees with the need for a comprehensive review of UNFPA's resilience strategies to enhance organizational readiness and response capabilities. [Recommendation 2]**
- Efforts will be made to formalize and secure resources for the Nexus Action Community within UNFPA.
- In addition, UNFPA is committed to developing or integrating into the existing People's Strategy and upcoming programming guidelines a corporate strategy for strengthening the skills and competencies of UNFPA's human resources to function in crisis settings and across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace continuum.
- **Furthermore, Management recognizes the significance of investing in business continuity management to strengthen UNFPA's resilience [RE: Recommendation 3]**

- UNFPA revised its business continuity management (BCM) policy/guidance to reflect BCM as an ongoing process within business units and approved additional resources for the Office of Security Coordinator.
- UNFPA is also working on the timely implementation of the JIU recommendations, is focused on reviewing BCM, and is committed to ensuring that our implementing partners meet basic provisions related to business continuity management.
- **Fourth, Management agrees that UNFPA should foster a workplace culture where all its personnel are appropriately supported and valued and where personnel and implementing partners are better prepared to anticipate, respond to and recover from crises. [RE: Recommendation 4]**
- To foster a workplace culture that prioritizes the well-being of and support for all personnel, particularly during times of crisis, UNFPA has undertaken measures to address the disparities and challenges highlighted during the pandemic.
- Most notably, we have launched a new People Strategy and Culture Initiative to foster a positive work environment that emphasizes the health, safety, and well-being of all our personnel.
- We have also implemented flexible working arrangements and intensified efforts to support the psychological well-being of all its personnel, including through the services of the Rome Institute, which provides additional psychosocial support as needed.
- When it comes to our implementing partners, UNFPA's approach is *clear*. We prioritize those with policies that are designed to minimize adverse social and environmental impact, ensuring that our partnerships align with our values and goals.
- **Fifth, Management agrees that UNFPA should take steps to improve its supply chain resilience and ensure that it is in the position to continue procuring and supplying services and goods needed for the safety and security of its personnel and for effective business continuity and humanitarian programming. [RE: Recommendation 5]**

- Management is pleased to confirm that the emergency policy and procedures are under development to outline an emergency response protocol, timelines, and core operational policy that will allow UNFPA to respond swiftly to humanitarian emergencies.
- Furthermore, we now have a dedicated supply chain management unit (SCMU), which brings all the supply chain management activities under one umbrella.
- Finally, UNFPA will finalize the Emergency Policy and Procedures and ensure the completion of the remaining two audit recommendations on the Fast Track Procedures for humanitarian supplies.
- **Sixth, Management largely agrees to strengthen UNFPA systems to plan, monitor and report on results achieved in response to serious disruptions. [RE: Recommendation 6]**
- UNFPA will leverage the existing results framework to support results monitoring and reporting in crises.
- Furthermore, UNFPA will build and resource the country offices' and implementing partners' data collection expertise by increasing their technical/digital solutions knowledge and strengthening their skills in working with third-party monitoring providers.
- **Finally, Management agrees to systematize UNFPA organization-wide knowledge management/learning to capitalize on innovations, maximize effectiveness and ensure no one is left behind. [RE: Recommendation 7]**
- UNFPA is leveraging information technology (IT) for knowledge management and innovation through, for example, knowledge management hubs. In the future, aided by AI tools, we will systematically capture a wider range of knowledge from initial ideas and pilots to innovative solutions and scaled-up interventions.
- Moreover, UNFPA has established a dedicated knowledge management unit in the Programme Division that was created as part of the recent optimization exercise.
- **Mr. President,**

- **Members of the Executive Board,**
- In closing, let me thank you on behalf of UNFPA management for your continued guidance and support.