

Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Summary	
Organisation: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Date: February 2011
Description of Organisation	
<p>The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is mandated to lead on sexual and reproductive health rights (S&RHR) and support countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty. UNFPA strives to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. It has a central role on MDG 5 (maternal health) and a supporting role on MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS) and MDG 3 (gender equality). UNFPA's work in the fields of S&RHR, women's empowerment and population issues supports the advancement of the other MDGs. UNFPA's mandate is codified in its current strategic plan (2008-2013).</p> <p>UNFPA was established in 1972 having previously been a programme under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNFPA continues to maintain close ties with UNDP. UNDP and UNFPA have the same governing board structure, UNDP provides many back office functions for UNFPA and the organisations are co-located in many countries.</p> <p>UNFPA has 129 country offices and six sub-regional offices. In 2008 a decentralisation process was initiated to establish five regional offices. Three of these are now operational. The remaining two will be established by the end of 2011. UNFPA's HQ is in New York from where policy and research is led.</p> <p>On 1 January 2011 Dr Babatunde Osotimehin became the fourth Executive Director. Prior to this Dr Thoraya Obaid was Executive Director for 10 years.</p> <p>UNFPA's governing board consists of 36 UN member states - 12 donors and 24 programme countries. The UK is a board member until 2011 and will rejoin the board in 2013 as part of an agreed rotational scheme. The board meets three times a year and provides broad policy direction and governance advice in addition to approving funding allocations to country programmes.</p> <p>In 2009 UNFPA's total income was \$762m of which \$486m (64%) was core funding. Most of UNFPA's development work at a country level is funded from core resources. In 2010/11 82 % of core resources are projected to be allocated to programme work and 18% to management and programme support. 100% of UNFPA's core funding is counted as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The UK's contribution to core resources in 2009 was £22m, representing approximately 7.1% of UNFPA's total core funds. The UK has also committed to contribute £100m over a 5 year period (2008-13) to the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security (GPRHCS).</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Overall UNFPA has the structure and capacity in place and embeds gender disaggregated data in policy at a national level. - It is difficult to judge the impact of UNFPA’s interventions. The evidence from the DFID country missions produced mixed evidence on gender equality. = While the impact of UNFPA work on gender is at times unclear overall its systems and focus are good. <p>2c. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA is committed to the UN “Greening the Blue” initiative and has its own staff training plan and policy on this for its personnel. They are also signed up to the UN Carbon Neutral Strategy which ensures that environmental issues are considered in their programming. - We could find no evidence of specific policy guidance on how climate change or environmental issues are considered in programme design. - We could find no evidence to show that environmental safeguards are in place or that a monitoring tool is in place to evaluate impacts. - UNFPA’s performance indicators do not include climate change and environment. = We could find no evidence to show that UNFPA has the policies in place to ensure environmental issues are adequately considered. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>3. Focus on Poor Countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Assessed centrally by comparing the multilateral’s country by country spend with an index that scores developing countries based on their poverty need and effectiveness (the strength of the country’s institutions). UNFPA spends almost 50% of its resources in the countries that are in the top quartile of the index – this includes high amounts to big countries with high absolute poverty such as India, Nigeria and Pakistan. - However it also has a significant spend in middle income countries (including upper middle income countries). = The balance of UNFPA’s spending is tilted towards low income countries. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>4. Contribution to Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA provides comprehensive reporting against its global level objectives but these are mainly set at the activity and outcome level. - Evidence from DFID country offices highlights UNFPA’s variable delivery in-country. UNFPA Management is prioritising systems reform but this has yet to translate 	<p>Weak (2)</p>

<p>into more consistent delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We could find no evidence to suggest that management takes steps to tackle problem parts of the portfolio. - It is difficult to judge if UNFPA is making a significant contribution to development outputs or outcomes. <p>= UNFPA's delivery in-country is mixed and its objectives are mainly set at the activity level.</p>	
Organisational Strengths	Score (1-4)
<p>5. Strategic and Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA's management has made significant efforts to improve strategic and performance management. The governing body has supported these efforts. + UNFPA made good progress under previous leadership, although many challenges remain. It is hoped the new Executive Director can maintain this progress. - UNFPA's leadership in-country is mixed. - UNFPA has a weak culture of evaluation and a weak results chain at the global level. UNFPA can not currently demonstrate to the governing body that strategic decisions are based on performance information although the GPRHCS is enabling improved tracking of results. <p>= UNFPA's management has strived to improve its strategic and performance management but currently its performance against this component is weak.</p>	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>6. Financial Resources Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA's financial rules and procedures provide the flexibility to respond to partner countries' needs. + UNFPA has strengthened its oversight and financial resource management. Its accountability framework conforms to international best practice. - We could find no evidence that poorly performing projects are curtailed and savings recycled. - UNFPA has received successive 'qualifications' by the external auditor relating to the national execution modality. <p>= UNFPA has adequate financial systems in place but continues to have problems with parts of its portfolio. Although it has made tackling audit concerns a priority, progress on this is slow particularly in improving national execution.</p>	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>7. Cost and Value Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA's prices achieved for condoms compare favourably with other MOs. UNFPA has a good record in procurement and its procurement strategy requires consideration of value-for-money-related principles. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence from DFID country missions provided a mostly negative assessment on cost control. UNFPA has a high administration to programme ratio that has increased recently, partially due to strengthening its regional presence. UNFPA does not systematically report on prices achieved or track procurement savings. - There is little evidence of UNFPA's governing board challenging it on cost control and value for money (vfm) choices. = While UNFPA's management is making progress on vfm significant areas of weakness remain. 	
<p>8. Partnership Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA has strong partnerships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), partner countries and other MOs. + It incorporates beneficiary voice in its policies and programmes. It reinforces country-led approaches and has a variety of instruments to apply depending on the given country situation. + Although UNFPA does not play a leadership role on the Paris/Accra agendas, it does work in accordance with the Paris/Accra principles. = Working with partners is one of UNFPA's strengths. 	<p>Strong (4)</p>
<p>9. Transparency and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Partner countries are in the majority in UNFPA's governance structure. + UNFPA has a disclosure policy for internal audits and has initiated financial disclosure for staff. - UNFPA does not operate under a presumption of disclosure. - UNFPA does not encourage transparency with programme countries. UNFPA does not publish full information on project performance. = UNFPA is strong on accountability to partner governments but weak on transparency. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>Likelihood of Positive Change</p>	<p>Score (1-4)</p>
<p>10. Likelihood of Positive Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNFPA's governing board has supported reforms in the past. This has led to improvements in the effectiveness of UNFPA in areas of high priority for DFID. - UNFPA has overlapping change management initiatives that need to be simplified. = UNFPA has a strong track record on reform; therefore, even with a change of leadership there is good reason to believe that progress can be made. 	<p>Likely (3)</p>