Update on the context and trends

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered an unprecedented global crisis, the reverberations of which will be felt for years to come. In addition to the direct health impacts, the related economic crisis is pushing more families into poverty and placing tremendous strain on already overburdened social and health services. For children, the consequences of the crisis are especially profound, exacerbating existing exclusions and inequities and severely challenging the international community’s commitment to leave no child behind.

Responding to the crisis requires new ways of doing business while remaining focused on delivering results. Learning from experience has become profoundly important in this rapidly evolving environment, with countries engaged in a process of respond, learn, and then respond better. For the UNICEF Evaluation Office, the central challenge has been adapting its work so that it can continue to contribute to learning and accountability while supporting the organization and partners to analyze the short- and long-term impacts of the crisis and provide evidence on what works to address them. This has required innovative thinking, including on new ways to gather, analyses and share evidence with a wide variety of stakeholders in real time.

Despite the enormous challenges encountered in 2020, the UNICEF Evaluation Office remains on track in implementing the revised evaluation policy (E/ICEF/2018/14) and the Plan for Global Evaluations (E/ICEF/2018/3) and the targets set in the Office Management Plan. While the COVID-19 pandemic required the Evaluation Office to adjust its workplan, the office was able to continue strengthening the key drivers identified in the evaluation theory of change, including financial and human resources, governance and quality assurance, guidance and tools, capacity development within UNICEF and with partners, systems for monitoring performance and partnerships for evaluation.

To respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and ensuring that no child is left behind, the Evaluation Office issued a Technical Note on the response of the UNICEF evaluation function to the COVID-19 crisis. The Note highlighted the need for the function to comply fully with the precautionary measures established by the organization and host governments to protect staff, teams and consultants and partners, and the communities in which they work. The Technical Note also suggested the use of innovative approaches for data collection, rapid review and synthesis, and the use of virtual data-collection approaches and tools, secondary data and available real-time data, including monitoring data such as U-report. The Evaluation Office also established a resource hub to support knowledge-sharing and open exchange across the UNICEF evaluation community on the implications of the COVID-19 crisis for evaluative work.

As technology advances, a wider variety of evaluative instruments are becoming available, geared towards specific needs, including real-time decision-making, oversight and learning, as well as towards addressing areas that have emerged or become more salient in recent years. The Innovation, Learning and Uptake (ILU) Section of the Evaluation Office is exploring these innovations for the purpose of augmenting the quality of evaluations. Its specific objectives are threefold: (a) to accelerate and innovate both in terms of data collection and evaluation design and methodologies; (b) to exploit and harness the digital landscape in order to provide greater transparency and access to evaluative products; and (c) to increase the use and uptake of evaluations, both internally and by external partners.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILU Section explored how technology could be better
leveraged in the conduct of evaluations. The Innovation, Learning and Uptake Unit launched a multiregional mobile phone population survey, called the Community Rapid Assessment, to track behaviors and their drivers during the pandemic in real time. The objective was to provide timely, high-quality community-sourced data to inform COVID-19 programme and policy decisions at the country level. This included a behavioral and public trust component, which needed to be standardized in the COVID-19 tools. Findings thus far have provided a rich and much-needed picture of the behavioral component of the outbreak at the individual and community levels. In making use of time-series data, the assessment has also provided further opportunities to examine country- and region-specific trends over time. And because the assessment is a real-time exercise, analysis, visualization and interpretation of findings are already being used in several country-level forums to guide programme changes. The lessons stemming from the assessment also proved that a lightweight approach of collecting population data can be deployed during such emergencies and pandemics.

In addition, the Evaluation Office continued to explore areas were cost savings could be realized. The Evaluation Office shifted away from rely solely on contracting institutions to conduct corporate evaluations to contracting individuals to form Evaluation Teams when this is appropriate. While this has improved the delivery of corporate evaluations and brought major cost savings, it has almost doubled the contract administration and management workload for the Evaluation Office, including coordination with DHR and DFAM. The Office is also backstopping evaluation budget management for ROs and COs, including appropriate coding and matters related to the allocation and utilization of the Evaluation Pooled Fund. The enhanced due diligence, diversified approach to contracting and backstopping of ROs and COs within the current operations management structure brings with its increased risks which need to be addressed.

For the UNICEF Evaluation Office, answering the Secretary-General’s call for more collaboration in evaluation across the UN systems, the EO renewed focus continued to focus on strengthening evaluation capacity across the function, developing agile, innovative data collection and analysis tools in support of adaptive management and continuous improvement, while connecting with a wider range of stakeholders for better use of evaluations and country-led evaluation of national policies and programmes. Furthermore, the Evaluation Office was focused working with partners in the context of United Nations reform, which resulted in continued acceleration of Joint Evaluations with other United Nations Agencies.

**Major contributions and drivers of results**

The activities of the Evaluation Office are guided by the Plan for Global Evaluation which sets out the programme for corporate evaluations over the period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Implementation of the plan is on track, including a review of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was finalized in early 2021, and additional work, such as joint evaluations, that emerged after the endorsement of the plan by the Executive Board.

The Evaluation of Approaches to Social Protection Programming in Humanitarian Situations, including cash-based programming, was initiated in the first quarter of 2020. The draft reports – including one global synthesis and four country cases – were delivered in December 2020 and are expected to be finalized by end of the second quarter of 2021.

The Corporate Evaluation of UNICEF Work in Urban Settings was completed in December 2020 and was presented to the UNICEF Executive Board at its first regular session of 2021, in February. The Evaluation featured significant observations on UNICEF urban programming and performance, and several recommendations that were agreed to by senior management.
The Evaluation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, was completed in December 2020 and presented to the UNICEF Executive Board at its first regular session of 2021. This was the first evaluation of a UNICEF strategic plan, conducted with these primary purposes: (a) assessing the use of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, as a tool for guiding and for managing UNICEF activities; (b) facilitating learning from UNICEF experience; and (c) providing actionable strategic and planning process recommendations for the upcoming strategic planning cycle. The Evaluation provided critical evidence to inform the design of the new strategic plan; the seven recommendations were all agreed to by senior management.

The Development Effectiveness Review, 2016–2019 synthesized findings from UNICEF evaluations from 2016 through 2019. In addition, the 2020 Review presented a trend analysis of UNICEF performance based on a set of assessment criteria: relevance of the intervention; achievement of objectives; cross-cutting themes; sustainability; efficiency; and use of evaluation and monitoring to improve effectiveness. Overall, it was observed that UNICEF programmes have been consistently well suited to the needs and priorities of children, demonstrating good programme performance, with a strong commitment to partners and national priorities. Important progress was also observed in gender equity and equity for marginalized and vulnerable children. The Review recommended greater organizational ambition in relation to gender equity and greater engagement and consultations with community members to more effectively serve marginalized groups. Findings indicated that the scalability of UNICEF-supported programmes depends on the sustainability of funding, particularly access to reliable financing from governments, the private sector and civil society. Additionally, it was observed that the effectiveness of monitoring and results-based management systems remains a challenge, particularly at the country-office level. Finally, the Review noted that it is important to define baseline evidence and analyses on some change strategies to inform the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.

Two inter-agency humanitarian evaluations that commenced in 2019 and were finalized in 2020 included the Inter-Agency Response to Cyclone Idai, and Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls. An Evaluation of the Response to the Yemen Crisis was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be undertaken in 2021.

The Evaluation of Inter-Agency Response to Cyclone Idai assessed the contribution of the new scale-up activation mechanism since its adoption by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2018. The Evaluation found that the scale-up activation, joint preparedness and strong collaboration with governments, combined with timely joint aerial assessments, ensured that immediate humanitarian needs were anticipated correctly and contributed to the overall success of the response. As intended, the scale-up activation helped to augment in-country capacities and mobilize human and financial resources in the early stages of the response. The Evaluation also identified opportunities for improving future collective responses in similar contexts. These include better use of anticipatory/early action triggers and cash-based interventions, greater engagement with local civil society organizations and the private sector, and more coordinated management of monitoring and assessment data.

The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls revealed that, since 2017, the IASC has made notable progress in integrating gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into its humanitarian responses, especially in protracted crises. Success factors included developing the IASC Gender Accountability Framework, cluster-level and agency-specific guidance on gender mainstreaming, and greater availability of gender advisors through the Gender Standby Capacity Project and cluster-lead-agency surge mechanisms. Investments in the guidance, training and availability of expertise in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls helped humanitarian actors to more systematically consult affected women and girls and increase collection and reporting of sex- and age-disaggregated data.
The Global Evaluation of UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programming in Protracted Crises was the first UNICEF global thematic evaluation focused specifically on protracted-crisis contexts. The evaluation contained lessons applicable across UNICEF and the wider water, sanitation and hygiene sector on linking humanitarian and development programming. The Evaluation found that UNICEF had been largely successful in meeting water-coverage targets, but that progress in sanitation and hygiene lagged behind. Moreover, while service-coverage standards were adequate, increased emphasis was needed on equity and quality. Finally, further work is needed to implement the UNICEF transformational agenda on linking humanitarian and development programming at the country level to adapt programming as crises endure and evolve. The Evaluation recommended that UNICEF improve data collection and use, strengthen local partnerships, and reclaim UNICEF thought leadership in the sector. In delivering these evaluations, the Evaluation Office has paid particular attention to the quality of corporate evaluations. 12 evaluations were rated Satisfactory or higher. These were broken down as follows: 7- Satisfactory, 4-Highly Satisfactory and 1-Exceptional. Only 1 evaluation was rated Fair.

**Evaluation Use:** At the end of February 2021, implementation of Evaluation Management Response actions for evaluations completed in 2018 was at 96 per cent (82 per cent completed, 14 per cent under way, 2 per cent not started and 2 per cent cancelled), compared with 2019 actions, which were at 83 per cent (35 per cent completed, 48 per cent under way and 17 per cent not started). Implementation of some Management Response actions has been delayed due to lockdown measures, as in most cases UNICEF offices had been implementing recommendations with partners and host governments.

It is encouraging to note the increase in the number of Country Program Evaluations being conducted. In 2020, out of 29 country programme evaluations conducted, 59% assessed key program components of their country programme as assessed by GEROS. It is envisaged that these evaluations that were conducted informed the new country programmes that were developed.

**Use of Information Technology to Enhance Learning:** The Evaluation Office has continued to develop and improve tools and guidance to enhance the efficiency of the function. The Evidence Information Systems Integration (EISI) platform now includes notification features for offices that provide updates on entries that have been created, and this has improved the accuracy of information stored on the platform. Enhancement in evaluation planning and implementation of management responses can be attributed to these new features. Discussions are under way for the integration of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan into EISI, which will result in an electronic version of the Plan.

To make evaluation evidence more accessible to key stakeholders and partners, the Evaluation Office, in partnership with the Office of Research and seven university partners, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Lancet COVID-19 Commission, launched the Global Development Commons, a digital-evidence platform devoted to child-focused policy and programming.

The platform also serves as a learning-exchange hub and the knowledge management broker for the Lancet COVID-19 Commission. A series of crowd-sourced webinars and learning exchanges proved to be a useful means of sharing guidance, experience and lessons from evaluations. More importantly, because the platform’s content largely depends on external partners, evaluations can be complemented with external contributions from UNICEF partners on the ground. In 2020, the platform hosted three webinars: two youth-based webinars featuring youth changemakers, and one inaugural policy dialogue co-hosted with the Lancet COVID-19 Commission and featuring evaluative work from the UNICEF social protection syntheses. The platform was also promoted by the Executive Director at the virtual 2020 Vatican Youth Symposium in an effort to engage young people to contribute learning about what works for children to the platform.

The Evaluation Office undertook key actions to enhance quality assurance for evaluations. Some of the key changes/improvements to the GEROS template include a weighting system and an adjusted rating
scale with an outstanding/exceptional category being introduced. Filters have also been incorporated so that different types of products can be processed through GEROS. Also, new questions on innovation, lessons learned and use of visual aids were added, with reviewers providing feedback.

**Evaluation Expenditure:** The proportion of total programme resources spent on evaluation was 0.64 per cent in 2020. Evaluation expenditure was impacted by the reduction of the Evaluation Pooled Fund and by the restrictions put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic also affected evaluation spending as offices transitioned to online data collection. There continues to be a variance between the expected evaluation expenditure and the actual expenditure in across regions. The fixed 1% target applied across all Regions needs implies that regions with huge programme budgets particularly those facing humanitarian crises have to also increase their evaluation spending by similar proportions.

**Gender and Disability:** The Evaluation Office continued providing evidence in support of integrating gender into its evaluations and assessments. Evidence from the 2020 Development Effectiveness Review provides trend analysis from the period 2009–2019, showing an increase in the percentage of evaluations reporting improvements towards achieving gender equality. These findings support those of the 2019 Evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, which showed an important contribution to gender equality across the Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Without factoring in the effect of the evaluation of the Gender Action Plan, in 2020, performance under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was consistent with that of 2019 (“meets requirements”).

The Evaluation Office committed to ensuring that disability considerations are included in evaluations. The EISI platform now has disability markers for offices to use to indicate the extent to which disability is covered in the evaluation. In addition, quality assessments of GEROS have been updated to include questions on how evaluations incorporate disability. Strengthening disability inclusion in evaluations will help UNICEF and the United Nations system to promote institutional accountability and learning and contribute to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the core commitment to leave no one behind.

Working closely with the disability section in UNICEF and using various normative frameworks, the Evaluation Office assessed how well humanitarian evaluations undertaken by UNICEF have reflected disability issues over the past 10 years. The assessment showed that only one third of humanitarian evaluations conducted in the past 10 years had taken disability into account. To help to address this gap, the Evaluation Office has included some specific evaluation questions related to disability in the humanitarian evaluation guidance note, which will be issued in 2021. The Evaluation Office also continues to provide the necessary support to country offices to address the gap and will assess compliance through GEROS.

**Humanitarian:** Since 2018, the Evaluation Office has conducted 10 evaluations of declared Level 3 emergencies. These include evaluations of the crises in Yemen, South Sudan, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Bangladesh Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela and South Sudan. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office during the OMP period based on L3 declarations that are made.

The Evaluation Office has also worked jointly with other UN agencies to conduct evaluations of declared emergencies. UNICEF conducted a set of five joint humanitarian evaluations. In partnership with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF concluded a Joint Humanitarian Evaluation of the Evaluation Pooled Fund and an Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Idai, which was jointly managed with OCHA (chair), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
During 2020, the Evaluation Office continued to support the implementation of joint exercises with a clear focus on promoting evaluation coherence in support of system-wide evaluation. This included joint efforts for a System-Wide Evaluation of the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. UNICEF is a member of the Advisory Committee of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund and has participated in the related lessons learned and evaluability assessment exercise. The organization has also seconded a senior staff member to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to support system-wide evaluation efforts and continues to provide inputs to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) as a member of the System-Wide Evaluation and the COVID-19 Response Working Group.

At the global level, UNICEF concluded the evaluability assessment of the Common Chapter of the 2018–2021 Strategic Plans, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). In addition, UNICEF conducted a set of five joint humanitarian evaluations. In partnership with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF concluded a joint humanitarian evaluation of the evaluation pooled fund and an inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to Cyclone Idai, which was jointly managed with OCHA (chair), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). An inter-agency humanitarian evaluation on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was also concluded during 2020, in coordination with OCHA, UNFPA, Care, WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Additionally, together with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF conducted an independent evaluation of the United Nations system response to AIDS from 2016 to 2019.

Finally, an iterative evaluation of the UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children commenced in 2020. The overarching aim of the Blueprint initiative is to achieve measurable, transformative change for refugee and returnee children and their families in education, water, sanitation and hygiene and child protection. The evaluation will be completed in 2022. The Evaluation Office introduced a new tool in 2020 designed to assess the status of new or growing areas of work in UNICEF. The Readiness Assessment was designed as a diagnostic tool to present evidence-based conclusions and recommendations using primary and secondary data. The pilot readiness assessment focused on climate and the environment, exploring issues of improvement, scalability and requirements for sustainability. Evidence from this assessment has directly informed the design of the Climate, Energy, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan being prepared by Programme Division.

**Influencing global/regional discourse and policy:** There is growing interest in Country-Led Evaluations and Country Programmes Evaluations, and in linking these to evaluations of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and Voluntary National Reviews of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The evaluation function is in a strong position to contribute to enhancing national evaluation capacity and strengthening system-wide evaluation with other United Nations agencies in support of the Decade of Action.

The organization further strengthened its participation in UNEG in 2020, co-chairing the peer review and partnerships working groups as well as the evaluation capacity development, humanitarian evaluation and evaluation coordination subgroups. UNICEF also played a key role in the running of the virtual 2020 evaluation practice exchange.

**Office Management:** The office continued to operate effectively despite the change in work modalities necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff continued to work from home with the office relooking at its work program reprioritizing activities to ensure that the Annual Work Plan was
Amongst some of the major changes in the management of the office were the reassignment of the Director of Evaluation to be the Regional Director in South Asia at the end of 2020. It is anticipated that a new director will be recruited in the first half of 2021.

The P5 Senior Evaluation Specialist post left vacant after the incumbent’s secondment to the office of the Secretary General and the P6 Principal Advisor Corporate Evaluation will be recruited by the new Evaluation Director. Meanwhile, the EO has interviewed with the Division of Human Resources for the P2 Operations Manager post and the P3 Evaluation Specialist Education, while the P3 Humanitarian Evaluation post has been filled. The Evaluation Office is also in the final stages of recruiting a P5 Evaluation Impact and Methods Specialist to strengthen its capacity for impact evaluation.

All regions have completed recruitment of Multi Country Evaluation Specialists apart from WCAR and LAC that have both advertised but were unable to fill the post as the selected candidate did not accept the offer. This is partly due to the offer being limited to one year as the Pooled Funds will only be secured once the Fund is transformed into an Integrated Budget funded post. DFAM has agreed to come up with a temporary arrangement where the Pool Fund will be extended while waiting for the IB to be approve by the Executive Board and come into effect on 1 January 2022. The two Regions are using consultants as a stop gap measure until recruitment takes place.

Funding constraints due to COVID-19 have resulted in the inability of the Evaluation Office to keep some consultants in 2021, who assist Evaluation Managers in research and management assignments. A more sustainable solution will be pursued through the Office Management Plan 2022-2025 which is currently being prepared.

Amongst some of the efficiency gains realized in the year under review, were the cost savings realized from the reduced travel budget in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions. These savings were rephased to supporting emerging activities in the Plan for Global Evaluations

**Lessons Learned and Innovations**

The Evaluation Office recognized earlier on during the epidemic that it was important to reflect on what the crises meant for the evaluation function and agreed that it was critical for the evaluation function to continue to contribute to learning and accountability, and supporting the organization and its partners to analyze the short and long-term impacts of the crisis and provide evidence on what works to address them.

UNICEF offices have since progressed and adapted to the changing environment, adjusted ongoing work, identified new evidence needs and came up with solutions to implement some of evaluative activities to support the response. Several evaluative reviews were undertaken with support from the Evaluation Office – a few are noted below:

**Evaluative evidence for continuous learning and adaptive management** – given the need to learn and adapt, the Evaluation Office embarked on an assignment with a focus on continuous learning and adaptive management. The approach aimed at generating evidence, in an iterative manner, on the ways in which UNICEF systems were responding to the crisis and creating feedback loops, as the crisis unfolded, to support organizational learning. The approach drew on elements of real-time evaluation and developmental evaluation approaches. The key feature has been evaluators being embedded in the management of the response to collect and analyze information in real-time to help inform decision-making processes, as they evolved. Rooted in the fly on the wall approach, this
model opened the space for evaluative work to become an important component of how the organization reflects on its response in a near real-time manner.

Rapid Assessment of COVID-19 Crisis Impact and Prospective Social Protection Responses – this assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the potential of social protection to contribute to a more effective crisis response. While a wealth of global studies is examining the epidemiological and economic dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic at a macro level, relatively little research explores the medium-to-long-term household-level issues of specific interest to UNICEF, particularly in countries where UNICEF plays a leading role in the social protection sector. The review addressed that gap, particularly examining issues specifically relevant for women and children, including providing a baseline evidence base as well as immediately actionable strategy analysis and recommendations at country, regional and global levels. After the completion of the proposed rapid assessment, subsequent panel iterations offer the potential to assess more comprehensively the medium-term dynamics of the pandemic and the policy responses.

Innovation is key: The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the need for the evaluation function to be nimble and agile as it responds to the external environment. The innovations that the evaluation function introduced through the technical note on COVID-19 adaptations was vital to ensuring that offices continued to drive the evaluation agenda despite the challenges that were posed by the pandemic. Through these innovations, the evaluation function delivered a record number of evaluations.

The crisis has accelerated the adoption of innovative approaches to generating evaluation evidence in much faster and timely manner. The lessons learned from this experience are being shared widely and the Evaluation Office is leading Learning Events to enable the Evaluation Community to maintain key elements of these innovations to be applied whenever relevant and appropriate.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic and the global crisis that ensued challenged the evaluation function to generate evidence more quickly. The function had to adapt and learn quickly about what was working for children in very difficult circumstances. In particular, the evaluation function was called upon to provide timely answers to programme managers as to whether their response to the crisis was appropriate and producing the expected results. A number of important lessons were learned, which will inform the work of the function going forward.

The Community Rapid Assessment demonstrated the utility in a crisis of lightweight, rapid, time-series data, real-time evaluations and rapid reviews, which have proved valuable for both learning and accountability. More generally, the pace of innovations in data-gathering to generate evaluation evidence accelerated significantly in 2020. New tools and methods were mainstreamed, while the range of evaluative products made available to country offices and partners was expanded. These efforts must be sustained post-crisis, as they will result in a stronger evaluation function.

Thanks to these adaptations, the function continued to perform exceptionally well in almost all key indicators despite the many challenges. The investment made in the past two years in the Evaluation Pooled Fund paid off, contributing to the submission of a record number of evaluations of high quality. The establishment of multi-country regional evaluation posts has clearly contributed to this achievement. However, the reduction by two thirds of the Evaluation Pooled Fund in 2020 is beginning to undermine the gains made. The Fund has been an important factor in moving towards the benchmark established by the Executive Board in its decision 2018/10, in which it called for evaluation to account for 1 per cent of programme expenditure. It is imperative that these resources are secured and made predictable for the next quadrennium.
With a growing body of evaluative products now in the public domain, greater use of evaluation evidence is also becoming a priority. Efforts were made in 2020 to engage the wider community in reflecting on the findings emerging from evaluative evidence, with the Global Development Commons platform being a prime example. There is now a need to transform the many tools at the disposal of the organization, such as management responses and GEROS assessments, to foster a culture of evaluation-use for learning and development in addition to accountability.

There growing interest in country-led evaluations and evaluations of country programmes, and in linking these to evaluations of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and Voluntary National Reviews of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The evaluation function is in a strong position to contribute to enhancing national evaluation capacity and strengthening system-wide evaluation with other United Nations agencies in support of the Decade of Action.