

## Evaluation

### Report by the Secretariat

1. The Executive Board at its 131st session in May 2012 approved WHO's evaluation policy,<sup>1</sup> which, inter alia, requires the Secretariat to report annually to the Board through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on progress in the implementation of evaluation activities. The next annual report will be submitted to the Board at its 137th session. The present report provides an update on progress in implementing the evaluation policy, including the Organization-wide evaluation work plan for 2014–2015.

#### **STRENGTHENING THE SECRETARIAT'S CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE CORPORATE EVALUATION FUNCTION**

2. Since the approval of the evaluation policy, good progress has been made in the evaluation work undertaken at WHO. Milestones have been passed, such as the Board's review and approval of the first biennial evaluation work plan in May 2014,<sup>2</sup> and the publication of the *WHO evaluation practice handbook* as a tool to guide and harmonize evaluation work across the Organization and to support mainstreaming of high-quality evaluation work.<sup>3</sup>

3. To accelerate progress and further support the continuing WHO reform process, the Secretariat has identified the strengthening of evaluation and organizational learning as an essential step. Accordingly, in August 2014 the evaluation function was moved from the Office of Internal Oversight Services (where it had been integrated with other functions) to become a separate unit within the Office of the Director-General in order to support independent evaluation. The Director-General has appointed a Representative for Evaluation and Organizational Learning, whose tasks include reviewing the evaluation function in WHO and identifying best practices and models in other entities, in order to propose a framework for strengthening the evaluation function at the Organization.

4. The review and consultation process with internal and external stakeholders focuses on the following essential elements of strengthening evaluation and organizational learning: (a) creating a culture of evaluation; (b) establishing an enabling environment; (c) defining modalities and the scope of evaluation; (d) facilitating organizational learning; (e) determining relationships between evaluation and other assessments; and (f) communicating evaluation work and findings.

---

<sup>1</sup> Decision EB131(1).

<sup>2</sup> See document EB135/2014/REC/1, summary record of the second meeting, section 2.

<sup>3</sup> WHO evaluation practice handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2013.

5. The framework being developed for strengthening the evaluation function and organizational learning will guide the future work of the new evaluation unit.

## **EVALUATION WORK PLAN FOR 2014–2015 AND OTHER ONGOING WORK**

6. The Organization-wide evaluation work plan for 2014–2015 approved by the Board<sup>1</sup> sets out the areas of ongoing evaluation. Three in particular are being taken forward as corporate priority evaluations: normative function of WHO; WHO's presence in countries; and impact of WHO's publications.

7. The evaluation unit also supports or co-manages several other evaluations, both at WHO and as joint evaluations, for example, through involvement as a member of the evaluation management group for the external evaluation of the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) initiative, which has been commissioned by WFP's Office of Evaluation.

8. WHO's Global Network on Evaluation continues to be an integral part of the institutionalization of evaluation in the Organization by providing direction and guidance. A key aim of ongoing efforts to strengthen the evaluation function in WHO is to review and better define the roles, responsibilities and working methods of the Network and its task forces in order for it to play a stronger role in future evaluation work.

9. In 2014, the Network has contributed to: (a) improving coordination and support of evaluations, especially those that are decentralized; (b) updating the evaluation registry; and (c) ensuring follow-up to the recommendations of evaluations. Its regional focal points have begun to map decentralized evaluations undertaken at the regional level, and are ensuring that evaluation reports are made available for quality control and internal dissemination. WHO's evaluation registry was reviewed in order to identify any gaps and strengthen the registry. Available reports of evaluations completed in 2013 have been added to the registry. The Network has identified the follow-up to the status of evaluation recommendations as an area for improvement, and its work has focused on this.

10. The *WHO evaluation practice handbook* has been well received. It facilitates coherence and harmonization of evaluation work across the three levels of the Organization. It has been reprinted and disseminated to all WHO offices, is being translated into French and Spanish, and will be converted into an interactive web-based tool.

11. WHO is a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group and participates actively within its Executive Group and in its various task forces.

## **ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

12. The Board is invited to note the report.

= = =

---

<sup>1</sup> Document EB135/5, Annex.