UNFPA Input

ECOSOC Integration Segment

THEME - Innovative communities: leveraging technology and innovation to build sustainable and resilient societies

1. What is your assessment regarding the main risks faced by your membership currently and in the next 10 years, within the context of the work of your Office? (Please limit your response to 150 words or less)

As per UNFPA's Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, the main external risk factors include: (a) a changing international assistance environment, with limited core resources and increased competition for funding; (b) a political landscape with growing opposition towards sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and (c) many humanitarian and crisis situations that undermine development gains and that are characterized by the neglect of maternal and reproductive health needs and rising risks and exposure to gender-based violence.

In recent years, both natural and man-made humanitarian crises have become more frequent, intense and of longer duration, leading to increased humanitarian needs, especially for women, adolescents and youth who constitute 80 per cent of the affected population. Of the more than 125 million people that required humanitarian assistance in 2016, over 30 million were women and adolescent girls of childbearing age (between 15 and 49 years) who needed support to protect their health and rights, given the increased risk of gender-based violence and maternal mortality in situations of humanitarian emergency. In addition, an estimated 40 per cent of the 1.4 billion people living in states impacted by crises are under the age of 15, and adolescents aged 10 to 19 years constitute a significant proportion of the population in many conflict and post-conflict settings.

UNFPA's humanitarian action responds to the global call for greater coherence among partners, moving beyond short-term assistance and towards contributing to long-term development gains, with a strong emphasis on building resilience across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

2. Please kindly rate a short list of vulnerabilities faced by Member States as identified by your Office in the course of its undertaking of its mandates: (list of risks attached in survey)

UNFPA provides support to 155 countries, including LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and the range of MICs, it is difficult to assess a consolidated list of risks

The main risks faced by many countries around the globe are related to the impact of climate change and environmental disasters, including biodiversity loss induced extreme weather events and natural disasters that is exacerbated by water crises and food crises as seen during El- Nina and El-Nino during 2017, which lead to social unrest or conflict that leads to large scale migration. Public health disasters and threats of epidemic is another vulnerability factor and is putting countries at risk. Complex disasters

are on the rise, the situation in Yemen with the conflict compounded with epidemic, economic shocks to lack of trade and unemployment led to higher risk of vulnerability.

Link to table here - https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DYCG6TB

Rate in terms of resilience - Very, somewhat, neutral, somewhat vulnerable or very vulnerable.

Extreme Weather & Natural Disaster - very vulnerable
External trade or Economic shocks - neutral
Food Crises - very vulnerable
Unemployment/Underemployment - somewhat vulnerable
Cyberattacks - neutral
Governance - somewhat
Large-Scale Migration - somewhat vulnerable
Environmental Disaster - very vulnerable
Water Crises - very vulnerable
Data Fraud/Theft - neutral
Social unrest/conflict - somewhat
Infrastructure - somewhat vulnerable

3. What are the highlights of your Office's current work in terms of leveraging technology and innovation to build more sustainable and resilient societies? (Please limit your response to 250 words or less)

Reducing risk and vulnerabilities and building resilience is one of the principles which underpins the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, along with protecting and promoting human rights, prioritizing "leaving no one behind" and "reaching the furthest behind first", ensuring gender responsiveness, strengthening cooperation and complementarity among development, humanitarian action and sustaining peace and improving accountability, transparency and efficiency.

UNFPA has embraced innovation as a corporate priority and sees innovation as an indispensable engine to bring about transformative change for women, girls, and young people. Deepening and broadening our reach will require powerful partnerships and innovation so that no one is left behind. We further recognize that given the rapidly changing contexts and resource constraints, it is time to harness new innovations and technology that can provide breakthrough solutions that deliver sexual and reproductive health for all, across the humanitarian/development nexus. Our approach to innovation is to inclusively create and scale-up data-driven, sustainable and open solutions that accelerate the achievement of transformative results in the lives of women, adolescents and youth.

4. Please provide an assessment of resilience gaps, or vulnerabilities, and areas requiring urgent attention within the context of the work of your Office and pertaining to building more sustainable and resilient societies for the advancement of the 2030 Agenda. (Please limit your response to 250 words or less)

Threats, whether natural or manmade, have the ability to negatively impact communities. Although government agencies serve communities before, during, and after disasters, emergency management officials understand the realities of gaps that exist in disaster management systems exclusively managed by government. There is a mounting cognizance of the need for effective communication and coordination from a broad range of stakeholders to reduce the negative effects of a given disaster.

A whole community approach to disaster management requires an investment from public, private, voluntary organizations and the UN agencies working at country and member state levels. The utility of this investment allows for a collective response because no one organization can fully address all the complexities of disaster management. Recognizing that the effort of all sectors is required to create resilient, prepared communities is a starting point for this process.

A major community resilience gap is the lack of a solid network of partnerships at national and community level that is needed to address the specific needs of its community members. The need for public-private and voluntary sector approach to address the resilience gap. All the targets for SDGs would need resilience gap analysis and developing a culture of preparedness for each of the sustainable development goals, interoperable communications to address communication barriers at country, regional and global levels. Raising the resilience index requires all community members to recognize their roles in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disaster situations.

Active participation in preparedness activities must become a way of life for communities, not an afterthought. This means creating a culture of empowerment and awareness, essential to bring about meaningful behavior and attitude changes, especially among those in greatest peril.

There are still gaps in national and sub-national system resilience for health including for sexual and reproductive health and addressing gender based violence

- *Risk Assessment and Planning* – Requires providers to assess specific and general risks they face and create plans to respond to those risks.
- *Policies and Procedures* – Must be written, approved, and reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually.
- *Communications Plan* – Must be created and outline how a healthcare provider will communicate both internally and externally, especially when normal means may be unavailable.
- *Training and Testing* – Requires providers to train their staff and conduct periodic testing and exercises to ensure they can do what they must do in the event of a disaster.

5. Please share the most important challenges and opportunities, as well as valuable lessons learned, your Office has encountered in supporting the advancement of the 2030 Agenda through the use of technology and innovation to strengthen resilience and inclusion in an integrated manner.

If your Office has work related to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, please share any specific initiatives undertaken to reduce disaster risk through the Framework.

(Please limit your response to 350 words or less)

UNFPA will accelerate its humanitarian preparedness efforts to address risks and build resilience. This will ensure that systems, communities and societies are better equipped to respond to and recover from emergencies. These efforts will also include the implementation of minimum preparedness actions.

The humanitarian data strategy of UNFPA addresses key aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 by: (a) promoting strategic partnerships; (b) harnessing new technologies and using comparative advantage in national population data systems; and (c) strengthening and engaging with coordination networks. UNFPA will extend its support to national authorities to strengthen national capacity to make subnational population projections and use geospatial mapping tools to support disaster risk reduction efforts.

In 2016, UNFPA was actively engaged at the regional level in the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, resulting in the adoption of Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. This plan specifically calls for the promotion and support of gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction actions at the national and local levels, including universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, prevention and response to gender-based violence, and women's leadership roles. This call was reiterated in the GA resolution on Disaster Risk Reduction

6. Please share strategies, plans, policies or initiatives in which your Office has been involved where different stakeholders – such as government, civil society organizations, private sector and academia – have engaged in coordinated actions to enhance resilience at the local, national or international levels. What approaches have proven effective in this respect? (Please limit your response to 350 words or less)

UNFPA, in partnership with World Vision and with the support from Luxembourg, will implement Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) under a two-year project in four countries (Mali, DRC, Nigeria, and Angola). With LMMS, each participating country will enhance their capacity to better monitor and track the delivery of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) supplies and services as well as the distribution of humanitarian commodities such as dignity kits, including the monitoring the work being undertaken by UNFPA implementing partners (each registered beneficiary will have a registration card). LMMS devices work in remote areas to register people affected by crises even if there is no internet available at the time of registration. LMMS is a proven stand-alone technology solution designed to digitize (and simplify) beneficiary registration and verification, efficient planning and distribution of supplies and kits and better health monitoring and improving accountability at the community and national level by tracking to the last mile of service delivery in humanitarian settings. It will enhance resilience as it can track where support was provided.

In order to improve the availability of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) supplies and commodities in emergency settings, UNFPA and the John Snow Institute developed a Forecasting Tool for emergency SRH supplies. In 2017, the Tool was successfully piloted in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp to inform multi-method forecasts for emergency SRH kits. The Tool was able to forecast the need for each

emergency SRH kit based on Implementing partner data on population, morbidity/Family Planning demand, historical services provided, and emergency SRH kit quantities issued to service delivery points. It is designed to help countries consolidate all Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for sexual and reproductive health data in one linked excel tool with varying forecasting methodologies combined in one place (consumption, demographic, and service statistics).

7. Please share the most relevant examples and recommendations related to your Office's work in building more sustainable and resilient societies using technology and innovation, as well as emerging issues in this area likely to affect the achievement of the SDGs. (Please limit your response to 250 words or less)

● Syria: With support from the UNFPA Innovation Fund, displaced youth participated in a business start-up and communication training programme to gain critical business, leadership and entrepreneurship skills. A young Syrian computer science student was among 45 young people received seed-funding to help start small-scale projects. She launched an award-winning app to help young people in Syria and beyond learn to code, design websites, and develop other social media platforms. This start-up will "make a revolution in online learning about programming in the Arab world, to empower people to learn about cutting edge technology tools through Arabic content."

● Mauritania: The Mauritania Innovation project aims to develop innovative ICT solutions to respond to the challenges of radicalization and provide tools that increase young people's self-esteem and spirit of citizenship. Guided by research as part of a larger effort to understand the risk and protective factors found among youth when it comes to radicalization, a hackathon (Hack4Peace) took place in November 2017 to co-create and design new solutions to reach young people.

● Palestine: UNFPA Palestine's "Yalla Shabab" ("youth active citizens") aims to change the disenfranchisment of youth in the political process through creative ways to engage young people in civic participation. Palestinian youth brainstorm and design a combination of online and outreach activities to share messages of peace, democracy, social cohesion, and civic engagement. They established a youth council in Gaza that mobilized more than 1000 volunteers to be activated in times of emergency, and to facilitate needs assessments, data collection, and community empowerment. They are currently building a mobile app to connect these volunteers to provide a real-time response on public service contacts, a notification system, and learning materials.

● Ethiopia and Tanzania: The portable learning device, with its solar-charged battery, built-in Android tablet and pre-loaded multimedia training lessons, is designed to overcome challenges frequently encountered in rural areas with poor infrastructure, such as erratic electricity supply and poor internet connectivity. Intended for teaching health professionals, the lessons cover life-saving skills such as post-partum haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, obstructed labour, post-abortion care, family planning and essential newborn care. The training materials were developed by UNFPA and meet international clinical guidelines. UNFPA began pilot-testing the device in Ethiopia and Tanzania in

March of this year. It quickly proved a success. Since then, over 2,700 midwives and health workers and individuals have received training.

8. What can ECOSOC do to better leverage the work of the UN system in supporting countries to pursue integrated policies and apply technology and innovative solutions at the national, regional and global levels, to effectively enhance resilience and manage risks in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? (Please limit your response to 250 words or less)

With more data becoming available through mobile technology and internet, there are many risks associated with identification of individuals within high risk groups that can be vulnerable in certain situation such as survivors of sexual violence.

The ECOSOC should continue to serve as a forum for the presentation and discussion of best practices, including the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs. ECOSOC however, can do more to bring together the knowledge gleaned from the various outcomes and discussions from relevant meetings and fora, such as the the Partnership Forum, Youth Forum, and Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, as well as the intergovernmental discussions held in the context of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, as well as the HLFP, together. The disparate and disconnected nature of the knowledge shared can be brought together to help support countries pursue integrated policies and apply technology and innovative solutions at all levels.