



Report of the Workshop on Assessing Development Results at Country Level

New York, Helmsley Hotel, 1 - 2 November 2004

I INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a two-day workshop on “Assessing Development Results at Country Level” during 1-2 November 2004. In 2002 UNDP launched independent country evaluations, called Assessment of Development Results (ADRs). The objective of ADRs is to assess UNDP’s contributions to development results at country level and generate lessons that can enhance performance and organizational effectiveness. To date, the Evaluation Office has conducted 15 such ADRs. The purpose of the workshop was therefore to take stock, learn and share UNDP’s experience with partners and deepen understanding and knowledge of what approaches work best in evaluating results at the country level. It brought together some 30 representatives of development agencies from both multilateral and bilateral agencies -most of which undertake country evaluations-, international NGOs, academics and practitioners in evaluation to share their approaches and practices. (See Annex 1 & 2 for a list of Participants and the Agenda) This report presents a summary of the main issues discussed and the key lessons learned from the workshop. All presentations and papers presented at the workshop can be found on the following Evaluation Office website: (<http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/workshop>)

II OPENING SESSION

The opening session provided a rich background for the two day workshop. Following the opening by Shoji Nishimoto, the Director of UNDP’s Bureau of Policy Development, Keith Griffin, Distinguished Professor, Department of Economics, University of California gave a keynote address and representatives of Mozambique and India’s Permanent Missions to the UN provided perspectives of the South.

In her welcome remarks, Saraswathi Menon, the Director of the Evaluation Office, noted that ADRs attempted to measure UNDP’s contribution to development results, in relation to the broader development challenges of the country and the strategies of the national governments. In this regard, she underlined that the UN’s work was defined by partner countries’ realities. Participants were urged to address the questions of what and how they carry out evaluations not only from a methodological perspective but also in terms of situating their assessment within the larger context of development effectiveness and public action. She posed two sets of issues for discussion: (a) the need to be clear on whose development results agencies assess and how to measure the contribution of an international agency to changes in people’s lives, when the efforts go far beyond those of an individual agency ; and (b) the need to be clear about who assesses development results and balance the assessment of an agency’s own organizational performance against the need to also measure its contribution to international development goals and link agencies’ evaluation practices to that of actors in the programme countries that they support.

Shoji Nishimoto’s opening statement summarized the objectives of the workshop and challenged the participants to focus their deliberations on how the evaluation function can be harnessed to promote development effectiveness. He urged participants to use the workshop to reflect on their evaluation approaches, build a common understanding on how to enhance evaluation practices and make these relevant and useful in gauging progress and guiding policy improvements. Key issues he raised as important for the evaluation community were:

- Focusing on the country as the primary unit of the assessment of development effectiveness and the only way to ascertain whether the sum of development partners’ efforts result in meaningful development outcomes
- Evaluation capacity building at the national level and the need to deepen partnerships with national actors to discuss goals , design and implement programmes and evaluate together

- Measuring organizational success by the success achieved at the country level
- Developing robust methodological approaches and tools that allow agencies to gauge change in development conditions, to establish credible linkages between development efforts and outcomes and substantiate the accountability and learning functions of evaluations with empirical evidence.
- Systematically feed knowledge from evaluations into development practice and policy choices, and seek to stimulate policy debates on development among different actors within country programmes, and enhance the quality of development work.
- Ensure that there are effective institutional mechanisms and commitment for timely follow-up and linking of evaluation results to corporate and country programme decision-making processes.

Keith Griffin's key note address entitled ***Assessing Development Results: A Skeptical View*** briefly reviewed the history of evaluation practices in aid agencies and how these have closely mirrored paradigm shifts in development debates. Key issues covered in his address were as follows:

- The growing trend within the international development community to focus on accountability, evaluations and reviews of aid effectiveness result from two key factors: the failure of foreign assistance over the past 50 years to reduce poverty and inequality and the reduction in aid flows.
- The history of evaluations and approaches have evolved according to changing concerns and assumptions about how aid contributes to development: i.e.: from audits focusing on expenditures and inputs and timely completion of activities, to assessment of project outputs, to development results, the most intangible category of them all. The task of measuring the effect of aid effectiveness on development results poses the need of using counterfactuals and with it, innumerable conceptual and practical complications.
- The current state of the art in country evaluation practices indicates changes from reviews of past performance to concerns with strategic positioning to identify areas of comparative advantage that help shape future activities. The move to locate interventions upstream –i.e.: policy advice and advocacy- without tangible outcomes makes assessing development results extremely difficult.
- The trend among donors to coordinating foreign aid was discouraged in favor of maintaining the variety of approaches, goals and expertise belonging to each aid agency. The address emphasized the negative effects for development, of imposing donor priorities on host country governments. Keith Griffin referred skeptically to the mainstreaming of “national ownership” within the development community as a response to the proven failure of policy conditionality. National ownership was still used more as a rhetorical slogan than as genuine recognition of national sovereignty. He underscored the importance of channeling aid efforts where governments are receptive.
- Role of donors as facilitators of dialogue and discussion of policy alternatives with recipient countries was strongly advocated. Facilitating access to policy options and international experience should be an indicator for measuring success, independently of the choice made by the host country and the ensuing outcomes. Involvement of host countries in assessing the effectiveness of foreign aid, it was argued, would put the former at the center of aid interventions and would be an indication of ownership of development programmes.

Perspectives from Programme Countries, *H.E. A. Gopinathan Deputy Permanent Representative, India Mission to the UN and H .E. Filipe Chidumo , Permanent Representative, Mozambique Mission to the UN*

Two representatives from developing countries where the UNDP has undertaken ADRs, India and Mozambique, were invited to provide perspectives of programme countries on country evaluations. H.E. A. Gopinathan Deputy Permanent Representative, India Mission to the UN and H .E. Filipe Chidumo, Permanent Representative, Mozambique Mission to the UN highlighted the following perspectives which served as a backdrop to participants' discussions throughout the workshop:

- Governments and civil society of developing countries are still trying to grasp what foreign concepts such as ADRs are about and there does seem to be presently little demand for such exercises in the South. Ambassador Chidumo underlined that until evaluations are internalized by national actors in the South and evaluation capacities developed; these cannot be representative or used to inform local decision-making.
- Evaluations should be based on host governments 'development agendas and strategies, and assess whether donors' interventions are in conformity with national government's plans and strategies. Both Ambassadors Gopinath and Chidumo acknowledged the dilemmas faced by governments of the South who need to own development programmes in order for change to be sustainable, yet find it difficult to own what they cannot pay for.
- Although evaluations are important for accountability purposes, their significance for developing countries needs to be considered in the context of overburdening and even contradictory conditionalities and requirements demanded by donors, which leaves recipients with narrow human resources and capacities to respond and advance development at the same time. There is a need for flexible and contextually tailored approaches to support programme countries in their development agendas and avoid "one-size-fits-all" approaches or application of non -contextual best practices.
- On harmonization, both representatives posed the following challenges: Who are donors/development agencies harmonizing with? Are donors harmonizing with host countries' processes and practice or with those of other donors? Donors were urged to ground harmonization efforts within the context of aligning evaluations with government strategies and priorities in order to reduce high transaction costs and conflicting demands on host countries.

III SESSION I: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON COUNTRY LEVEL EVALUATIONS

Several bilateral, multilateral and UN agencies (World Bank, IFAD, UNICEF, DANIDA, SIDA, UNDP, IADB & Global Environment Facility) presented their approaches and methods to country level evaluations. (See Evaluation Office website for all presentations: <http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/workshop>)

While most agencies do not have a formal, codified methodology, certain common approaches were identified:

UNDP Assessment of Development Results (ADRs): Emerging Lessons and Challenges,
Fadzai Gwaradzimba, Sr. Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office, UNDP.

Fadzai Gwaradzimba presented an overview of UNDP's country evaluations and the emerging lessons and challenges since the ADRs were launched in 2002. She noted that ADRs seek to promote a focus on development effectiveness, results based management, partnerships and simplification and harmonization of processes at country level. They support quality assurance and accountability, UNDP's substantive accountability function to Executive Board and knowledge and learning for UNDP and national stakeholders. Significantly, ADRs focus on development change and go beyond project outputs and assess UNDP's contribution to development results and development effectiveness at country level over a 5-7 year period. To date, UNDP has completed 15 ADRs. The turn around time is 9 to 12 months and the average cost is \$130,000.

ADR Scope and Methodology:

UNDP ADRs assess strategic positioning and examines the value-added UNDP brings to the country i.e.: Are we doing the rights things? - and UNDP's contribution to development results i.e.: Are we getting there? The key variables assessed for strategic positioning are relevance, responsiveness to country's priorities, comparative advantage, missed opportunities, degree of innovation, range and quality of partnerships and links to MDGs, UNDAF. When assessing development results, ADRs analyze the key overall results at national level, factors influencing results, partnership strategies, degree of national ownership and sustainability. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used with a heavier bias towards the former and triangulation is applied throughout to validate source, quality and credibility of the evidence. ADR strengths are:

- ADRs are external to country office and constitute a results focused comprehensive approach to performance assessment
- ADRs' strategic focus allows for identification of critical contributions of UNDP and its comparative advantage at country level
- ADRs assess outcomes in relation to nationally defined priorities and this potentially strengthens development effectiveness
- ADRs can be a strategic tool for strengthening partnerships at the country level
- ADRs have the potential for building M&E culture in the country.

Emerging Lessons & Challenges:

- Uneven ownership and marginal involvement by in-country stakeholders
- Tension between learning and accountability
- Follow-up to ADRs - some process use evident but no clear legislative mandate
- Analytical quality of ADRs variable
- Weak evaluative evidence base- strong on qualitative judgments but weak on quantitative analysis
- How to effectively addressing issues of contribution and attribution
- Poor alignment with UNDP's M&E and results chain framework
- Scale of ambition is too high
- Country as unit of analysis – problems of regional issues not addressed
- Unsatisfactory treatment of UN issues
- Methodological rigor (challenge of managing attribution and assessing "soft assistance"- i.e. policy dialogue & advocacy, capacity building etc.)
- Turn around time and coverage
- High cost (time, human and financial resources)
- Tension between need for national ownership and independence of evaluation
- Sustaining engagement beyond completion point
- Supply versus demand driven ADRs and synchronization with 'real time' strategic issues (UNDP programming cycle needs)
- Independence and quality of local in-depth research which serve as building bloc to ADR main evaluation is problematic

Future Directions for UNDP ADRs:

Based on experience to date, UNDP's future work will, among other things, encompass the following:

- Identify target audiences for ADRs and clarify legislative framework corporately
- Refine, enrich and adapt ADR methodology
- Develop approaches and tools to evaluate "soft-assistance" credibly
- Align ADRs with UNDP M&E framework, mainstream corporately and link to programming needs
- Streamline ADR process, improve quality control and sequencing of evaluation phases
- Enhance national ownership
- Ensure follow-up to ADRs by UNDP and national actors
- Locating ADRs within UN system (UNDAF) M&E framework.

Country Assistance Evaluation (CAE) Methodology *(Kyle Peters, Senior Manager, Country Evaluation and Regional Relations, Operations Evaluation Department, (OED) World Bank)*

Kyle Peters' presentation reviewed the OED's past record in country assistance evaluations (CAE) and highlighted the findings of a recent comprehensive review of the Bank's 70 CAEs. There is a disconnect between the outcomes of Bank's country assistance programs with the aggregate outcome of the Bank's lending operations –i.e.: in a third of the country programs, aggregate outcomes from projects were satisfactory, while country assistance program was unsuccessful overall-. He noted that this indicates critical omissions in the Bank's programme, reflecting the fact that project interventions may not be addressing key development constraints. While the individual projects may be satisfactory, key constraints affecting the overall program may remain unaddressed.

CAEs Methodology:

The object of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the development in the country, the country assistance programme (CAP) and the organization (WB). CAEs typically take form 12 to 18 months and cost an average of \$250,000 with the minimum at \$125,000 and the maximum at \$500,000.

OED assesses Bank's assistance programs in three dimensions:

- First, a development impact dimension, which involves a "top-down" analysis of the principal program objectives – i.e.: Were these objectives right? Were they achieved? What are the risks to program outcomes? Did the program have an impact on institutional development?
- Second dimension involves a "bottom-up" analysis of major program inputs—loans, analytical work, and the Bank's partnerships and aid coordination.
- The third dimension is the most challenging: attribution, in which the responsibility for the program outcome is attributed to four categories of actors: (a) the Client; (b) the Bank; (c) partners and other stakeholders; and (d) exogenous forces (e.g., events of nature, international economic shocks, etc.). Attribution is not possible using current counterfactuals, Bank performance is measured against best practice and corporate standards.

The focus is on Bank's performance in terms of the consistency of the strategy with key development constraints, and corporate priorities; quality at entry; implementation and follow-up; selectivity; participation and partnership and creativity, initiative, and efficiency. OED rates the outcome of the Bank's assistance program by gauging the extent to which the programme's major strategic objectives were relevant and achieved without shortcomings –rating based on assessment of programmes' relevance, efficacy, efficiency, outcome, institutional development and sustainability.

On balance, an ongoing review of the methodology revealed:

- High awareness of CAEs and CAE findings
- Incorporation of recommendations
- Frequent mention in strategies and Board discussions
- But staff views negative overall...timing, accountability, consistency; Board views more positive, but need to focus more on results and less on compliance
- The approach may place too much emphasis on instruments rather than impact
- Different sections of CAE appear to lead to different conclusions, i.e. project outcomes
- Focus shifts from country to bank to country—may be confusing
- Need to ensure consistency of terminology

A brief examination of methods employed by other agencies showed that:

- OED has completed the most country evaluations by far
- Only about half the agencies have formal, codified methodologies
- OED is only agency to rate; very few attempt to construct counterfactuals or to attribute

Based on ongoing self-assessment, the Bank is considering several changes to the approach and methodology:

- Making the CAEs more-results based, by organizing by objectives
- Establishing what the program attempted to accomplish by objective
- Analyzing the product dimension by objective rather than overall
- Preparing sub-ratings by objectives, disaggregating the overall rating
- Changing attribution to the notion of “plausible association” or Bank contribution
- More institution-wide attention to evaluating the impact of country programs
- Mainstreaming of Results-based CASs -containing a CAS self-evaluation

Country Programme Evaluations (CPE) Methodology and Experience (*Inder Ruprah, Senior Economist, Office of Evaluation and Oversight, IADB*)

Inder Ruprah presented IADB’s approach to Country Programme Evaluations. CPEs are periodic assessments of the totality of Bank-supported interventions in a single country, they are mandated every time there is a national election in a borrowing country and are inputs for the next country programming exercise. CPEs currently evaluate 10 year periods but are moving to 3-4 year periods. To date, IADB has completed 70 CPEs. The turn around time is 9 to 12 months and the average cost is \$300,000. CPEs serve two evaluation functions: (i) they provide an account to the Board of Directors regarding the results achieved from Bank action in a country over an extended period of time; (ii) they provide an opportunity for reflection and lesson-learning regarding how the Bank could improve the effectiveness of its operations in the future.

CPE Methodology:

The benchmark for CPEs is the intent of the country strategy and of individual projects, and whether objectives were achieved. There is a strict protocol on process – questions to be asked, people to be interviewed and structure of final narrative. Evaluative criteria are the basic ECG ones: relevance, coherence, efficiency, efficacy and sustainability. The evaluation is expected to bring out differences of interpretation regarding results and performance, where this occurs. Presentation of information on results is achieved from two data sources: IDB’s internal project monitoring system and available external data. Progress information from the Bank’s data sources is weak, while external data presents a generally mixed picture.

Although in theory IADB should in a country provide support in a few strategic areas based on comparative advantage and value added, in practice most existing programming documents are largely lists of projects, with few priorities and weak strategic selectivity. Program-level intent or measures for change are rarely stated explicitly and must be inferred by the evaluators.

Standard Assessment Tools used are:

Evaluability; Disbursement efficiency; Volatility, predictability and cyclicity; Net flows; Amortization profiles; Progress assessments; and Poverty & Inequality. At present, evaluability of projects is low, and evaluability of programs lower still. There is poor (or no) specification of intent at the level of the program as a whole and low investment in analytical and sector work contributes to poor strategic selectivity while idiosyncratic Assessments highlight those issues that are more important and have a greater salience for the present than others. These issues form the core of the CPEs' evaluation narrative, and are the basis for at least half of the recommendations. Recommendations attempt to be implementable in the next country strategy document

Experience to date suggests that formal disagreement with OVE recommendations is rare. However, indicators at the project level are improving, but program-level indicators still weak and, as a result, recent country programs still lack evaluability. Starting in 2006, OVE will be conducting "second round" CPEs on most borrowers. These second round evaluations will focus on a single programming cycle, and will need to consider both the program itself and the implementation of past evaluation recommendations. IDB management will likely undertake more extensive self-evaluations of the Bank's program.

How to Assess Programme Results with a Human Rights Approach (*Lucien Back, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF*) *Presentation did not focus on methodology of CPE but of implications of HR approach on evaluations*

Lucien Back presented UNICEF's approach to Country Programme Evaluations (CPE). CPEs are relatively new, voluntary exercises to support Mid Term Reviews or strategy development. The turn around time is 12 months and the average cost is \$150,000. They explicitly feed into the UNDAF evaluation, wherever possible and entail strong involvement by national evaluation partners. Approach is flexible –possibility for joint implementation with donors and feeding into or being part of sectoral or thematic reviews. They support the function of accountability of results achieved through country programme and learning.

This presentation provided core elements of **Human Rights based approach to programming (HRBAP)** . CPEs should document experiences and challenges of HRBAP in Country Programmes and assess adequate contribution of Country Programmes to UNDAF outcomes, national goals, MDGs and poverty reduction, and need for renewal / re-alignment of Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP). Programme results should involve relevant / effective / efficient contribution to broader policy frameworks beyond the programme. Programmes monitor and evaluate programme outcomes and processes as well as evolving capacities guided by human rights standards and principles. HRBAP is meant to produce verifiable results in terms of changes in the capacities of rights holders to enjoy their rights and of duty bearers to fulfill their obligations. CPEs have standard questions to assess results based on HRBAP. Experience to date suggests that emphasis on RBM has improved CPAP design –now includes expected outputs and outcomes that can be attributed to UNICEF.

Emerging Challenges for CPE Evaluation Approach and Methodology:

- Assessment of (non-) realization of rights and obligations (capacity analysis) and of underlying and structural causes
- Link with reporting to and recommendations from human rights bodies
- Evaluation as part of HRBAP – involvement and empowerment of stakeholders
- Emphasis on processes and sustainable results at all levels (institutional and behavioral changes)
- Accountability to and learning for all stakeholders
- Keep transaction cost as low as possible

- Seek opportunities to coordinate or blend with country-owned review and evaluation initiatives

Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs) –The World According to IFAD (*Fleming Nichols, Evaluation Officer, Office of Evaluation, IFAD*)

Fleming Nichols provided an overview of IFAD's approach to country programme evaluations (CPEs) IFAD's Office of Evaluation (OE) recently became independent and has adopted a new evaluation policy.

Assessment of results and impact is undertaken at the corporate level –IFAD has no country offices. To date, IFAD has completed 16 CPEs which on average cost \$150,000 and take around time 12 months to complete. CPEs typically cover: the strategic assessment -internal logic/consistency of IFAD strategies, and the coherence between IFAD's strategy and the government's strategy; the operational progress assessment -impact assessed against 8 standard criteria; project performance (effectiveness/efficiency/relevance of objectives); performance of project partners; the thematic assessment - from a list of "IFAD themes" which are crosscutting or corporate level, and themes identified by the core learning partnership; plus the Agreement at Completion Point (ACP).

Methodology:

The key steps in IFAD CPEs involve: preparation of approach paper, including discussion with partners; desk study -strategies and consistencies; operation progress; evaluation mission; report writing and national ACP workshop. Experience to date suggests that the three phased approach is useful and the ACP is appreciated and ensuring full engagement by national stakeholders in determining next programme. The emerging challenges are analytical agenda overload, validity and credibility of findings and relevance of the CPE report.

IV SESSION II: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS: ROLE OF COUNTRY EVALUATIONS

Assessing Development at the Country Level: Japanese Experiences and Issues: *Professor Ryokichi Hirono, Visiting Professor, Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Tokyo and Professor Emeritus, Seikei University*

Professor Hirono presented a historical review of Japan's ODA evaluation system¹ and explained two types of country level evaluations that Japan undertakes (i) Strategic Evaluations that assessed the effect of Japanese ODA on Japan's bilateral relations with different partner countries; (ii) Development Evaluations (DACOL). DACOLs are aimed at measuring, analyzing and evaluating the impact of the Japanese ODA on the overall economic and social development of partner countries. DACOLs intend to draw policy and implementation lessons and recommendations for future development policy and programming exercises both on the Japanese and partner country sides.

Three major issues facing Japanese DACOL exercises: (a) many country programmes lack a strategy note, thus, objectives, goals and targets of ODA in most partner countries have been general and qualitative, making it almost impossible to make country-level development evaluation, let alone quantitative ones; (b) there is still no consensus on the methodologies of assessing development results and processes at the country level; and (c) there is a lack and/or

¹ The paper used for this and all other presentation can be found in the ADR Workshop website.
<http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/workshop>

inadequacy of reliable macro-economic and sectoral data and quantitative indicators in areas involving Japanese ODA policies and programmes.

Methodology:

DACOL approach typically involves: (a) review if broad objectives, goals and targets of ODA policies and programmes were consistent with those of national partner countries, (b) if consistent, measuring how far these objectives/targets have been achieved: (c) if not, what factors contributed to the inconsistency between partner countries and Japan, (d) if objectives were not met, what factors contributed to failure, (e) what actions could be taken to deal with such failures in planning and programming the next round of ODA for the future, including improved development needs assessment of partner countries and better monitoring of the progress of ODA implementation. The emerging challenges are improving DACOL methodology and assisting partner countries to enhance their development capacity including evaluation infrastructure.

Professor Hirono underlined the importance of including programme country partners in assessing the effects of Japanese assistance, thus the approach for Japan's country evaluation was to do joint exercises including bi/multilateral partners and national actors.

A Bilateral Perspective on Evaluations and Development Effectiveness, Niels Dabelstein, Head of Evaluation Secretariat, Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Niels Dabelstein gave a presentation on Danida's approach to evaluations of its programmes. The presentation discussed some methodological issues DANIDA encountered with country evaluations and shared experiences arising from the cases of Nicaragua and Bolivia. The objective of Danida's country evaluations was to assess performance and results; to provide lessons for the future and to feed into the revision of the Country Strategy. The scope of work covered relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and impact and sustainability. A reference group was formed in-country to ensure representation of local stakeholder's views.

In practice, Danida found that results from its country evaluation only to a limited extent informed future country programming process. They were also limitations of data on results and impact. Danida has decided to suspend country programme evaluations due to the complexity, the high cost and time factor.

Niels Dabelstein underscored the fact that country evaluations may be trying to cover too much ground and too many issues; the ambitious scope prevented in-depth analysis in evaluations. Danida's alternative approach to country evaluations in future could entail: (a) an assessment of the extent to which Danida has aligned its programmes to PRSP and (b) evaluations focused on sustainability due to phasing out of cooperation activities in the country.

Niels Dabelstein briefly presented current thinking in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation: The organization works with a hierarchy of evaluations at the country level according to the scope and level of results being assessed, viz:

- **Donor Effectiveness:** Evaluation of the internal effectiveness of a particular donor agency. Questions concern the institutional effectiveness of an agency rather than its contribution to development impact.
- **Donor Contribution:** Evaluation of the contribution of an individual donor to the effectiveness of the larger development co-operation effort. Does the individual agency operate in a manner that is supportive of the development co-operation effort as a whole and does it make a significant contribution to development results?

- **Aid Effectiveness:** Evaluation of the effectiveness of the development co-operation system itself. The evaluation focuses on questions concerning partnership, the alignment of external support with partner country development strategies and the harmonisation of donor practices.
- **Development Effectiveness:** Evaluation of the effects of the combined donor support to a particular country. How does total aid effort contribute - positively and negatively - to achievement of desired development outcomes at country level (PRSP & MDG)?

The first two levels are suitable for evaluations conducted by individual donors in cooperation with its partners while the last two levels lend themselves to joint evaluations.

Day 1 proceedings concluded with a set of observations from two discussants Shiva Kumar, Consultant & Board Member of IDEAS and Judith Tendler, Professor of Political Economy, The International Development and Regional Planning Group, MIT. Shiv Kumar recognized the significance of ADRs in promoting development evaluations. However, he noted that there was a crisis of credibility facing aid agencies in the present international context and the challenge for the UN is to keep abreast with the current development scenario. The UN needed to uphold the value system it stands for and broaden the range of stakeholders it brings to the table through its initiatives and go beyond national governments. He urged agencies to be aware that there are larger issues of representation underpinning the concern for “ownership” of development interventions and evaluations. A country is not synonymous with national governments when it comes to issues of ownership, representation and participation. Independence of evaluations is important and the issue poses strong ethical dilemmas. While agencies have focused on governments, civil society is where true independent evaluations have the potential to be developed. There is a need to build evaluation capacity outside the sphere of government and donor and to ensure that international agencies are skilled to carry out evaluations. Agencies need to re-think evaluations and consider whether they are useful and practical and construct a clear framework regarding: (a) significance (what is the objective, who o benefits and how can it trigger change?); (b) scope; (c) substance: (ensuring country evaluations are useful); and (d) methodology. On methodology, the absence of hard data should not be a constraint. There is high value in perception and judgments as long as evaluators clarify basis for conclusions. A variety of evaluation approaches were encouraged and agencies were urged to consider real innovations in evaluations methods and approaches that are taking place in south and encouraged to deepen dialogue among M&E community and social scientists in developing countries. With specific reference to ADRs, he noted that these could use longer timeframes (15 years) if the objective is to reposition the agency.

Professor Tendler stressed the need for development agencies to focus on developing the capacity of professional associations of evaluators in the south which are generally ignored by donors and remain isolated. Agencies were urged to support them to develop their skills, help them network and tap into their knowledge to improve the quality of evaluations. In order to deal with limitations that country evaluations are facing, she suggested that agencies focus not only on success stories and successful aspects of interventions but on failures as well, in order to learn from those aspects that failed and were corrected and improved. She also urged agencies to use evaluations as an educational opportunity: to build capacities of a generation of people in countries of the south –i.e.: training university students to carry out evaluations-; tapping into local knowledge and improving the quality of evaluations.

During the plenary discussions of the day’s presentations, participants raised the following points:

- There is always tension between the need for ownership and independence and building capacity means providing the opportunity for actors from the south to participate in evaluations. On the methodological challenges, most participants emphasized that “incremental attribution” rather than “attribution” per se should be considered to assess the contribution of individual agencies.

- Evaluators are pressed to produce information faster, cheaper, of better quality but it is not clear whether country programmes evaluations are useful, timely and credible. Evaluators needed to ask themselves what the value added of country programme evaluations is.
- The changes in approaches and methodologies and the growing complexity and scale of ambition of current country evaluations underlined the importance of learning from variation with the average, understanding why some things and certain contexts worked in the past as opposed to the other. There was a need to understand the dynamics of political economies in the partner countries and the risks of forcing “coherence” at the expense of understanding real processes and motivations behind stated objectives.
- Participants questioned the excessive focus on organizational performance at the expense of partner country performance. An agency could not effectively assist a partner country if it does not assess how the country itself is doing.
- There was need to take into consideration the deep underlying motives - i.e.: political, commercial, diplomatic interests - at play in bilateral aid. It was therefore important to define what success meant for agencies, as the type of assistance might reflect the political agenda of the donor instead of the development priorities of a country. This raised the question of how success can be judged if the objective was never development in the first place. There was also the problem of fungibility and the difficulty for an agency to trace how resources were exactly spent by a partner country government. The question here was how reliable were evaluations if they were based on analysis of “value for money” without exactly knowing what money went where.
- Development effectiveness was an important motive for donors and MDGs represented common goals to which all had agreed to and shared. Although they may be a need to coming up with a competitive model to evaluate MDGs, some agencies discouraged the use of one approach for all and by all, particularly since bilateral agency evaluation reports have to be written with the taxpayers of a country in mind.
- Development assistance was still largely supply-driven even though the environment has changed. Agencies were urged to focus on internationally agreed development goals (MDGs) and to use the four levels proposed by the DAC Evaluation Network above to measure progress towards those goals and use country-led evaluations to show possible progress in good practice cases.
- Country evaluations had become more demand-driven and joint evaluations could be more useful for thematic assessments rather than for country evaluations. Forward-looking aspects of evaluations should be solidly substantiated by assessment of past performance.
- There was a need to embed agency evaluation practices in the national context and in developing evaluation capacity for programme countries to evaluate themselves. Unless development agencies try to simplify their ways of evaluating their results, they will not be in sync with the assessments citizens are making on the ground.

V SESSION III: NATIONAL OWNERSHIP, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF EVALUATIONS

During the second day, participants focused on four critical areas that determine the relevance, usefulness and value added of country evaluations. In a panel session, speakers and discussants discussed key challenges that country evaluations face in terms of methodology, ownership, evaluation capacity and utilization.

Methodological Challenges, Ownership and Evaluation Capacity Development: Perspectives from the South, Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of Center for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh and Visiting Fellow at the Center for Global Development.

Mr. Bhattacharya introduced the discussion on the abovementioned challenges by stressing that independence, incentives and commitment are critical elements for effective monitoring and evaluation and the pursuit of quality country evaluations. He noted that while UNDP's country evaluations (ADRs) are expected to inform development policy in a country, it is not clear whether the methodology responds to demand at country level. He called on development agencies to consider the possibility of outsourcing M&E work to research institutions and universities to foster greater independence, incentives and commitment towards M&E at national level.

On the ADR methodology, Mr. Bhattacharya underscored the need to clarify the purpose of ADRs. He questioned whether ADR's are analytical exercises for learning, accountability and enhancing development-effectiveness or a public relations tool to raise funds and suggested some key issues that warrant attention:

- Building credible links between UNDP's interventions and development outcomes to ensure accountability;
- Timing the undertaking of an ADR in a country and the presentation of results to relevant decision-making processes;
- Bringing greater focus on delivery mechanisms of aid (e.g. aid disbursement, conditionality, overhead costs) that will enhance the quality and relevance of assessment;
- Reconciling the difficult issue of attribution; and
- Achieving greater clarity on triangulation (i.e. perception, validation and documentation) to ensure effective and credible national consultation processes. The latter entails considering how to add value to different types of knowledge and perceptions at different levels (e.g. macro/micro), and how these can be integrated within the overall analysis.

On the issue of, ownership, Mr. Bhattacharya called on the need to unpack the meaning of the concept –i.e.: are we talking about ownership of development cooperation, of outcomes, of ADR processes and recommendations or all of these? He also highlighted that development practitioners need to be aware that ownership of development process by national government does not equate to national ownership, and that different levels of government and different stakes within civil society need to be looked into more carefully.

On the use of evaluations, Mr. Bhattacharya emphasized the requirement of clear and consistent follow-up strategies to evaluations in order for these to affect the development process. He proposed the implementation of a follow-up compliance report to indicate changes in practices among UN agencies, government and other partners as a result of evaluation follow-up.

During the ensuing plenary discussion, one participant noted that although the question of independence is important, engaging "externals" to perform evaluations does not necessarily ensure it. Using the appropriate methods, experience and variety of tools and perspectives – in view of the fact that ultimately everybody may have specific priorities and interests that can influence the evaluation process, better ensures independence. Several participants agreed on the importance of understanding ownership as a concept that applies to the entire development process, and not just the specific evaluation exercise.

Perspectives on Country Evaluations (Rob Vandenberg, Former DAC Network Chair and Current Director of Monitoring and Evaluation in GEF)

In his presentation, Rob Vandenberg shared the current approach and challenges for country evaluations by analyzing them from the perspectives of DAC/OECD, GEF and the country being evaluated. Regarding the first perspective, he explained that for DAC/OECD, where donors

finance together, they should evaluate together, and that increasing partnership should include partnership in evaluation. Along the same logic he stated that increasing ownership should lead to ownership of evaluation and that ideally, the recipient should evaluate the contribution of aid. This explains the trend to build evaluation capacity in partner countries and the support to recipient-led evaluations as well as the undertaking of joint international evaluations.

At the country level, key challenges facing evaluations are related to the evaluation policy, budget available, the role of parliament and Supreme Audit Institutions, the rule of law and system of checks and balances, the role of the media and limited access to data. With regards to the evaluation of GEF interventions, Rob Vandenberg stated that these occurred in a context where evaluation of external funding in the form of grants, is politically sensitive. Additionally he described the competing interests, conflicting advice, and confusing dialogues within the aid environment as experienced by recipient countries. Patterns of donor pressure to countries illustrate these tensions: donors advocate for partner countries to reduce central government yet they also want them to strengthen rule of law and service delivery; recipient governments are being asked to reduce budgets yet they are being called upon to spend more on social sectors.

Because of the scope of its operations, GEF evaluations do not have a country perspective. Its M&E is focused on global trends. There is however a hierarchical M&E architecture from project level to overall performance assessments. GEF evaluations have become fully independent in the past 2 years but recipients do not yet play a role in evaluating performance of environmental interventions.

Country Level Evaluations: Methodological and Ownership Challenges (*Stefan Dahlgren, Senior Evaluation Officer, Department of Evaluation and Internal Audit, Sida*)

Stefan Dahlgren offered a presentation of Sida's experience with country evaluations. He acknowledged that Sida's approach to evaluation has been "impressionistic", mainly focusing on issues of organizational interest and gauging relevance of interventions rather than assessing impact. Sida's evaluations may be divided into four main groups according to the purpose they pursued: (1) historical; (2) macroeconomic studies; (3) civil society processes and implementation; and (4) ownership and relevance of national poverty reduction strategies. The key principles informing these evaluations reflect a number of issues, viz PRSP reviews, in order to track new trends and future possibilities; supporting partner country initiatives; focusing on the country as a whole, but on a limited number of aspects; and assessing impact of new cooperation modalities. He stated that unlike multilateral agencies, bilateral agencies tend to be less interested in country evaluations. However, the EU Commission is now undertaking country evaluations. For bilateral agencies like Sida, country evaluations still reflect a donor-centric approach where only the partner country is viewed as a key aspect of accountability. Clearly, a more holistic approach, where accountability is envisaged within the development cooperation process, needs to be considered as well.

Among the key challenges facing Sida are establishing new and improved sources for developing methods and data collection; ensuring cost-effectiveness of evaluations and assessing capacity building.

As a discussant of the panel, Osvaldo Feinstein (Former Manager and Adviser in the Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank) emphasized the need to guard against overselling methodology. While the latter plays an important role, the quality of evaluations remains a key issue. In this context, he stressed the need to consider multiple perspectives and messages that are critical to nurture the appetite for evaluations by way of three key points:

- **Incentives:** The need to focus on the question of incentives, which makes it necessary to distinguish between government and non-governmental ownership of evaluations. Demand for evaluations can be nurtured; raising awareness on how evaluation can be

useful should be regarded as part of the accountability function of doing evaluations. Under RBM, there is a lot of pressure to show results and the need to nurture demand for evaluations can be overlooked.

- **Evaluation capacity:** The traditional approach has been training – and some types of training can weaken, rather than enhance, evaluative capacity in partner countries. One alternative is to promote new opportunities by “learning by doing” and involving national actors throughout the overall evaluation process.
- **Methods and approaches:** The need to consider different perspectives is paramount. This could be achieved through “story-telling” (i.e. conveying messages, including unintended effects, that tend to be lost in conventional analysis) that is often missing in evaluations. Additionally, considerations of assumptions made should not be underplayed, even when observations are clear cut.

VI BREAK OUT SESSIONS: METHODOLOGY, NATIONAL OWNERSHIP, AND USE OF EVALUATIONS

Three groups were formed to delve deeper into the three dimensions on which the workshop focused during the second day, Methodology, National Ownership and Use of Evaluations. Each group discussed the key challenges and emerging issues for assessing development results at the country level within this context and proposed some suggestions for the future.

(a) Approaches and Methodology: Moderators Osvaldo Feinstein and Fadzai Gwaradzimba

The first group elaborated a set of standards of good evaluations, and discussed what the purpose of the standards was and how each should be implemented:

1. **Timeliness:** speaks to the need for evaluation results to feed into decision-making processes and programme cycles, as well as national development strategies and priorities (e.g. PRSP). This could be achieved through inclusive consultations and engagement with national actors at the outset and the preparation of an approach paper laying out the evaluation strategy considering the national context and how the evaluation would fit into relevant decision-making processes.
2. **Relevance:** refers to the need to satisfy the information needs of clients in the scope and focus design. This should also be reflected in a strategic approach paper.
3. **Credibility:** addresses the need to ensure independence and transparency, the choices of methodology, and the difficulty of establishing plausible linkages. Credible evaluations should be based on an explicit evaluation policy, solid research design that combines a mix of qualitative & quantitative data, multiple lines of evidence and uses existing data; the use of appropriate analytical tools; participatory approaches, rigorously substantiated evidence and validation processes.
4. **Cost effectiveness:** evaluations should provide clear value added to justify their cost and allow tracking of implementation of recommendations and lessons learned. The way to do this is to institute management response to evaluations and pursue an active strategy of knowledge management to disseminate lessons.
5. **Accountability**
6. **Learning**
7. **Improving programming**

(b) National Ownership: Moderators Professor Ryokichi Hirono and Suppiramaniam Nanthikesan

The second group discussed the issues and challenges related to strengthening national ownership at country level and assessing such efforts. Ownership was considered from a broad perspective, encompassing the entire development process, not just the end, when evaluations are undertaken. National ownership was defined as involving commitment through political will and resources dedicated, the participation of stakeholders in all phases of development initiatives and ensuring transparency and accountability measures to ensure effective participation. Ownership was considered vital to practice accountability to stakeholders involved –i.e.: civil society, all levels of government and development partners-, in development initiatives and to strengthen development effectiveness. The team proposed some ways in which national ownership could be strengthened:

- National development plans are good entry points (MDGs, PRSPs etc)
- While recognizing the sovereignty of the government, development agencies should contextualize the processes through which national priorities are identified and assess to what extent they are donor-nationally driven
- Support to the national plan should be informed by the knowledge of the processes and open a second window to credible CSOs that work in the areas of interests.

Finally, some indicators for national ownership were proposed:

- Local public resources committed
- Participation
- Credible structured consultative mechanisms
- Freedom to participate
- Nontraditional consultative processes
- Transparency, Accountability of processes and decision-making mechanisms
- Governance structures
- Monitoring structures in place.

The team proposed several steps in order to strengthen national ownership of development interventions and evaluations:

- Promote evaluation as integral part of development process (must be included in planning)
- Building local coalitions around MDGs where consensus exists.
- Enhance capacity of evaluation thinking – formal and nontraditional
- Ensure international development community to support ownership.

(c) Use of Evaluations Moderators Rob Vandenberg, Nurul Alam & Knut Ostby

The third group discussed the use of evaluations and highlighted the importance of paying attention to the usefulness of evaluations based on their quality, and the need to identify users from the onset of the evaluation process. The group concluded that the use of evaluations is dependent on the enabling environment or learning environment where evaluation takes place. Consequently, agencies should analyze what actors an evaluation could influence and what information needs these actors have, in order for evaluation results to feed into the decision-making process. To ensure this, users should define the focus and scope of an evaluation. Recommendations should be in an adequate language for the intended audience, and directed to actors with responsibility and commitment to take corresponding action. Follow-up mechanisms need to be in place, and dissemination activities planned accordingly.

The break-out groups' presentations triggered an interesting discussion which centered around methodology and ownership issues. On methodology, *the following issues were raised:*

- A word of clarification on the independence of evaluations was offered: Independence is the means to attaining the end of quality evaluations. It is critical that evaluators have the independence to formulate judgments, rather than the formal independence of the evaluation unit within an organization. Furthermore, quality is not necessarily guaranteed by the independence of an evaluation unit but by a solid methodology that ensures that judgments are substantiated in evidence and that these can be openly formulated.
- A useful suggestion was made regarding the need for development agencies to think about the building blocks required to establish “attribution” in order to unpack this process, these would entail the following steps: (1) measure change; (2) link change to an agency intervention; (3) establish causal sequence and use counterfactuals; (4) explore alternative explanations for change, other than the intervention; and consider exogenous factors influencing change. It was noted that agencies need to abandon the idea of claiming attribution and just content themselves with being able to establish their contribution to building the enabling environment for a programme country to take action regarding its development plan.
- Concerning the credibility of evaluations, a call was made to state the assumptions on which evaluations are based upfront, and for agencies to be transparent about the methods they use in order to promote the learning process. Additionally, learning can be enhanced by focusing not solely on results but on assessing the process of development interventions. Some participants noted that the excessive attention to final outcomes of interventions encouraged by the Results Based Management paradigm downplays the value of learning and evaluating the process.
- Finally, most participants seemed to agree in the skills required by a good evaluator. Good evaluators should preferably have a multidisciplinary background as opposed to narrow technical skills.

The concept and need, advocated by many participants, of national ownership of evaluations was highly contested. Some participants strongly argued that the sole idea is a misconception, and that ownership is defined by who the author and owner of an evaluation is. Knowing who undertook an evaluation allows the reader to form a clear judgment, while blurring this and attempt to claim national ownership sheds confusion and undermines the applicability of evaluation results. An evaluation is owned by who undertakes it. Other participants present disagreed with this position and underscored the need to give actors in a programme country a voice in forming the judgment to qualify how an agency has performed, and how useful its interventions have been. Consequently, the advocates of national ownership alleged that agencies still have a lot to do in order to address the challenge of having democratic tools that include national stakeholders in country-led evaluations. Going further in this direction, some suggested gradually handing over the evaluation function to programme countries.

VII EMERGING ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report summarizes the key issues and conclusions arising out of the two day discussions.

- i. Most agencies have moved from assessing results at the project level to evaluating results at the programme country level, although a few (GEF, Danida) do not undertake country evaluations due to complexity, high cost and time factor. I think this is an incorrect statement – Rob argued, that “Because of the scope of its operations, GEF evaluations do not have a country perspective. Its M&E is focused on global trends”, and I merely said that we have discontinued “traditional” country programme evaluations until we have found better approaches

- ii. The main purpose of evaluations is to fulfil the functions of accountability and learning in order to improve organisational effectiveness. Most agencies are concerned with assessing internal effectiveness of the particular agency, rather than its contribution to development results. Although some are additionally, concerned about assessing its contribution to the larger development cooperation effort. UNDP's approach to country evaluation is yet more ambitious in that it also attempts to assess development effectiveness within the programme country. In contrast to the use by most agencies of a standard purpose for country evaluations, SIDA has tailored the purpose of its evaluations according to varying organizational concerns over time. On average, the evaluations assess an agency's support to a programme country over a period of five to ten years.
- iii. Most agencies at the workshop, particularly bilaterals and IFIs, use the following OECD/DAC principles as evaluative criteria to gauge the performance of their interventions: relevance, efficacy, efficiency, coherence and sustainability, outcomes or results achieved. Some include additional evaluative criteria such as institutional development (World Bank), and strategic positioning (UNDP).
- iv. There is a continuum from country evaluations that substantiate their findings primarily on empirical evidence and quantitative data (World Bank, IADB) to those that are preponderantly based on qualitative judgment and perception (UNDP, SIDA, Danida and UNICEF). Agencies balance these two sources differently.
- v. There is consensus that establishing attribution of an agency's development results is at best tenuous. Most agencies are moving towards identifying plausible association or contribution of their support to development outcomes. Proposals were made to measure contribution in terms of "incremental attribution" or to think in terms of sliding levels: from building the conditions for a country to take action to the most ambitious level of attributing causal linkages –most unattainable level. Many agreed that the most an agency can do is build enabling environments -conditions- for a country to chart and pursue its development strategies.
- vi. There was general consensus about the benefits of joint evaluations – i.e.: in giving voice to national stakeholders on a donor's performance, and reducing costs. But there was a strong call to maintain a diversity of approaches to development support and evaluation, instead of blending into a uniform front. Additionally, difficulties of undertaking joint evaluations among country programme partners were highlighted. While some strongly advocated for embedding evaluation in the national context, and facilitating the active participation of national actors in evaluations, others justified the need for the agency to undertake the evaluation on its own.

Challenges of country evaluations

Some common challenges faced by most agencies include:

- i. Lack of clearly stated programme objectives, baseline data and benchmarks to measure progress.
- ii. Linking evaluation timing and outcomes to future programming and decision-making processes in the development organizations as well in the programme country.
- iii. Tendency to increasingly focus on results, and less on compliance. Inclination to downplay the importance of assessing the process of development interventions and its effects, in the name of RBM and excessive emphasis on demonstrating outcomes achieved.
- iv. Policy conditionality and asymmetrical power relations between donors and host countries result problematic vis-à-vis bringing value added from evaluations.

- v. The need to use evaluation to clarify the dilemma between micro successes and macro failures and strengthening evaluation tools to account for changing development environment. For instance: (a) flow of resources and drivers of growth are not necessarily coming from the North to South, but also flowing South to South.; and (b) there is need to account for all of the exogenous factors (trade, conflict, disasters etc) that influence development effectiveness.
- vi. Complexity of assessing contribution –let alone attribution: identifying measures for change; linking change to an agency’s intervention, establishing the sequence of actions –causality-, exploring alternative explanations and accounting for exogenous factors influencing change.
- vii. Adjusting organizational strategy and systems to practices and development constraints of a host country.

Methodology

- i. There is a lack of codification of methodology and approaches used in country evaluations.
- ii. Assessing contribution is at the end of the day more important than accurately capturing attribution. Most agencies are leaning towards “plausible associations with results” rather than attribution.
- iii. Evaluability of country programmes is made difficult by lack of baseline data and benchmarks to measure results. Some suggested the possibility of using proxies of statistical indicators; while others discouraged the effort due to costliness, and the predominant subjective nature of judgments on which evaluations rely on.
- iv. More conversations between M&E communities and social scientists recommended. Many pointed at the importance of having suitably qualified evaluators in determining the quality of evaluations –there were views on preferring good development thinkers and social scientists with multidisciplinary backgrounds than overly technical evaluators. The development community must look to the South where innovation in evaluation methodologies is taking place, and tap into local experts.
- v. The litmus test of a good “evaluation is honesty and courage”, rather than analytical and methodological rigor.
- vi. Independence is the means to attaining the end of quality evaluations. It is critical that evaluators have the independence to formulate judgments, rather than the formal independence of the evaluation unit within an organization. Quality is not necessarily guaranteed by the independence of an evaluation unit but by a solid methodology that ensures that judgments are substantiated in evidence and that these can be openly formulated.
- vii. The way forward is to rethink the purpose, the framework, the scope and approaches to evaluations – viz. organizational effectiveness should be assessed within a longer time horizon (e.g. 15-20 years); perception based evaluations and good qualitative descriptions can yield good evaluations even in the absence of hard data. A variety of evaluation approaches, rather than one single method, preferred.

Ownership

- i. Larger issue of representation underpins the challenge of host countries owning both the development process and the evaluation of its outcomes. It is important to ascertain who

represents a country, which is problematic and goes beyond the notion reflected in the assistance provided by many agencies that a country is equal to its national government.

- ii. Evaluations should be based on host governments' development agendas and strategies, and assess whether donors' interventions are in conformity with national government's plans and strategies. The dilemma of ownership was presented: for governments of the south who need to own development programmes in order for change to be sustainable, while they cannot own what they cannot pay; and for donors who lack incentives for funding initiatives they have a marginal role in determining.
- iii. Who are donors harmonizing with -with host countries' processes and practice or with other donors? Donors need to ground harmonization efforts within the national context, aligning evaluations with government strategies and priorities. This is necessary to reduce high transaction costs and conflicting demands to host countries. In this context, the value of aid coordination was questioned. Additionally, is there a role for policy dialogue among donors, if national ownership is the objective?
- iv. Governments and civil society in developing countries are still trying to grasp what foreign concepts such as ADR are about and there is an inexistent demand of such exercises in the south. Until evaluations are not internalized by national actors in the south and evaluation capacities are not developed, these cannot be representative or used to inform local decision-making.

Use of Evaluations

- i. Practical limitations and conflicting interests and agendas between donors and host countries preclude clarity on how to make evaluation findings inform and influence decision-making processes at the country level. Besides, it is not certain how those decision-making processes operate at the national and sub-national level, and there is recognition of the need to deeply understand political and social dynamics determining national choices and potential uses of evaluation results. Development interventions –thus their evaluations- do not operate in a vacuum. Many participants feel agencies have not fully internalized this.
- ii. The importance of dissemination – how much of resources are being spent in dissemination of knowledge gained from evaluation?
- iii. Variable quality of evaluation reports and questionable utility by end-users, especially the country offices and governments, which makes follow-up difficult.
- iv. Tension between accountability and learning functions of evaluations which determines how evaluation results are used. It is essential to be clear at the outset of an evaluation process who the audience is, what their needs are, and how the results can be used in practice.

Capacity

- i. Traditional approach to country evaluations questioned by many agencies, and several moving towards self-assessment by country offices – to serve as building blocks of independent meta-evaluations.
- ii. There was consensus on the need for developing evaluation capacity for host countries to evaluate themselves. Some encouraged the support to national networks, professional associations, academic and civil society organizations towards this endeavor. Many pointed out that true independent evaluations need to be outside the sphere of governments and donors. Some agencies are tending to support professional networks in the south, and

outsource in-depth evaluations to national institutions and professionals to ensure better quality.

VIII Conclusion

In closing, the Director of UNDP's Evaluation Office noted that the workshop had shown that there was agreement that agencies are trying to do too many things at the same time, and evaluations have become increasingly complex. She noted that unless agencies simplify their ways of evaluating results, they will not be in sync with the assessment citizens are making on the ground. Ultimately, the success of the development community's efforts should be measured by the success of host countries. Agencies needed to consider four critical questions: (i) Whose development results are they assessing (ii) Who is doing the assessments? (iii) Is there a demand for evaluations? (iv) Who benefits from evaluations? (v) How do agencies measure success and how rigorous are their methodologies? Participants agreed to continue sharing their knowledge and find ways of improving on their approaches and to seek collaboration in making country evaluations serve the needs of programme countries.

Evaluation Office
15 December 2004

Annex I: Agenda

Day I: 1 November 2004

8:00 - 9:00 REGISTRATION (Knickerbocker Suite D)

9:00 – 10:30 OPENING SESSION

- Welcome Remarks (Saraswathi Menon, Director, Evaluation Office, UNDP)
- Opening Statement (Shoji Nishimoto, Director BDP)
- Perspectives from Programme Countries (H.E. A. Gopinathan Deputy Permanent Representative, India Mission to the UN and H .E. Filipe Chidumo , Permanent Representative, Mozambique Mission to the UN)
- Key Note Address: *Assessing Development Results: A Skeptical View* (Keith Griffin, Distinguished Professor, Department of Economics, University of California, Riverside)
-

11:00- 11:30 COFFEE BREAK (Knickerbocker D)

11:30 – 3:00 SESSION I: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON COUNTRY LEVEL EVALUATIONS

- *Assessment of Development Results (ADRs): Emerging Lessons and Challenges* (Fadzai Gwaradzimba, Sr. Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office, UNDP)
- *Country Assistance Evaluation (CAE) Methodology* (Kyle Peters, Senior Manager, Country Evaluation and Regional Relations, Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank)
- *Country Programme Evaluations: Methodology and Experience* (Inder Ruprah, Senior Economist, Office of Evaluation and Oversight, IADB)
- *Plenary Discussion*

1:00 -2:00 LUNCH (Helmsley Hotel: Room – Murray Hill)

SESSION I (continued)

- *How to Assess Programme Results with a Human Rights Approach* (Lucien Back, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF)
- *Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs) –The World According to IFAD* (Fleming Nichols, Evaluation Officer, Office of Evaluation, IFAD)
- *Plenary Discussion*

3:00 - 3 :30 COFFEE BREAK (Knickerbocker D)

3:30 - 5:00 SESSION II: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS: ROLE OF COUNTRY EVALUATIONS

- *Assessing Development at the Country Level: Japanese Experiences and Issues.* Professor Ryokichi Hirono, Visiting Professor, Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Tokyo and Professor Emeritus, Seikei University)
- *A Bilateral Perspective on Evaluations and Development Effectiveness.* Neils Dabelstein, Head of Evaluation Secretariat, Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- *Plenary Discussion*

WRAP-UP

- *Commentaries on Day's Proceedings.* Shiva Kumar (Consultant & Board member of IDEAS)
- *Discussant on Day's Proceedings and Emerging Challenges,* Judith Tendler, Professor of Political Economy, The International Development and Regional Planning Group, MIT.

**5:30 – 7 :00 RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF ALL PARTICIPANTS, THE HELMSLEY HOTEL:
KNICKERBOCKER SUITE C**

Day II: 2 November 2004

- 9:00 - 9:30 SUMMARY of Day I's Proceedings** (Nurul Alam, Deputy Director, UNDP Evaluation Office)
- 9:30 – 11:00 SESSION III: NATIONAL OWNERSHIP, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF EVALUATIONS**
- *Methodological Challenges, Ownership and Evaluation Capacity Development: Perspectives from the South*, Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of Center for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh and Visiting Fellow at the Center for Global Development.
 - *Perspectives on Country Evaluations* (Rob Vandenberg, Former DAC Network Chair and Current Director of Monitoring and Evaluation in GEF)
 - *Country Level Evaluations: Methodological and Ownership Challenges* (Stefan Dahlgren, Senior Evaluation Officer, Department of Evaluation and Internal Audit, SIDA)
 - *Discussant* (Osvaldo Feinstein, Former Manager and Adviser in the Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank)
- 11:00 - 11:30 COFFEE BREAK** (Room - Murray Hill)
- 11:30 – 1:00 BREAK OUT SESSIONS**
- *Challenges of Assessing Development Results at the Country Level:*
 1. *Approaches and Methodology*: Moderators Osvaldo Feinstein and Fadzai Gwaradzimba
 2. *National Ownership*: Moderators Professor Ryokichi Hirono and Suppiramaniam Nanthikesan
 3. *Use of Evaluations*: Moderators Rob Vandenberg, Nurul Alam & Knut Ostby
- 1:00 - 2:30 LUNCH** (Helmsley Hotel : Room - Sutton Place)
- 2:30 - 3:30 PRESENTATION OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN PLENARY**
- Presentation and Discussion of Group Reports in the Plenary
- 3:30 - 4:00 COFFEE BREAK** (Room - Murray Hill)
- 4:00 - 5:00 CLOSING SESSION**
- Presentation of key issues emerging from the workshop (Rapporteurs and Chair)
- 5 :00 - 5 :30 CLOSING REMARKS**
- Saraswathi Menon, Director, UNDP Evaluation Office

Contact Persons:

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