

**PROFESSIONAL PEER REVIEW  
OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION**

# **UN-Habitat**

# Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function

# UN-Habitat



# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the report of the Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of UN-Habitat. The peer review was carried out at the request of the UN-Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. Although a key component of UN agency accountability, I would like to stress the voluntary nature of the exercise and the buy-in of UN-Habitat management.

The peer review was conducted by a panel of three members of UN and bilateral evaluation units supported by a senior expert. The panel based its work on the UNEG-DAC Framework for Peer Reviews and on the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System. In agreement with UN-Habitat, the panel explicitly chose a light version of the peer review modality, which did not include field visits.

The report welcomes the intention of UN-Habitat to establish a full fledged evaluation unit, separate from monitoring. It concludes with a number of recommendations, well in line with the establishment of an independent and credible evaluation function at UN-Habitat.

However, a peer review is not only about findings and recommendations. An important aspect is the peer exchange, within the panel and between the panel and the staff of the function reviewed. For this particular peer review this exchange benefited from a parallel peer review of the UNEP evaluation function and from discussions where all three parties participated. It should be noted that, not the least, did the peer review team itself benefit from the insights gained, the sharing of good practices and the rich exchanges

on fundamental evaluation issues and related standards.

Martin Barugahare, Head of the UN-Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, and his team provided the panel with useful inputs and insights throughout the process. This helped us understand the UN-Habitat context and guide us towards our conclusions. We also noticed a readiness to learn from others.

The panel is most grateful for the accessibility of and frank dialogues with UN-Habitat staff, including senior management, and with representatives of member states. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who invested their time in facilitating the review and in responding to our demands for information and data. A special word of thank goes to Susanne Bech who, on top of her daily work, managed to organize our interviews and to guide us with a smile to the offices of our many respondents.

We do hope that the peer review will be a useful tool to assist UN-Habitat in establishing an evaluation office that meets the UNEG standards and that it will contribute to knowledge about, confidence in and use of evaluations.

Vienna, March 2012

Margareta de Goÿs  
Chair of the Peer Review Panel  
Director, UNIDO Evaluation Group

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Professional Peer Review is to provide an independent assessment of the functioning and quality of the evaluation function of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat. It is primarily intended for use by UN-Habitat in its quest for excellence and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Evaluation Network and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). More specifically, the peer review serves to enhance knowledge about, confidence in and use of evaluations by governing bodies and senior management of UN-Habitat, improve evaluation policy and practice, build internal capacities and confidence of the evaluation function and support the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (MEU) in its efforts to ensure greater acceptance and use of evaluation findings in the performance management system of the organization.

The peer review was conducted between October 2011 and January 2012 in line with the UNEG Framework for Professional Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN Organizations, which was approved as a UNEG reference document at the UNEG Annual General Meeting in 2011.

The peer review panel consisted of: Margareta de Goÿs, Director, Evaluation Group, UNIDO, (Chair), Dominique de Crombrugghe, Special Evaluator for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium and Oscar A. Garcia, Senior Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme. The panel was assisted by an adviser, expert in evaluation and familiar with multilateral organizations, Roland Rodts.

The peer panel greatly appreciated UN-Habitat's collaboration and full support throughout the review process. The MEU engaged in an open and constructive dialogue, sharing information, thoughts and ideas. Senior management, divisional and regional office staff and evaluation staff at UN-Habitat all facilitated the collection of data and took part in discussions of issues and findings.

The peer review's main limitation is that it could not undertake an independent assessment of the technical credibility of evaluations conducted by UN-Habitat. It was also not possible to conduct interviews with key external stakeholders, in particular government and NGO cooperating partners based in partner countries. Although not all aspects were covered, the panel is confident that the report can serve as a credible input and stimulus for UN-Habitat as it moves forward in its reform process.

## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation is increasing in importance within UN-Habitat and has been influential in promoting organizational change and in validating or changing orientations of programmes and projects. The ongoing reform process with increased emphasis on results and accountability is expected to further strengthen its position. The panel recognizes the efforts that have been made to reinforce the evaluation function over the last decade but the function is still under-resourced, not fully independent and there is confusion between the roles of monitoring and evaluation.

The fact that the function is currently imbedded in a unit responsible for both monitoring and evaluation is not in line with best UN practices. Moreover, the panel finds that evaluation is marginalized, with the majority of the time

and resources devoted to monitoring. The commitment of senior management and governing bodies to strengthen the evaluation function and the recent decision to separate evaluation and monitoring functions are seen as positive.

There is, presently, no Evaluation Policy in place and no clear definition of roles and responsibilities for planning, managing and conducting evaluations. The panel is hesitant towards the intention of UN-Habitat management to bring the MEU (to be renamed Evaluation Office) under the authority of a to-be-created Executive Office. By doing so, the evaluation function would not be located independently from the Executive Office's line management function, as required under the UNEG Norms.

It is a concern to the panel that the allocation of resources for evaluation is not done in a transparent and independent manner and that the MEU does not have an evaluation budget under its control. In practice, the evaluation work programme is largely determined outside the MEU by donors, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) or senior and programme management. This limits the functional independence of the MEU.

As evaluations are indistinctly commissioned by the MEU, programme units, donors and by decentralized functions, there is little clarity in the total number of evaluations conducted. Independence is constrained by inadequate volume and transparency in the allocation and control over human and financial resources. The number of evaluations conducted is small and the coverage not fully representative of UN-Habitat's mandate and activities. Few strategic evaluations are conducted and the same can be said for country evaluations, evaluations of emergency-type interventions, evaluations of normative work and evaluations of pilot interventions.

The credibility of the evaluation function is affected by the limited scope and coverage of its work, the limited amount of resources available for evaluation and the fact that there are areas of UN-Habitat that are not sufficiently evaluated.

The peer review panel considers the current practice of externally recruited professional staff for the evaluation function appropriate. Moreover, evaluations are conducted transparently, are assessed as impartial and are conducted independently without interference from management and found to be in compliance with UNEG Norms and Standards. Evaluators are found to be competent and the evaluation process is found to be rigorous and encompass good guidance from the MEU. A proper roster of evaluation consultants is not yet in place, but a quality assurance system exists and is functioning in a satisfactory manner. Stakeholder consultations do, however, not always engage all stakeholders. Gender issues are, moreover, not found to be systematically mainstreamed in evaluation Terms of Reference or evaluation reports.

The panel finds that, generally, evaluations conducted are credible, balanced, producing reports of good quality and that the evaluations carried out have been found to be useful. There is a management response system in place to follow up on implementation of recommendations. Evaluations are perceived to have influence and findings, and recommendations often feed into the planning of new project or programme phases. However, as there is little attention to strategic level evaluations, there is marginal influence on policy and strategy formulation. This affects institutional credibility and limits the usefulness of evaluation for accountability and learning.

All evaluation reports are circulated to internal and external stakeholders for review of accuracy and technical quality of the information. Where there is disagreement on issues or conflicting views the comments or dissenting views are published with the report. All evaluation reports are available on the UN-Habitat website. There have, however, been few synthesis reports or reports highlighting lessons learned and the potential contribution to knowledge management and organizational learning remains untapped.

In conclusion, the panel finds that, presently, the

evaluation function of UN-Habitat cannot be considered as fully independent, that its credibility is satisfactory but, as the scope and coverage is limited, the utility in terms of providing evaluative evidence of UN-Habitat results and for accountability and learning is not fully tapped.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the crucial importance of an enabling environment for evaluation and in ensuring that the role and function of evaluation is clearly stated and reflecting the principles of the UNEG Norms, an Evaluation Policy, aligned to UNEG Norms and Standards, needs to be approved and endorsed by governing bodies. The policy should spell out guiding principles, roles, responsibilities, and types of evaluations to be conducted.

UN-Habitat management is invited to reconsider its plan to bring the MEU (renamed into Evaluation Office) under the authority of the newly to-be-created Executive Office. A direct reporting line to the Executive Director should preferably be kept to avoid interference with the line management functions of the Executive Office. A direct reporting line should also be established to the CPR.

The panel recommends that the human resource capacity of the MEU should be further strengthened and adequately provided for in a future Evaluation Office. The panel recommends a minimum of three professional staff (two international and one national post) for this office. The panel also invites UN-Habitat management to explore how the authority of the chief of the evaluation function could be reinforced.

The evaluation function should develop a proper evaluation consultant roster. More attention should be paid to ensuring an adequate balance between international and national experts. For larger evaluations, the panel recommends the establishment of external evaluation reference groups to enhance the quality of the evaluations.

The UN-Habitat management should ensure that

the evaluation function has an adequate level of predictable budgetary resources to operate in an independent and credible manner. For transparency and accountability purposes, the evaluation function should be endowed with budgeted annual evaluation work plans and have resources specifically allocated to various types of evaluations.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit/Evaluation Office needs to do more in terms of volume and coverage. To the extent that the evaluations are decentralized to the field, the MEU should be informed of their processes and results and be involved with their quality assurance. Consideration should be given to identifying explicit criteria for selection of evaluations that ensure good coverage of UN-Habitat's work programme and thematic priorities and include strategic evaluations, evaluations of subprogrammes and country-level evaluations.

Efforts to document and track management response to evaluations, including those managed outside the MEU, should be further strengthened. The MEU should establish mechanisms to systematically harvest lessons from existing evaluations. An annual evaluation synthesis report should provide information on main findings and learning stemming out of evaluations. The panel recommends, however, that the head of the MEU or of a future Evaluation Office rather serves as an adviser to a programme/project review or approval committee than as a member with decision-making powers, in order to minimize bias and conflict of interest.

UN-Habitat should give high priority to address the disconnect between its various results-focused data collection, reporting and monitoring tools in order to foster the availability of reliable data that can be used by the organization, including its evaluation function. A strategy to strengthen feedback links between the three results-based management pillars of planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective learning, performance improvement, management decision-making and policy should be prepared.



## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

A professional peer review of an evaluation function is an independent assessment of its independence, credibility and utility, conducted by peers from other evaluation functions.

Two key factors led to the introduction of Professional Peer Reviews of evaluation functions in multilateral agencies in 2004: a strong demand for multi-donor evaluations of United Nations (UN) organizations on the one hand, and the recognition of the need to harmonize evaluation practice due to the considerable variation across the UN System on the other. In view of this, the Evaluation Network of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) jointly with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) introduced the peer review mechanism.

The rationale behind the peer review of the UN organizations' evaluation function is to establish the credibility of evaluation functions including their reports and thus potentially decreasing the need for external donor evaluations. UNEP and UN-Habitat requested a peer review at the same time, which led to the decision to undertake the two reviews in parallel. This feature has the advantage of one peer panel working with two evaluation functions, sharing a common approach, using resources efficiently by saving travel cost, etc., and organizing joint peer exchanges during the reviews. The latter is an important part of the peer review process and benefits from a larger participation of peers. At the same time, separate reports for each organization are produced.

This peer review report includes the detailed plan

and approach of the UN-Habitat Peer Review, background information on the organization and its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (MEU), an assessment of the peer review function based on the main criteria for the review: independence, credibility and utility.

### 1.2 PURPOSE

The peer review provides an assessment of the evaluation function of UN-Habitat against UNEG Norms and Standards for conducting evaluations in the UN system. Moreover, in preparation for the peer review, the UN-Habitat evaluation function was asked to specify the purposes the peer review should serve, which can be summarized as follows:

- Enhancing knowledge about, confidence in and use of evaluations by governing bodies and senior management of the organization, leading to informed decisions about increasing the independence of the function;
- Improving evaluation policy and practice, including stronger planning and resourcing of evaluation (also based on greater appreciation and support of evaluation by governing bodies and senior management), by sharing good practices and building internal capacities of and confidence in the MEU, including taking informed decisions about monitoring activities at UN-Habitat; and
- Supporting the MEU's efforts to ensure greater acceptance and integration of evaluation findings in the performance management system of the organization.

In addition, according to UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews, peer reviews aim at sharing good practices, experience and

mutual learning. A copy of the review's Terms of Reference (ToR) is attached in Annex 1.

### 1.3 CORE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The peer review was conducted in line with the UNEG Framework for Professional Reviews of the Evaluation Functions of UN Organizations, which was approved as a UNEG reference document at the UNEG Annual General Meeting in 2011. This framework builds on the Framework for Professional Peer Reviews developed by the DAC/UNEG Joint Task Force on Professional Peer Reviews of Evaluation Functions in Multilateral Organizations, January 2007. It recognizes that the model may be adapted in some cases, for example, to very small or highly specialized organizations and/or those with limited existing evaluation capacities. In this respect, the DAC/UNEG Task Team developed a framework for 'lighter' peer reviews, to be used for small(er) organizations such as UN-Habitat. However, the 'reduced' framework addresses the same 'core assessment question': "Are the agency's evaluation function and its products: independent; credible; and useful for learning and accountability purposes?"

The approach and methodology of this and other peer reviews of UN agencies hinges on using UNEG frameworks and clustering the treatment of the various issues under three criteria that need to be satisfied for high-quality evaluation functions: A copy of the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation is attached in Annex 2.

**Independence of evaluations and evaluation systems.** The evaluation process should be impartial and independent in its function from the process or entity concerned with the policy making, the delivery, and the management. A requisite measure of independence of the evaluation function is a recognized pre-condition for credibility, validity and usefulness. At the same time, each review should bear in mind that the appropriate guarantees of the necessary independence in a particular organization will differ according to the nature of its work, its governance and

decision-making arrangements, and other factors. Moreover, most organizations aim to encourage the active application and use of evaluations at all levels of management, meaning that systemic measures for ensuring the necessary objectivity and impartiality of this work should receive due attention. Indicators of independence are broadly covered by UNEG Norms N 2.1-2.6 and N 6.1-6.5.

**Credibility of evaluations.** The credibility of evaluations depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the degree of transparency of the evaluation process. Credibility requires that evaluations should report successes as well as failures. Recipient countries should, as a rule, fully participate in evaluations in order to promote credibility and commitment. Whether and how the organization's approach to evaluation fosters partnership and helps build ownership and capacity in developing countries merits attention as a major theme. Indicators of credibility are mainly treated in UNEG Norms N2.4-2.5, N5.1-5.3, N7.1-7.2, N8.1-8.2, N9.1-9.3 and N10.1-10.2.

**Utility of evaluations.** To have an impact on decision-making, evaluation findings must be perceived as relevant and useful and be presented in a clear and concise way. They should fully reflect the different interests and needs of the many parties involved in development cooperation. Importantly, each review should bear in mind that ensuring the utility of evaluations is only partly under the control of evaluation functions. It is also critically a function of managers, and member countries through their participation in decision-making and on governing bodies and in commissioning, receiving and using evaluations. Indicators of utility are mainly treated in UNEG Norms N1.3, N2.6, N8.2, N10.1-10.2, N12.1-12.3 and N13.

The MEU agreed that all three criteria were relevant to the exercise and inter-related. It emphasized the greater importance of independence and requested that related criteria are thoroughly viewed.

## 1.4 THE PEER REVIEW PANEL

A number of considerations were taken into account when composing the membership of the panel: (i) relevant professional experience; (ii) independence – to avoid any potential or alleged conflict of interest or partiality, the panel members do not have any working relationship to UN-Habitat that might influence the panel’s position and deliberations; and (iii) the level of seniority of panel members. The combination of these criteria together with the voluntary nature of service on the panel and the wish to have members from bilateral as well as multilateral evaluation functions resulted in the following composition:

- Margareta de Goys, Director, Evaluation Group, UNIDO, Chair
- Dominique de Crombrugghe, Special Evaluator for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
- Oscar A. Garcia, Senior Evaluation Adviser, United Nations Development Programme, Evaluation Office

The panel was assisted by an adviser, expert in evaluation and familiar with multilateral organizations, Roland Rodts. The adviser was responsible for preparatory work (data collection and information gathering), preliminary assessment of the collected information, participation in the interviews with stakeholders and contributed to drafting the peer review report.

## 1.5 APPROACH

The methodology and methods applied are consistent with past peer reviews, using similar templates and methods and aligned to the UNEG Framework. However, this review has been conducted according to “Peer reviews for ‘small’ evaluation functions” and has not included field visits. A copy of the Normative Framework is attached in Annex 3.

The peer panel would like to emphasize the importance of discussions that took place among peers and with key informants, both to obtain information and share experiences. In particular, the panel has engaged with:

- Stakeholders in governing bodies and senior management to gain an understanding of their satisfaction or concerns and share with them insights into good evaluation practice to address the expressed intention to enhance the knowledge and confidence in evaluation.
- Peers in the evaluation office to learn about the evaluation functions’ practices and discuss additional or alternative ways to address common evaluation challenges.
- Operational management to gain an understanding of their satisfaction or concerns and discuss issues related to learning and implementing evaluation recommendations. Operational management also included stakeholders outside Nairobi, who were consulted via an Internet survey.

## 1.6 THE REVIEW PROCESS

The following major steps and activities were undertaken during the review.

### PREPARATION OF THE APPROACH TO THE REVIEW

The preparatory activities were conducted collaboratively by the peer panel members and the UN-Habitat’s MEU. The Approach Paper and Work Plan was finalized in the course of September 2011. The document described the key elements of the peer review: background, purpose, scope, general approach and methods, composition of the peer panel and the proposed time schedule. Not the least, it contained the Peer Review Normative Framework and review matrix.

Subsequent to the preparation of the approach paper, a self-assessment template was prepared for gathering factual and other information from the UN-Habitat MEU, including views on its

institutional position, perceived strengths and weakness and on how relevant the three criteria forming the basis for the Review were for its efficient and effective functioning.

## **REVIEW OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Subsequently, the peer review team reviewed key documents, a list of which is attached in Annex 6. The documents covered general information on UN-Habitat, its organizational structure and the institutional setting of the MEU and evaluation-specific documents. The study also served to gain insight into the processes governing the programming, conduct, reporting and feedback process of evaluations commissioned by the MEU. The MEU self-assessment, mentioned above, fed into this study. The preparatory work resulted in a Factual Report. This report presented preliminary findings, pointed out a number of issues, and identified questions requiring follow-up during the visit of the peer panel to UN-Habitat's Headquarters.

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EVALUATIONS REPORTS**

The preparatory work included an in-depth assessment of the quality of a random selection of eight UN-Habitat evaluation reports. The quality of the reports was analysed based on the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports, approved at the UNEG 2010 Annual Meeting. The list of the evaluation reports selected is provided in Annex 5a.

The checklist consists of two parts. First, it lists the general characteristics of the evaluation concerned: the subject evaluated, the evaluation conducted, the actors concerned, and the final report. Subsequently, the quality of the evaluation is examined by applying three quality criteria: validity, reliability, and usability. Each of these criteria is operationalized by specific indicators, which in turn are further specified into components. Main assessment criteria are: (i) Presentation of evaluation's purpose and scope, design, process and methodology and

evaluation tools; (ii) Presentation of evidence or results (outputs, outcomes and/or impact of the subject evaluated); (iii) Analysis and formulation of conclusions; and (iv) Formulation of recommendations.

## **UNDERSTANDING FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES: INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

From 16 to 29 October 2011, the panel and the adviser visited UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi to conduct semi-structured interviews with UN-Habitat management and staff from both substantive and policy functions as well as with MEU staff. The basic purpose of the interviews was to collect information on the structural aspects of the MEU including its positioning and functioning and to assess it against the three main assessment criteria. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed new questions to be introduced during the interview, in response to the interviewee's answers. During the mission a meeting was also organized with representatives of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The list of interviewees and persons met is appended in Annex 4. At the end of each day of interviews the panel members and the adviser shared their findings and identified gaps in information and knowledge. This facilitated the development of a common understanding. To conclude, the panel discussed its initial findings with MEU staff and UN-Habitat management during a presentation and feedback meeting. The comments received are reflected in this report.

Following the visit to UN-Habitat Headquarters, a series of telephone interviews were held with a number of evaluators, who had been involved in the evaluations selected for in-depth review. The list of the evaluators consulted is provided in Annex 4. Furthermore, an e-mail survey was conducted to gauge the views and opinions of the UN-Habitat's Regional Office staff and Habitat Programme Managers. The response rate of the survey was about 62 percent. Information from the decentralized functions shed additional light on the panel findings.

## **PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

This peer review report reflects a team effort where all panel members were involved in the collection of data and in conducting interviews, actively engaged in discussion and validation of insights and findings and in the drafting of the report. A draft report was shared with UN-Habitat for factual validation and comments.

### **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE PEER REVIEW**

It should be noted that this peer review is not a formal evaluation. It is a less comprehensive and in-depth assessment but adheres to a rigorous methodology applying the key principles of evaluation, including triangulation, while taking full advantage of the particular benefits of a peer mechanism.

The peer review's largest limitation was that it could not undertake an independent assessment of the technical credibility of the UN-Habitat evaluations; to do so, it would have required panel members or technical advisers with relevant expertise. Instead, the panel has assessed whether the evaluation processes of UN-Habitat include adequate measures to ensure the best possible technical credibility.

Neither was it possible to conduct interviews with key external stakeholders, in particular representatives of national governments of partner countries and NGO cooperating partners.

Although this peer review did not cover all aspects, the panel is confident that the report can serve as a credible input and stimulus for UN-Habitat as it moves forward to improve and embed the evaluation function as a critical component in its ongoing search for excellence in fulfilling its important mandate.

### **1.8 REPORT STRUCTURE**

After the introductory chapter on background and approach and a chapter briefly describing the evaluation function in UN-Habitat, the report discusses, in turn, each of the core criteria and analytical dimensions in three separate chapters. Different facets, pertinent to the dimensions of independence, credibility and utility, are described under separate headings and examined in relation to their importance and the corresponding UNEG Norms. Each of the three main chapters ends with brief, overall conclusions. The report ends with a chapter on conclusions and recommendations, organized along the main issues identified by the panel. When applicable and for practical purposes, the recommendations are directed to the organization as a whole.



## CHAPTER 2

# UN-HABITAT – GENERAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 MANDATE

As a United Nations Programme, the mandate of United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is to promote sustainable urbanization and the reduction of poverty. It has a broad mandate that derives from the outcomes of relevant international conferences and from the specific mandates given to the programme by various United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and UN-Habitat Governing Council (GC) resolutions.

The establishment of UN-Habitat and its origin were shaped by two landmark international conferences: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, in 1972, and the global Conference of United Nations on Human Settlements (UNCHS) held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. For nearly two decades of its existence (1978-1996), UNCHS remained a small technical agency. In 1996, the second United Nations Conference on the Human Settlements (Habitat II) adopted the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. This gave UNCHS a new explicit normative mandate. It was charged with the responsibility to support and monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In 2002, governments attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) further mandated UN-Habitat to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015.

The period 2001-2004 witnessed rapid growth in the staff, activities and budget of UN-Habitat. In-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat by the Office of the Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), 2005,

commended the achievements of UN-Habitat but given its broad mandate and limited resources, it recommended sharpening of the UN-Habitat's focus in order to have greater impact. This led to the GC at its twentieth session in 2005 requesting UN-Habitat to prepare a comprehensive Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013. The intent of the plan was to: (i) sharpen the focus of the work of UN-Habitat and broaden its funding base; (ii) strengthen programme alignment and coherence, (iii) apply results-based management to enhance value for money, transparency and accountability.

### 2.2 THE MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL PLAN (MTSIP)

The MTSIP was approved by the GC at its twenty-first session in 2007, through resolution 21/2. The plan includes five substantive focus areas: (i) advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; (ii) participatory urban planning, management and governance; (iii) pro-poor land and housing; (iv) environmentally sound and affordable urban infrastructure and services; and (v) strengthening human settlements finance systems. A sixth focus area, excellence in management, is intended to create an enabling environment for the effective implementation of the five substantive areas, focusing on result-based management (RBM), knowledge management, results-based planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, enhanced accountability and transparency.

The MTSIP is implemented in phases that correspond with the biennial work programme cycles of 2008-2009, 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. In the course of implementation of the MTSIP, some issues have come to the fore. These include: (a) conceptual and methodological difficulties in

reconciling the ambitious expected results and indicators of achievement with results-based approach; (b) complex effort required in complying with different reporting mechanisms and accountability frameworks; (c) inadequacy of organizational and governance structures of UN-Habitat.

## **2.3 EXPECTED RESULTS**

The MTSIP states as its broad indicators of success: (a) the number of countries and partners engaged in monitoring and reporting on key urbanization trends including urban poverty and slums; (b) the number of countries having integrated urbanization and urban poverty issues in their respective national development plans, poverty reduction and country assistance strategies; (c) increased Official Development Assistance flows for pro-poor housing and urban development; (d) increased private sector investment in and national budgetary allocations for urban infrastructure and housing development, including ad hoc transfers and other forms of support to local authorities to improve planning, governance and the provision of basic services; and (e) the empowerment of slum dwellers and the urban poor through improved access to credit for housing and to basic urban infrastructure and services largely through strengthening financial systems and partners.

## **2.4 ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK**

MTSIP implementation is monitored and progress reported to the CPR on a six-monthly basis. There is an evaluation framework for the MTSIP. The first phase, 2008-2009, of the implementation of MTSIP was assessed through a peer review in 2010, the second phase, 2010-2011, is currently being externally evaluated (evaluation to be completed in March 2012), and a final MTSIP evaluation will be conducted in 2014. There are two routine internal audits per year and periodic external audits that are consolidated into a report to the General Assembly every two years. Regular assessment of the work programme is carried out through

the United Nations Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). An in-depth programmatic evaluation of UN-Habitat by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is scheduled for 2012.

In line with the MTSIP, the organization has developed guidelines and a framework for monitoring compliance with delegated responsibilities. It also supports the implementation of improved operating procedures for project review and approval, travel planning and approval, cooperation agreements, and online training tools. The accountability framework aims at developing an audit trail in systems and databases, as well as setting up a Cooperation Agreement Review and Advisory Committee to establish quality standards and oversight mechanisms. One important milestone has been the strengthening of the programme review mechanism through Programme Review Committees. The committees are strategic management tools for strengthening alignment between the results specified in the biennial work programme, on one hand, and, on the other, the programmes, projects, and activities that contribute to these planned results. In addition to the Headquarters Programme Review Committee, three Regional Programme Review Committees are operational and are using the new guidelines.

## **2.5 GOVERNANCE**

UN-Habitat has a dual system of governance. First, it is part of the UN Secretariat and is burdened by rules and regulations of the UN Secretariat, and second, it is expected to perform like other programme and funds by abiding to its GC, donors and partners. This ambiguity stems from the evolution of the UN-Habitat mandate, which started as primarily a technical role to a full-fledged programme capable to combine its normative and operational expertise into an effective urban development agenda. This has resulted in complex and multiple reporting lines that UN-Habitat must cope with, including reporting to the CPR, donors, the GC, the UN

Headquarters, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UNGA. This situation is not ideal for accountability and transparency. UN-Habitat is governed by the UNGA, the GC and the CPR to UN-Habitat. The GC is a subsidiary body of the UNGA and serves as the intergovernmental decision-making body of UN-Habitat. The GC reports to the UNGA through the ECOSOC, which coordinates the work of UN agencies. The GC is composed of 58 members of the United Nations elected by ECOSOC for a four-year term. Every two years, the GC approves UN-Habitat's work programme and provides guidance on its relationship with partners. The GC meeting is a high-level forum of governments at the ministerial level that sets UN-Habitat's policy guidelines and budget every two years.

The CPR serves as the inter-sessional subsidiary body of the GC. The membership of the committee is open to all Permanent Representatives of Member States of the United Nations and specialized agencies, which are accredited to UN-Habitat. The CPR reviews and monitors the implementation of the work programme of UN-Habitat as well as the implementation of decisions of the Governing Council. It also reviews the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat and prepares draft decisions and resolutions for consideration by the Governing Council. The CPR meets four times in a year, with the participation of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat. The present Executive Director (ED) of UN-Habitat, Dr. Joan Clos, took office in October 2010.

## 2.6 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The approved UN-Habitat organizational structure is organized around four subprogrammes, which correspond to four substantive divisions. These are: Shelter and Sustainable Human Settlements Development corresponding to the Global Division (GD); the Monitoring the Habitat Agenda corresponding to the Monitoring and Research Division (MRD); the Regional and Technical Cooperation corresponding to the

Regional and Technical Cooperation Division (RTCD); and the Human Settlements Financing – corresponding to the Human Settlements Financing Division (HSFD). In addition to the four subprogrammes, there are the Executive Direction and Management (EDM) and the Programme Support Division (PSD), which form part of programmatic framework structures for implementation of UN-Habitat mandate and objectives (see Annex 7 UN-Habitat organizational chart as of August 2010).

**Subprogramme 1:** Shelter and Sustainable Human Settlements Development: is responsible for the promotion of participatory urban planning, management and governance and the promotion of pro-poor land and housing and offers capacity training to governments and institutions to effectively implement normative programmes.

**Subprogramme 2:** Monitoring the Habitat Agenda: The main objective of this subprogramme is to monitor and assess progress towards the implementation of Habitat Agenda, sustainable urbanization conditions and trends, the targets of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on slums, safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as to raise global awareness of human settlements issues and to ensure Habitat Agenda partners actively participate in the formulation of sustainable urbanization policies.

**Subprogramme 3:** Regional and Technical Cooperation: The overall objective of the subprogramme is to strengthen organizational and technical capacity primarily at the national level and regional level.

**Subprogramme 4:** Human Settlements Financing: The subprogramme includes water and sanitation and urban finance branches. The main objective is to facilitate pro-poor financing for housing and urban infrastructure and services that contribute to sustainable human settlements development and the improvement of the living conditions of slum-dwellers focusing on global



policy work, demonstration projects, and advocacy to expand access to environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services. Major programmes under subprogramme 4 include Water for African Cities Programme; Water for Asian Cities Programme, Water for Latin American and Caribbean Cities; Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Programme; and the Global Water Operators' Partnerships.

**Executive Direction and Management** falls under the responsibility of the Executive Director and includes the Deputy Executive Director, the Information Services Section, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, the Resource Mobilization Unit and the UN-Habitat liaison offices in New York, Geneva and Brussels. The Executive Director provides overall direction in the management of the implementation of the organization's work programme, mandate and goals and in its relations with Member States, United Nations offices, programmes, funds, agencies and other partners in coordinating the system-wide implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Declaration targets and other relevant mandates.

**The Programme Support Division** is responsible for the financial, programme planning, and administrative and human resource functions of the organization. It provides overall direction and guidance on the allocation and management of resources; taking responsibility for UN-Habitat support services; liaising with the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and representing UN-Habitat on administrative matters at major UN inter-agency meetings.

## 2.7 MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION

UN-Habitat's activities are both normative and operational or project-related. Normative activities focus on helping countries implement the Habitat Agenda by enhancing their capacities through training programmes, guidance on how to improve their policies and legislation in key areas relating to human settlements, promoting good urban management governance and

providing up-to-date information and research on global trends in urban and human settlements. Operational/project activities, on the other hand, put into practice the policies and strategies identified by the normative programmes. They provide operational assistance, demonstrate that the concepts and policies are workable, and establish a knowledge base of best practices and lessons learned. At present, UN-Habitat has project cooperation programmes and projects under execution in 75 countries and more than 30 other countries benefit from support from global or regional programmes. The approach adopted by UN-Habitat for implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW) 2010-2011 gave an increased emphasis on the use of projects as the preferred delivery modality, to ensure better management and control over activities and resources.

At the global and regional level, the most important activities are the Slum Upgrading programme, the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations programme, the Water and Sanitation Programme and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) project. At the country level, the most important (in terms of budget size) current projects/programmes are the Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction programme in Bangladesh, the UN Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service in Somalia, the Learning for Community Empowerment Programme in Afghanistan and the Urban Development and Housing Improvement Programme in Chad. Countries that receive most project- or programme-related assistance are Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Chad, Serbia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## 2.8 FUNDING

Since attaining its programme status in 2002, UN-Habitat has experienced significant increases in income, from USD 118 million (for the biennium 2002-2003) to USD 311 million (for the biennium 2008-2009). It derives the majority of its income from voluntary contributions

received from member states and inter-governmental donors. The organization also receives contributions from other partners such as local authorities, the private sector, multilateral organizations and other United Nations system organizations. The main sources of funding are:

1. Regular Budget allocations (8 percent) which are approved by the General Assembly against the assessed contributions of Member States (core funding);
2. General Purpose contributions (20 percent) towards the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. These are non-earmarked voluntary contributions from governments for which the budget allocations are sanctioned by the UN-Habitat

Governing Council and are allocated as per the agreed priorities (core funding);

3. Special Purpose contributions (27 percent) which are earmarked voluntary contributions from Governments and other donors for the implementation of specific activities included in the approved Work Programme (non-core funding);
4. Technical Cooperation contributions (45 percent) which are earmarked from governments and other donors for the implementation of specific technical country-level activities.

In 2011, UN-Habitat (Headquarters) employed about 400 staff members.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE EVALUATION FUNCTION IN UN-HABITAT

### 3.1 MANDATE

The Secretary-General's Bulletin "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation" (SGB/2000/8), commonly referred to as PPBME, mandates the conduct of evaluation in the UN-Habitat decision-making cycle. The monitoring and evaluation of organization-wide work is coordinated and managed by the MEU.

The unit was created in 1997, following the OIOS recommendation that UNCHS should establish a mechanism for performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting that is separated from the planning function. To give it independence from substantive divisions, it was decided to locate the Unit in the Office of the ED and with a mandate to report to the Governing Bodies (CPR and GC) through the ED.

The MEU is distinct from the Monitoring and Research Division (MRD), which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the overall outcome and impact of interventions in achieving the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

### 3.2 EVALUATION POLICY

UN-Habitat does not have a formal evaluation policy. However, since the implementation of the MTSIP, the culture of evaluation has been evolving. This can also be attributed to the current reforms implemented in UN-Habitat. An Evaluation Policy, aligned to UNEG Norms and Standards, is under preparation.

### 3.3 MEU FUNCTIONS AND PRINCIPLES

The MEU performs two distinct but

complementary functions of managing and coordinating both the monitoring and evaluation functions. The focus is on monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the biennium work programme and conducting and managing programme and project evaluations. Since 2003, several initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the evaluation aspect. A charging system (two percent levy on projects) was introduced to support information management activities (70 percent) and evaluation activities (30 percent) and additional staff have been assigned to the MEU. The MEU operates according to a Monitoring and Evaluation Manual and the Programme and Project Cycle Management Manual but, as mentioned above, there is no official Evaluation Policy. Earlier reviews have recommended a separation of the M&E functions, to make the evaluation function more independent and to adhere to UN best practices.

### 3.4 WORK PROGRAMME

Evaluations are planned and prioritized during the preparation of the PoW of the organization. The Evaluation Work Programme basically consists of all mandatory evaluations requested by the Governing Council, other intergovernmental bodies and donors as well as evaluations requested by senior management. Due to limited resources and the heavy monitoring burden, it is not possible for the MEU to evaluate all UN-Habitat interventions as mandated. The present MEU 2010-2011 evaluation plan covers roughly 10 projects out of the 140 projects ending in the biennium. Selection of projects to be evaluated is made based on the following criteria:

- Evaluations requested by the governing bodies;
- Evaluations requested by donors;

- Evaluations requested by senior management;
- Evaluations that are of strategic relevance to the overall performance of the organization;
- Evaluations that are interdivisional and cross-cutting to all sub-programmes; and
- Project and programmes that have innovative value and replicability.

The list of proposed evaluations is discussed by senior management in order to come up with the final list. The agreed list is endorsed by the ED and forms the Evaluation Plan for the biennium.

### 3.5 KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE MEU

The MEU conducts various types of evaluation and monitoring tasks, in accordance with the requirements of the United Nations General Assembly, the UN-Habitat Governing Council and the Norms and Standards for evaluation of the United Nations system. The MEU's activities comprise:

- Preparing biennial performance reports;
- Reporting on activities, findings and recommendations of monitoring and evaluations;
- Maintaining a tracking system to follow up on strategic and mandatory evaluations;
- Consulting with senior management on evaluation plans and decision-making on evaluation topics and schedules; setting standards, developing and disseminating methodology and providing technical guidance by reviewing and making recommendations on draft terms of reference, proposed methodology and draft final evaluation reports;
- Building awareness and developing learning materials, tools, and resource packages to support monitoring and evaluation functions;
- Enhancing monitoring and evaluation competences among staff members;
- Promoting use of evaluation findings in

planning and programming;

- Supporting the harmonization of the evaluation function of UN-Habitat and ensuring that monitoring and evaluation in UN-Habitat contribute to and remain consistent with UN reforms.

Since the start of the implementation of the MTSIP in 2008, 24 evaluations have been conducted. The list of the evaluations is attached in Annex 5. In addition, 10 progress reports on the implementation of the MTSIP for 2008-2013 have been prepared. These 10 reports do not include the IMDIS reporting and performance reports on the biennium work programme, which have, in addition, been a substantial part of the workload of the MEU.

From interviews with line management and MEU staff, the panel learned that sometimes mid-term and/or terminal project evaluations are carried out at the regional or country levels without the involvement or knowledge of the MEU. Information on the number, scope and quality of these evaluations is not available. Currently, there is no single-repository of evaluations or a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons to improve organizational learning and systemic improvement.

### 3.6 FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The Governing Council approves the budget of the MEU as part of UN-Habitat's overall budget. Table 1 provides a summary of allocated financial resources in the last seven-year period.

Over the years, the allocated budget of the MEU has evolved considerably and mainly due to the introduction of the two percent levy mentioned under section 3.3 and increased MTSIP funds allocated for monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions. In principle, the budget covers MEU staff, administration and travel costs and the cost of consultant services. Information on how much and on which activities the available resources

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	75	100	150	250	760	925	1,110

Source: Overview of UN-Habitat Evaluation Functions. MEU briefing document. October 2011

have actually been spent could not be collected by the peer review panel.

The MEU budget allocations mentioned above are exclusive of project evaluation resources derived from project budgets and which are under the control of the project managers/task officers concerned. No exact figures are available but these extra budgetary resources are estimated to cover the bulk of project evaluation costs. As of the start of MTSIP, the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, division directors, subprogramme coordinators and other senior staff contribute to the implementation of the evaluation programme by ensuring that evaluations are provided for in the budgets of all new projects or programmes.

Over the years, the MEU has been strengthened considerably. From one professional and one administrative assistant in 2000, the Unit has grown to three professional staff (one chief, one human settlements officer, one programme officer), one national officer, one volunteer, one programme assistant and one secretary. Training opportunities exist for MEU staff, including formal seminars and workshops, coaching and peer group learning (through UNEG) and, to a certain extent, through self-study.

There is collaboration with the UNEP Evaluation Office. For example, the peer review of the MTSIP conducted in 2010 had two staff members from the UNEP Evaluation Office on its panel.

### **EVALUATION CULTURE**

In the past, little attention was given to developing systematic approaches to monitoring and evaluation, perhaps in part because of limited budgets. Failure of substantive branches to generate baseline data in relation to the problem, situation or

capacity gaps to be addressed, along with the absence of performance indicators or benchmarks, makes it difficult to undertake systematic monitoring and generate reliable information that could feed into evaluation. Such gaps in information reduce the value of evaluations as learning tools while making it impossible to achieve accountability for results.

In 2010, the MTSIP introduced significant improvements in management systems and tools to further enhance results-based management. Improvements in programme alignment and cohesion forged linkages and synergies between global and country-level activities. A key area of innovation was an integrated monitoring and reporting system to capture knowledge and lessons learned at country level and from the collective experience of Habitat Agenda partners and other UN organizations.

### **3.7 EVALUATION PROCESS**

The UN-Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Manual (2003) provide the basic methods and processes for conducting evaluations. It is the responsibility of the MEU, in consultation with the project/task manager and organizations involved, to draft the Terms of Reference (ToR) for planned evaluations. The ToR lay down the expectations of and requirements for the evaluation and represent the basis of the contract with the evaluators. The MEU, in most cases, commissions the evaluation to external evaluators and is responsible for its management.

When the ToR and the budget are agreed upon, three or more suitable consultants for the evaluation are identified. It is general practice for MEU to ask the project/task manager and other UN-Habitat colleagues and institutions to make suggestions regarding possible candidates. The



MEU screens and makes the final decision on the selection of the evaluators. Once the evaluation team is selected, a final evaluation cost estimate is prepared. The MEU facilitates the exercise and assists with related logistics. The process is complicated (and cumbersome) as the contracting of evaluation consultants has to be sanctioned by both the UNON and UN-Habitat.

The evaluators report to the MEU and other stakeholders for an initial review and discussion of the findings and conclusions. The MEU forwards all comments received on the draft report to the evaluator(s) for review and possible incorporation. Once the evaluation is completed the MEU prepares an evaluation quality assessment.

Following the completion of a formal project or programme evaluation, senior management (OED and heads of divisions) considers the recommendations contained therein and prepares a management response. Subsequently, the MEU provides the template for the management response including an implementation plan for accepted recommendations. The plan specifies for each recommendation: whether it will be implemented; who is responsible for its implementation; the expected completion date; and what actions have already been taken or should be taken. Where a recommendation is rejected, an explanation is to be provided as to why the recommendation cannot be implemented, and

where appropriate an alternative course of action is specified. A compliance procedure is used to track the progress made on implementing the recommendations. Divisions are required to report to the MEU on the status of implementation of recommendations.

All evaluations are shared with relevant stakeholders and published on the UN-Habitat external website.

### **3.8 PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION**

The mandate and functioning of the MEU was discussed in the April 2005 Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat. The report commented on the independence of the unit (reporting to the ED), the uneven quality of reports in the absence of a common methodological framework and, at that time, the very limited resource level (one professional and one support staff). It recommended strengthening the unit by adding one post. The 2010 MTSIP Peer Review observed that the MTSIP had given increasing importance to strategic planning and performance monitoring. The MTSIP Peer Review included, among its high priority recommendations, the establishment of a separate and independent evaluation function.

## CHAPTER 4

# INDEPENDENCE

The peer review panel assessed the independence of UN-Habitat's evaluations and evaluation systems against the following UNEG Norms:

- 2.1 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations in the UN system are responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation and ensuring that the role and function of evaluation are clearly stated, reflecting the principles of the UNEG Norms for Evaluation, taking into account the specificities of each organization's requirements.
- 2.2 The governance structures of evaluation vary. In some cases, it rests with the Governing Bodies in others with the Head of the organization. Responsibility for evaluation should be specified in an evaluation policy.
- 2.3 The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations are also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent fashion. They are also responsible for ensuring that evaluators have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career development.
- 5.1 Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. In the event that interested parties have different views, these are to be reflected in the evaluation analysis and reporting.
- 5.3 The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning of evaluation, the formulation of mandate and scope, the selection of evaluation teams, the conduct of the evaluation and the formulation of findings and recommendations.
- 6.1 The evaluation function has to be located independently from the other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. It needs to have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation.
- 6.2 The Head of evaluation must have the independence to supervise and report on evaluations as well as to track follow-up of management's response resulting from evaluation.
- 6.3 To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future.
- 6.4 Evaluators must have no vested interest and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.
- 6.5 The independence of the evaluation function should not impinge the access that evaluators have to information on the subject of evaluation.

The main findings of the peer review panel are summarized below.

#### **4.1 GENERAL**

The UN-Habitat management endorses the concept of an independent evaluation function and the need for UN-Habitat to report on results. The introduction of MTSIP has, for instance, increased the importance of the monitoring and evaluation function. There is general agreement among those interviewed that the visibility and importance of the MEU has increased over the years but, at the same time, the accountability and learning needs of the organization are increasing far beyond the capacity of the MEU to respond.

#### **4.2 INDEPENDENCE AND IMPARTIALITY OF THE EVALUATION OFFICE AND EVALUATORS**

In the absence of an Evaluation Policy document, the independence of the evaluation function is presently formalized in the Evaluation Manual, which was approved by the Executive Director in 2003, disseminated and implemented throughout the organization and posted on the Internet. In Section V of the Manual, the evaluation function is described as being “independent of operational sub-programmes to ensure freedom from undue influence and to facilitate objective assessment of programme and project activities without interference”.

##### **INDEPENDENCE OF THE MEU**

A new Monitoring and Evaluation Manual is presently under development and will provide the policy framework and overall guidance on the positioning and role of the evaluation function. To some extent, the MEU is presently guided by Monitoring and Evaluations Guidelines, issued in 2003. It is also following evolved practice and its independence is safeguarded by the ED and donors. There is also a serious attempt on behalf of the Chief of the Unit to align the work to the

UNEG Norms and Standards.

The MEU is located in the Office of the Executive Direction and Management, independently from substantive operational Divisions/Units, to facilitate independent and impartial evaluation processes. It was purposely located in the Office of the ED to give it independence from operational divisions and freedom from undue influence. Governance is defined as the chief of the MEU reporting to the Head of the Organization, although, in praxis, this mainly takes place through the chief of the Executive Director's Office. Presently, the ED is responsible for ensuring the structural and functional independence of the evaluation function while the behavioural independence is ensured by the chief of the MEU.

The evaluation function can thus be considered as structurally independent as it is separated from those responsible for the design and implementation of the projects and programmes being evaluated. There is, however, less independence when evaluations concern policies such as the gender mainstreaming evaluation or the recent peer review of the implementation of MTSIP. Moreover, its independence is not fully functional, as the MEU unit does not have full independence in planning, funding and reporting on evaluations. The panel assesses, however, that there is behavioural independence in terms of following the UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluation and minimizing conflict of interests and ensuring impartiality.

Coming back to the structural independence of the evaluation function, the panel took note of plans for restructuring within the ongoing reform programme and the intention to create a new organizational layer between Executive Direction and the foreseen Evaluation Office; namely an Executive Office. This would mean that there would no longer be any direct reporting line between the Evaluation Office and the Executive Director thus the structural independence of the evaluation function would decrease.



The MEU performs two distinct functions of managing and coordinating monitoring and evaluation. The fact that the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation is merged under one unit is an independence issue and not in line with best practices within the UN of handling these two distinct management functions by separate entities. It also needs to be pointed out that in addition to evaluations managed by the MEU there are some evaluations managed by decentralized functions and in these cases the structural independence is uncertain.

The panel also learned that the chief of the MEU is a member of the Project Review Committee and finds that this is not in line with UNEG Norms and UN best practices of having approval and evaluation functions clearly separated. The panel recognizes, however, the need to have learning from evaluations and evaluation recommendations considered in the design and approval process of new phases or projects and to ensure the evaluability of new projects/programmes. For many UN agencies, this is being safeguarded through evaluation staff member serving as advisers in appraisal or approval bodies rather than as full members.

Moreover, the disproportionately large amount of time that MEU staff presently dedicates to monitoring activities poses a risk to evaluation being marginalized. The decision of UN-Habitat management to separate the two functions in the near future is thus endorsed by the panel and will remove potential bias.

#### **INDEPENDENCE OF EVALUATORS**

Evaluation staff is selected through a competitive recruitment process that includes advertising the post externally, screening the candidates and interviews. The final decision, from an established shortlist of recommended candidates, is made by the ED. Recruitment procedures are consistent with UN Secretariat Rules and Regulations. No case of management exerting pressure on evaluation staff was found.

UN-Habitat applies the UNEG instrument ‘Code of Conduct for Professional Evaluators’. Staff and consultants who undertake evaluations for the organization sign this code. Also, the standard contract provisions in the UN Secretariat are designed to safeguard integrity and confidentiality. The MEU adheres to the general rule of conduct that its staff may not evaluate a project or programme if they have been responsible for its design, implementation or supervision. The panel found no evidence of staff acting as task managers or being assigned to manage or conduct evaluations of projects or policies in which they had been previously involved. However, the panel also came across cases when large-scale evaluations had been managed by the technical branches and where the principles of impartiality were not adhered to. Staff and consultants reported receiving good support from the chief of the MEU in order to safeguard their independence.

With regard to the independence and impartiality of the external evaluators, the ToRs have standard provisions to prevent conflict of interest. All consultants are required to report any previous or current association or relationship with the stakeholders involved in the evaluation issue or with the project or programme being evaluated. The panel found no case of conflict of interest. This was confirmed by the Internet survey of Regional Offices and National Programme Managers which revealed that 29 percent of the respondents completely agreed with the statement that for evaluations undertaken by the MEU, “evaluators worked independently” while 71 percent somewhat agreed. As to the statement that “evaluator(s) worked impartially” there was complete agreement of 57 percent of the respondents while 43 percent somewhat agreed. In some cases consultants are selected outside the MEU by programme divisions or decentralized functions. It was interesting to note that independence of evaluators was considered to be stronger when the evaluations were undertaken by the MEU as compared to those being commissioned by a Regional Office; in the latter case 11 percent of the respondents did

not agree to the statement that “evaluator(s) worked independently” at the same time there was a higher percentage (45 percent) who completely agreed with the statement. Moreover, 22 percent did not agree with the statement that “evaluator(s) worked impartially” while the percentage of respondents who completely agreed with the statement was about the same as for the MEU-managed evaluations.

The panel reviewed the ways in which the tender and recruitment procedures, for consultants, have been implemented and notes that the MEU gives due attention to the issue of impartiality. Consultants are selected based on competencies detailed in the ToRs for the evaluation. Selection is done on a competitive basis consistent with UN Secretariat Rules and Guidelines for recruiting individual consultants. A database of evaluation consultants does not exist as such but MEU uses the general consultant roster established by human resources. On one or two occasions, consultants have been identified and contracted by the donor, however, without compromising the independent character of the evaluation process. The Unit continues to pay attention to the issue of independence and impartiality while the evaluation is in progress by exercising quality control of the consultants’ work and their reports.

### **4.3 INDEPENDENCE IN PROGRAMMING EVALUATIONS**

The decision and subsequent Memoranda of the Executive Director, of March 2003, on Funding for Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Information Dissemination, was a positive step and increased the availability of monitoring and evaluation funds. However, as the 30 percent allocation from the two percent levy on projects were to benefit both monitoring and evaluation (and records on actual allocation and use for evaluation were found to be lacking), it was not possible to assess to what extent the evaluation function had actually benefited from this provision. The rather low coverage of evaluations actually conducted and related gaps in coverage indicate that resources have been insufficient and

that evaluation has not been primarily targeted. Moreover, internal statistics reveal a rather small percentage of UN-Habitat’s programmatic interventions being evaluated and that the percentage of projects being evaluated is quite low. To this should be added the small human resource base (i.e., three professional staff) of the MEU, which makes it impossible to manage a large volume of evaluations. In the view of the panel, the evaluation function does not have adequate resources to enable the evaluation function to operate efficiently and with due independence.

In the programming of evaluations, the mandatory project or programme level evaluations are considered as well as the evaluations requested by donors. When it comes to more strategic evaluations these are chosen in consultation with management, thus not independently and the MEU does not really have the resources to select and initiate evaluation they themselves consider to be of strategic importance or needed for accountability or learning reasons. Moreover, it is not only the MEU that initiates and manages evaluation, the panel found that evaluations are indistinctively commissioned by the MEU, donors, programme units and decentralized functions. This has the effect that the evaluation work programme is largely determined outside the MEU.

Thus, the independence to identify and carry out strategic and thematic evaluations seems limited due to the absence of human as well as financial resources. In principle, the Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to the evaluation function but in the opinion of the panel this has not yet been the case.

Towards the end of each year the MEU sends out a memo inviting all divisions to propose a list of evaluations they would like to be conducted in the following year. The list of proposals is discussed with the divisions and a final list established. The MEU prepares and submits a biannual evaluation plan and the plan is discussed with senior management in order to come

up with a priority list, which is subsequently endorsed by the ED. However, the implementation of the evaluation plan is flexible, not assured financially and what is actually evaluated is often subject to the buy-in of donors. In view of the few strategic, thematic and country evaluations actually implemented and considering the size of UN-Habitat, the level of resources at the disposal of the MEU appears to be insufficient.

Resource constraints also make the existing rule of evaluating all interventions unrealistic and sub-optimal. From interviews it is understood that donor demand is a key factor driving the evaluation process. The overall effect of the donor-driven process of evaluations is a strong emphasis on project and cross-cutting evaluations but also the availability of additional financial resources.

In the view of the panel, the evaluation programming involves a sufficient level of stakeholder participation which, in turn, is conducive to stakeholders' 'buy-in' or acceptance of evaluations. Division directors are asked, before the beginning of each year, to provide a list of projects coming to a close and, therefore, becoming subject to terminal evaluation. No cases were reported of stakeholders blocking an evaluation or refusing to cooperate.

Evaluation ToRs are generally clear and detailed regarding the evaluation criteria and questions, and the overall evaluation approach. Draft ToRs are shared with stakeholders, prior to initiation of all evaluations. Comments are reviewed and where necessary changes are made to the ToR. Where an inception report is prepared, it is shared with the evaluation stakeholders for comments. Evaluation ToRs articulate evaluation methods in some detail.

#### **4.4. INDEPENDENCE IN CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS**

The findings presented below relate, principally, to evaluations managed by the MEU.

A system is in place to ensure that evaluations are conducted by independent evaluators and to make sure that evaluations are free from bias. The use of the UNEG Code of Conduct reduces the risk of impartiality and conflict of interest. Behavioural independence is safeguarded through a transparent evaluation process, methodological rigour and the involvement of professional, most often, external evaluators. Evaluation reports generally present both achievements and challenges, incorporate views of various stakeholders and appear to be impartial. The MEU gives due attention to ensuring that impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process.

The evaluation staff and consultants interviewed by the panel confirmed that they were able to carry out their assignment without interference from MEU staff or UN-Habitat management. Evaluation consultants have, furthermore, generally been able to discuss their findings and recommendations with staff and management and with other stakeholders without undue interference. No case of undue interference or intrusion was reported. There is also no indication that the perceived independence of the MEU has led to restricting access to information. In general, deficiencies in available information appear to stem from the absence of reliable monitoring data and baselines.

All draft reports, including key evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, are shared with stakeholders. The MEU keeps records of the feedback provided by the stakeholders. It is up to the independent evaluators to accept or refuse comments. From interviews it was learned that comments of stakeholders are generally taken into consideration by the evaluation teams, however, without compromising the independence and impartiality of the evaluation process.

A management response system is in place under the responsibility of the MEU. The MEU tracks the follow-up of evaluation and the acceptance of recommendations but does not report on this on an annual basis.

#### 4.5 INDEPENDENCE IN REPORTING ON EVALUATIONS

The MEU has full discretion in submitting directly its reports for comments at the appropriate level of internal decision-making, i.e., the Executive Director or line managers. Finalized reports are cleared by the ED or the Chief of the Executive Office before dissemination and posting on the Internet. Evaluation reports also go through a senior management review and recommendations are being discussed by senior management before being finalized. Presentations to the senior management on findings and recommendations of evaluation are usually done by the Deputy Director or the chief of the Executive Office. These procedures for clearing reports are not in line with UN best practices and compromise the independence of the MEU. Moreover, dissemination of evaluation reports internally takes place without a forwarding memo from the head of MEU, which reduces the possibility of the MEU to highlight pertinent issues.

Reporting to the governing bodies, the Governing Council and the CPR takes place through the Office of the ED and not directly by the MEU, thus the results of evaluations are not communicated directly by the MEU to senior management nor governing bodies. It is often the chief of the Executive Office, who presents evaluation reports to the CPR. It should be noted, however, that UN-Habitat higher management was positive towards the introduction of a reporting line, of the evaluation function, directly to the CPR.

A quality assurance system exists and the effectiveness of the MEU's quality assurance process was assessed. Each evaluation produced by a consultant is formally reviewed at both draft and final stages. Evaluations are only accepted and a final payment made if the quality of the report is rated by the MEU as being moderately satisfactory or above. All evaluation reports are fully disclosed and made publicly available on the UN-Habitat website.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSIONS ON INDEPENDENCE

Regarding the independence and impartiality of the MEU, evaluation managers, evaluators, processes and evaluation outputs it is concluded that:

- The evaluation function at UN-Habitat is not fully independent.
- The separation of the evaluation function from monitoring was in the process of being achieved but the resource endowment had not yet been decided upon.
- There is an urgent need to finalize and approve UN-Habitat's Evaluation Policy.
- By having a direct reporting line to the ED, structural independence of the evaluation function is ensured and this should be maintained. The intention of UN-Habitat management to bring the MEU (renamed into Evaluation Office) under the authority of a Head of a foreseen Executive Office is not in line with UNEG Norms.
- Financing of evaluation has improved, however, there is little transparency in the way resources for evaluation are allocated and used and the amounts actually available and used for evaluation are not known.
- There is no indication of any hindrance of MEU staff or consultants to conduct their work in an independent and impartial manner.
- Evaluations are conducted in an independent manner; when necessary, this independence is championed by the leadership of the Chief of the MEU.

Regarding the independence and impartiality in the programming, implementation and reporting of evaluations it is concluded that:

- The current evaluation programming process lacks a systematic approach and predictable resources, which is detrimental to ensuring evaluation coverage in line with strategic priorities and learning needs.
- A system is in place whereby the MEU ensures the independence of evaluations by

means of transparency in the conduct of evaluations, methodological rigour and full disclosure of evaluation reports.

- Due attention is being paid to precluding conflict of interest, both when the evaluators are selected as well as during the evaluation by controlling the impartiality of the evaluation process and of the reports. The panel found no cases of conflict of interest.
- There is no direct reporting line to governing bodies.
- No structural obstacles preventing access to available information have been reported. In interactions with the panel, MEU staff demonstrated a high degree of intellectual independence and freedom to express different views.



## CHAPTER 5

# CREDIBILITY

The panel assessed credibility of the evaluation function by reviewing the processes through which evaluations are planned, managed and conducted and by assessing the quality of evaluation reports and the ways they are disclosed. Reference points for the assessment are the following UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System:

- 3.1 Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; and a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.
  - 2.5 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations are responsible for appointing a professionally competent Head of the evaluation, who in turn is responsible for ensuring that the function is staffed by professionals competent in the conduct of evaluation.
  - 4.2 The evaluation plan can be the result of a cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics. The purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders. The plan for conducting each evaluation must ensure due process to ascertain the timely completion of the mandate, and consideration of the most cost-effective way to obtain and analyse the necessary information.
  - 5.2 Impartiality increases the credibility of evaluation and reduces the bias in the data gathering, analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Impartiality provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflict of interest.
- 8.1 Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data-collection, analysis and interpretation.
  - 8.2 Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.
- 9.1 Each organization of the UN system should have formal job descriptions and selection criteria that state the basic professional requirements necessary for an evaluator and evaluation manager.
  - 9.2 The Head of the evaluation function must have proven competencies in the management of an evaluation function and in the conduct of evaluation studies.
  - 9.3 Evaluators must have the basic skill set for conducting evaluation studies and managing externally hired evaluators.
- 10.1 Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus

building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

- 10.2 Evaluation Terms of Reference and reports should be available to major stakeholders and be public documents. Documentation on evaluations in easily consultable and readable forms should also contribute to both transparency and legitimacy.

The panel notes that the MEU considers credibility a crucial prerequisite for living up to international and especially UNEG standards. It pays great attention to quality assurance all along the evaluation process. In particular, attention is given to impartiality. The MEU also has solid methods for data collection and analysis in place. In general, the panel observed a high level of satisfaction among staff and senior management about the ways in which the Unit manages its evaluations and about the quality of evaluation reports. In section 5.1 below, observations are made on the evaluation process while section 5.2 provides information on the quality of the evaluation reports and section 5.3 provides general conclusions on credibility.

## **5.1 CREDIBILITY OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

### **EVALUATION POLICY AND FUNCTION**

While UN-Habitat management recognizes that evaluation is a means through which it can obtain systematic and meaningful feedback about the successes and shortcomings of its interventions, there is, as mentioned above, no official evaluation policy document providing clarity to UN-Habitat staff, partners, donors and other stakeholders about the organization's evaluation objectives, the types of evaluations that are required and relevant and the organization's approach for conducting, disseminating and using evaluations. From interviews with UN-Habitat management, the panel found that the importance and urgency of having such a document is underestimated. In the view of the

panel, finalization of the Evaluation Policy would not only be an important step in informing and engaging all stakeholders on how evaluation may further contribute to fulfilling the organization's governance responsibilities but also demonstrate the organization's commitment to evaluation, RBM and learning.

The panel also observes that the credibility of UN-Habitat's evaluation function is severely affected by the limited resources at its disposal resulting in low evaluation coverage of programmes and projects. As mentioned earlier, only some seven percent of projects ending in the current biennium period are independently evaluated through the MEU, leaving as much as 93 percent not evaluated or evaluated through decentralized bodies. Some projects are evaluated in the host country at the initiative of national counterparts, donors or regional offices but the actual percentage of decentralized evaluations is not known nor the quality of these evaluations.

### **COMPETENCY AND CAPACITY OF STAFF AND EVALUATION CONSULTANTS**

Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including external evaluators and UN-Habitat staff, confirmed that the MEU is seen as consisting of a professionally competent team. The posts of the current Head and of other evaluation professionals were externally advertised. The formal qualifications for the MEU Head and other professional evaluation staff include criteria for appropriate technical and managerial competencies and experience. These criteria are applied during the selection process, which follows standard UN-Habitat recruitment procedures. Further development of evaluation skills of MEU staff relies mainly on internal peer support within the MEU and participating in UNEG events. Job descriptions exist for all MEU staff members. Competence and performance are assessed during the Skills Inventory and Competency Assessment (RCA).

As most evaluations are carried out by external consultants, credibility of evaluations also

depends on the competence of the evaluation team leaders and their team members. With respect to the consultants contracted, no major issues were identified. The selection process of consultants is credible and transparent and takes place according to UN-Habitat recruitment and procurement rules and regulations. Both the selection process of evaluation teams and their actual competence are generally satisfactory but the absence of an evaluation consultant roster was noticed. Knowledge of UN, evaluation and the evaluation topic is prioritized and the fact that evaluation reports were assessed as credible and based on evidence, by the peer panel and interviewees, confirms that evaluators are selected based on competence.

A system is in place to ensure impartiality and evaluators must abide by the UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluation. The fact that two evaluations of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, one managed internally and the other externally commissioned, came to the same conclusion is a proof of professionalism and rigour in conducting and managing evaluations.

The panel considers, however, that there is room for improvement in terms of a better balance between international and national evaluation consultants. Finally, the present staffing level and the uncertainty as to whether the future staffing and funding will be adequate for the Evaluation Office to carry out its function in a credible manner is a concern.

## **PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS**

A biannual evaluation plan is developed in consultation with managers and in conjunction with the organization's work programme. It is an indicative document that is updated annually. At the end of the day, what is being evaluated depends on the amount of funding made available and the interest (and funding) of donors.

The MEU is responsible for a balanced and impartial evaluation design as laid down in the

ToRs for evaluations. The impression of the panel is that the evaluability is severely and consistently constrained by the absence of reliable monitoring data and the inadequate functioning of UN-Habitat's RBM system. Addressing the lack of data within the RBM systems is not, however, within the mandate of the MEU.

The MEU ensures there is stakeholder participation in the design of the evaluation. Stakeholders, principally at Headquarters, are consulted in the early stages of the formulation of the ToR which allows them to contribute to the design of the evaluations and flag important issues. The evaluation process, including the conduct and reporting (interim and final), is transparent and consultative. The main problems encountered were the lack of resources (time and funds) for field missions; sometimes compromises in relation to data collection seem unavoidable. Generally, however, the panel agrees with perception of interviewees that the evaluations are conducted with rigour and professionalism and the reports were assessed to be of adequate quality or better. Also at the decentralized level, there is an overall perception, according to the survey, that evaluators are independent and impartial and that the evaluations are based on robust evidence.

The fact that some evaluations had been managed outside the MEU and directly by programme management (decentralized evaluations) has already been raised as an independence issue and can also be seen as a credibility issue, however, there was no indication of credibility having been compromised.

Towards the end of the evaluation process, workshops or presentations are organized to foster discussion on the evaluation's findings and to promote their dissemination. All reports are circulated to stakeholders for factual validation and comments.

Despite these procedures, a number of interviewees pointed out that the MEU does not always fully engage with partner country stakeholders regarding the programming of evaluations, their



design and findings. There is a perception that the decision to undertake an evaluation is mainly unilateral. It appears from the survey that most decentralized offices have not been involved in MEU evaluations in the last five years. When stakeholders at a regional level and in partner countries have been involved it was mainly as informants or to disseminate results. Their participation in the design, the ToR or even in commenting on evaluation reports is low if not inexistent. The level of involvement is higher for evaluations undertaken by regional offices. When feedback on evaluations is asked from regional and country offices, the imposed time limit to produce such feedback was often found to be unrealistic.

The survey indicates that the information flow on evaluations from regional and country offices and towards Headquarters seems to work better than the reverse. Information gathered by the panel at the HQ does not corroborate this finding and, of course, perceptions in the Headquarters and the field can differ on these issues.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

As mentioned above, the MEU considers that ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and the evaluation reports is an important aspect of its work. It assesses the quality of the evaluation process and evaluation reports by means of a checklist. A final report that does not score 60 percent of the criteria specified in the checklist is not accepted. The unit deals adequately with comments, suggestions and disagreements voiced by the stakeholders. It asks the evaluation teams to handle feedback and comments in an appropriate manner but at the same time recognizes the independent position of these teams. Well-substantiated comments and disagreements of line management and other stakeholders are usually taken into consideration by the evaluation teams and addressed when finalizing their reports. It is the panel's impression that where conflicting views and disagreements with findings have occurred, the situation has been handled appropriately.

In terms of the evaluation process, the panel's impression is that credibility might be further enhanced if the MEU were to make greater use of internal, external and mixed expert panels or reference groups as 'sounding boards' at key milestones in all of its evaluations. The MEU has normally not resorted to this in the past due to the costs involved. All evaluation reports of the MEU are publicly available on the UN-Habitat's external website but a clear policy on disclosure and dissemination is not in place. As mentioned above, the panel noted some ambiguity as to whether evaluations reports were cleared by senior management or not.

The credibility of the evaluation process is also reflected by the ways in which management deals with the findings of the respective evaluations in terms of using them to improve policy and practice as well as to account for successes and failures. This topic is discussed in Chapter 6 on utility.

## **5.2 CREDIBILITY OF EVALUATION REPORTS**

The panel reviewed the evaluation reports of the MEU and assessed their quality by means of a checklist based on the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (2010). The checklist consists of two parts. First, it lists the general characteristics of the evaluation concerned: the subject evaluated, the evaluation conducted, the actors concerned, and the final report. Subsequently, the quality of the evaluation is examined by applying three quality criteria: validity, reliability, and usability. Each of these criteria is operationalized through specific indicators, which in turn are further specified into components.

The panel did not have detailed information on the background of the policies, programmes and projects or institutions evaluated, or of their context. It was thus difficult to reach definite conclusions about the quality (and credibility) of the evaluation reports on the basis of a review of their content. Where possible, the assessment

of selected evaluation reports was triangulated with information from interviews with evaluation team members and UN-Habitat staff.

The panel has the following observations regarding the overall quality of the evaluation reports:

- Reports have Executive Summaries providing a good overview of the information contained in the report and ToRs are included in the annexes.
- The introductory chapters of the evaluation reports dealing with the evaluation purpose, and scope of work are informative and generally their quality is good. The criteria applied in the respective evaluations are clearly spelled out, as prescribed, and described in the respective ToRs. In almost all cases the 'traditional' evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact have been applied.
- The evaluation's design, methodology and tools applied in the assessment are generally sufficiently described.
- Gender issues were not found to be systematically mainstreamed in evaluation ToRs nor in evaluation reports.
- Most reports provide an indication of restrictions and challenges confronting the conduct of the evaluation. This allows the reader to form an opinion about the value of the evaluation's findings and conclusions.
- The reports sometimes indicate that the evaluation teams have faced time and manpower constraints which prevent them from cross-checking (or triangulating) different sources of information, including the points of view of different stakeholder groups.
- The reports are balanced in way of presenting both positive and negative findings.
- They are factual, clear and easy to understand.
- Taking into account the issues mentioned above, the quality of the analysis and

formulation of conclusions and recommendations is generally adequate. The majority of the evaluation reports provide substantiated findings and conclusions which are supported by a sufficient level of analysis.

- The recommendations generally appear to be supported by analyses and conclusions.

The panel also invited UN-Habitat line management and Regional Office staff to give their opinion of the quality and credibility of the evaluation reports. The impression gained from these interviews and from the Internet survey is that the staff and management of UN-Habitat consider the evaluation reports to be credible. On a few occasions, lack of hard data to support the findings was mentioned. Also, the issue that reports present a large number of non-prioritized recommendations was raised. It was, in addition, pointed out that evaluators do not always take into account the financial and organizational implications when formulating their recommendations. On the other hand, the large percentage of recommendations accepted is a proof of report credibility.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS ON CREDIBILITY**

#### **ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS:**

- Given the crucial importance of an informed and engaged management in securing the credibility of evaluation, the finalization and establishment of a policy basis for the UN-Habitat evaluation function is urgently needed.
- The present and future staffing and funding levels of the evaluation function is a concern as it affects its capacity to implement its mandate in a credible manner.
- The credibility of UN-Habitat's evaluation function is affected by the low scope and coverage of the current evaluation programme. Many projects and areas of strategic interest are excluded.
- The quality of evaluations managed by

decentralized bodies is not known.

- The MEU has based its approach and methodologies on UN evaluation principles and evaluation quality standards published by UNEG.
- The overall competence and professionalism of the MEU is adequate.
- The selection process of internal and external evaluators is credible, transparent and appropriate. Sufficient attention to an adequate balance between international experts and those from partner countries in evaluation teams is not always ensured.
- The evaluation process is adequate and transparent and ensures stakeholder involvement in all stages of the evaluation. The MEU does pay attention to and promote active stakeholder involvement.
- The MEU is strongly committed to ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and evaluation reports and a quality assurance system is in place.
- A system is in place to ensure that the evaluation teams have the professional competence and impartiality to guarantee the credibility of evaluation reports.
- Adequate arrangements are made for

handling stakeholders' factual validation, comments and conflicting views regarding evaluation findings, while at the same time safeguarding the credibility of the evaluation findings.

#### **ON THE EVALUATION REPORTS:**

- Reports were found to be of adequate or good quality and in line with existing benchmarks.
- Reports are logically structured, containing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations and are free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. They bring up positive as well as negative findings and seem impartial.
- Conclusions and recommendations are generally in line with evidence provided in the reports.
- In general, reports are presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensive; provide a clear explanation of the evaluation objectives and scope and an explanation of the evaluation criteria.
- The reports describe the evaluation methods including any limitations in a transparent manner.

## CHAPTER 6

# UTILITY

The panel assessed the utility of UN-Habitat's evaluation function by reviewing the use of evaluations for decision-making at the policy, strategic and programme/project levels and the way evaluation promotes RBM. It also reviewed the system for follow-up to evaluation recommendations. Reference points for the assessment are the following UNEG Norms for Evaluation:

- 1.3 Evaluation feeds into management and decision-making processes, and makes an essential contribution to managing for results. Evaluation informs the planning, programme, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. It aims at improving the institutional relevance and the achievement of results, optimizing the use of resources, providing client satisfaction and maximizing the impact of the contribution of the UN system.
  - 2.6 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluation contributes to decision making and management. They should ensure that a system is in place for explicit planning for evaluation and for systematic consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in evaluations. They should ensure appropriate follow-up measures including an action plan, or equivalent appropriate tools, with clear accountability for the implementation of the approved recommendations.
  - 2.7 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that there is a repository of evaluations and a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons to improve organizational learning and systemic improvement. They should also make evaluation findings available to stakeholders and other organizations of the UN system as well as to the public.
- 4.1 Proper application of the evaluation function implies that there is a clear intent to use evaluation findings. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work has to be carefully done. Evaluations must be chosen and undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information. Planning for evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of the evaluation function and/or the organization as a whole. Annual or multi-year evaluation work programmes should be made public.
  - 4.2 The evaluation plan can be the result of a cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics. The purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders. The plan for conducting each evaluation must ensure due process to ascertain the timely completion of the mandate, and consideration of the most cost-effective way to obtain and analyse the necessary information.
- 10.1 Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.
  - 10.2 Evaluation Terms of Reference and reports should be available to major stakeholders and be public documents. Documentation on evaluations in easily consultable and readable form should also contribute to

both transparency and legitimacy.

- 12.1 Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.
- 12.2 There should be a systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies.
- 12.3 There should be a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization.
- 13.1 Evaluation contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement. Evaluations should be conducted and evaluation findings and recommendations presented in a manner that is easily understood by target audiences.
- 13.2 Evaluation findings and lessons drawn from evaluations should be accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. A repository of evaluation could be used to distil lessons that contribute to peer learning and the development of structured briefing material for the training of staff. This should be done in a way that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system, through a clear dissemination policy and contribution to knowledge networks.

## 6.1 GENERAL

In order to contribute to informed decision-making, accountability and learning, evaluations must be perceived as credible, relevant and useful, and be presented clearly and concisely. Thus, the MEU needs to produce quality and timely

evaluations, catering for organizational accountability and learning needs but their actual utility and use also depend on the use UN-Habitat staff, senior management and other stakeholders make of evaluations and their willingness to learn from them.

As mentioned earlier, UN-Habitat management has taken important steps to foster a culture conducive to using evaluation results by showing an interest and actively engaging in the follow-up to evaluations, and by accepting the implications of evaluation results for management and accountability. Generally, the panel found that evaluation results are used within UN-Habitat.

## 6.2 PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation Manual clarifies the purpose of evaluation within UN-Habitat. It provides information on the objective(s) of evaluation and its potential use, its guiding principles, the evaluation process and the different steps and the processes for follow-up of recommendations. The majority of UN-Habitat staff and managers seem familiar with the purpose of evaluation and its potential contributions. However, interviews revealed that the intent of evaluation is not always clear and that, for instance, the distinction between self-evaluations and independent evaluations was not obvious.

In relation to independent evaluations, the review of evaluation ToRs by key evaluation stakeholders and the related feedback ensures that the intent of evaluations is clear and that pertinent issues and strategic areas are being addressed. Moreover, a transparent process and consultations with major stakeholders facilitate ownership of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The interviews conducted during the course of the peer review revealed a certain tension between the learning and accountability functions of evaluation. At UN-Habitat, the learning function seems to take precedence now although it is recognized that both functions are needed for a performing organization.



### **6.3 USE OF EVALUATION FOR DECISION-MAKING AT THE POLICY AND PROGRAMME LEVELS**

A system for following up on evaluations is in place and functioning at project and programme levels. From interviews with staff and management, as well as from the analysis of the content of management responses to the different evaluations, it becomes, however, apparent that the impact of evaluations on decision-making at the policy level is limited. The bulk of the MEU evaluations are programme or project evaluations and, for these, evaluation findings very often feed into the design of new phases of programmes/projects. At the same time, it is recognized that project evaluations could more broadly feed into the normative work of the organization.

Thematic evaluations have been rare but noteworthy is the one on gender, which influenced policy and structural decisions and, in particular, the peer review of the implementation of UN-Habitat's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2008-2013) that was considered strategic and highly useful. This review is widely acknowledged to have provided valuable insights into thematic and cross-cutting issues, to have been useful for decision-making at the programme and policy levels and to have provided relevant information to UN-Habitat's senior management. Engaging in this type of strategic evaluations provides opportunities for reinforcing the role of the evaluation function and for enhancing its relevance and utility.

The MEU has made commendable efforts to make evaluations widely available in the organization and has put emphasis on engaging different stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. On the whole, it has been rather successful in convincing senior management of the need to proactively promote the use of evaluations for learning and to enable evaluation results to be fed into the corporate knowledge and management system. There is still room for improvement, however, and in particular, the potential of

evaluation as a key tool for accountability and for assessing performance of the organization's work or of individuals does not seem to be fully tapped.

The evidence collected during the peer review allows the panel to confirm that project and senior management are satisfied with the work of the MEU and the information generated by past evaluations. At the same time, the limited evaluation coverage means that the full potential of evaluation has not been tapped and that an increased coverage of the evaluation work plan and a more systematic alignment to strategic learning needs would make its contribution even more important. A more systematic identification of evaluation subjects and evaluation planning might have captured areas such as UN-Habitat's humanitarian response and emergency-related work, which currently constitute a major part of the project portfolio.

Limited staff resources have also affected the Unit's ability to distill and disseminate lessons learned and to produce overall synthesis documents, which could feed into policy discussion and strategic development. Reviewing individual evaluation findings, assessing them, and using them as a database for knowledge management and for organizational learning have not figured high on the MEU agenda. There is also an absence of an evaluation report dissemination policy. The utility and actual uses of evaluations are likely to become more effective when a well-articulated dissemination and communication strategy is put in place. Such a strategy might also foster more ownership of evaluation and learning from evaluations among internal and external stakeholders.

Though the MEU organizes presentations to discuss evaluation findings and makes the reports available on the web and as printed copies, the Unit does not follow the practice of many evaluation units of development agencies of producing separate summary reports or evaluation briefs. The evaluations make efforts to assess results at outcome and impact levels, however it has often not been possible to do proper impact

evaluations as these are costly and normally need to be planned in advance, including the establishment of baselines and counterfactuals. The panel found that there have sometimes been unrealistic expectations from donors in relation to demands for impact evaluations at a late stage of project/programme implementation.

#### **6.4 MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT USERS OF EVALUATIONS**

There are several categories of potential users of evaluations in UN-Habitat, ranging from senior management to lower-level staff, both at headquarters and in the field and to representatives of member countries.

On the whole, the line managers find that the evaluations conducted are useful in helping them take necessary and informed decisions in project formulation and implementation processes. In fact, the panel was impressed by the high level of utility of evaluations at UN-Habitat and the fact that evaluations are generally perceived as having influence and as being useful. Evaluations are discussed in the Senior Management Team and sometimes in the CPR and this also contributes to the high level of utility of individual evaluations.

However, the utility of the evaluation function could be enhanced by a more consultative evaluation planning process and a more cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics in order to cover entities and themes of strategic importance to the organization. Moreover, the small number of thematic and strategic evaluations limits the influence of evaluation on policy and strategy and thus the utility at the level of higher management. Also, the absence of country-level evaluations was noticed. Furthermore, while there have been useful cross-cutting evaluations related to gender and youth, there is scope for more thematic evaluations, for instance, in areas such as slums upgrading, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction.

Judging from the ToRs, the evaluations tend to be primarily focused on internal stakeholders and less so on other categories of users such as the governing bodies, the wider public, national counterparts or other partner country institutions. Major donors demand (and finance) evaluations in order to satisfy their own accountability and information needs and to promote the use of evaluation. In this respect, the trust fund evaluations have catered for donor needs. There have been few requests for evaluation from other categories of member states.

From some interviews, it transpired that the evaluations are perceived as top-down approaches and that the engagement of stakeholders in the planning/design stages and in the follow-up to recommendations has been variable. The participation of decentralized programme units at regional and national levels in evaluations managed by the MEU is mainly concentrated on providing needed documentation and responding to questionnaires or participating in interviews. The utility of evaluations at the country level and as seen by national governments and other national stakeholders was not assessed by the peer review team.

#### **6.5 CONTRIBUTION OF EVALUATION TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

Knowledge management can be understood to comprise a range of practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute and enable adoption of new insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge either embodied in individuals or internalized through organizational processes. In order for the evaluation function to contribute to knowledge management, the information generated by evaluations needs to be credible, digestible, usable and accessible.

At UN-Habitat, evaluations are commissioned and used by programme units but cross-organizational fertilization or learning from evaluations by other programme units is still limited. UN-Habitat and the MEU need to put

mechanisms in place to enhance knowledge management and use evaluation findings and good practices to improve organizational performance and feed into a system-wide RBM system.

While all evaluation reports managed by the MEU are available in readable form and posted on the Intranet and Internet and are thus publicly available, there is no overall repository for evaluation and decentralized evaluations are not easily found.

## **6.6 CONTRIBUTION TO MANAGING FOR RESULTS**

The panel has found that UN-Habitat shares the difficulties faced by most development cooperation agencies (and others) in putting in place effective systems to manage for results. The capacity of the evaluation function to produce evidence-based impact information is currently hampered by the weaknesses of UN-Habitat's RBM system. The weakness of the results-based management system is not unique to UN-Habitat; the challenges are the same for many other development cooperation agencies and for bilateral donors. The panel strongly endorses current efforts to develop a more robust RBM system which has the potential to contribute more to the business process cycle, with increased management 'take-up'.

At the same time, the majority of the evaluations conducted focused on results and contributed to RBM. Furthermore, the MEU has played a vital and constructive role in promoting RBM within the organization.

## **6.7 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO EVALUATIONS**

The utility of the evaluation function and the use of evaluations by the different stakeholders can also be assessed by how governing bodies, senior management and programme/project managers react to evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The panel endorses the current evaluation management response mechanism that has led to a consolidated procedure establishing the objective, ownership and oversight, for follow-up activities and actions to be taken once the recommendations have been reviewed and responded to. As such, the management response formally relates to decision-making at both the operational and management levels. Most of the management responses include a motivated reaction (positive or negative) to the evaluation's recommendations and give reasons why certain recommendations will or will not be acted upon. A high percentage of UN-Habitat evaluation recommendations are accepted which is a proof of the utility the evaluations. Follow-up action is monitored on a regular basis by the MEU but there is no regular or systematic reporting on the acceptance or implementation of recommendations.

## **6.8 CONCLUSIONS ON UTILITY**

The panel's conclusions on utility can be summarized as follows:

- The panel notes that the evaluations conducted at UN-Habitat have been useful and had influence and especially at project and programme levels.
- The base of understanding of evaluation and its importance is reasonably strong in UN-Habitat and has been getting stronger in recent years. However, there is still room for improving the evaluation culture in UN-Habitat whereby management and staff fully accept the potential role and utility of evaluations.
- The utility of the evaluation function is affected by its small resource base and presently the amount and scope of evaluations is too limited and the absence of strategic and thematic evaluations is a major shortcoming.
- The utility of evaluation can be enhanced by a more representative coverage of the UN-Habitat programme of work.
- The capacity of the evaluation function to provide credible information for learning and



accountability purposes remains a challenge in view of the current weaknesses in RBM. UN-Habitat is, however, making progress in strengthening its RBM system and the MEU has played an important role in this respect.

- Opportunities are missed to distil and disseminate learning systematically and there is an absence of synthesis reports and lessons learned documents.
- Access to reports and findings through the UN-Habitat website is satisfactory but dissemination of evaluation findings could be more proactive.
- UN-Habitat management has taken steps towards institutionalizing the practice of developing a formal management response system to evaluation recommendations and the system is working satisfactorily. A high percentage of evaluation recommendations are accepted.

## CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation is increasing in importance within UN-Habitat and has been influential in promoting organizational change and in validating or changing orientations of programmes and projects. The ongoing reform process with increased emphasis on results and accountability is expected to further strengthen its position. The panel recognizes the efforts that have been made to strengthen the evaluation function over the last decade but the function is still under-resourced, not fully independent and there is confusion between the roles of monitoring and evaluation.

The fact that the function is imbedded in a unit responsible for both monitoring and evaluation is not in line with best UN practices. Moreover, the panel finds that evaluation is marginalized, with the majority of its time and resources devoted to monitoring. The commitment of senior management and governing bodies to reinforce the evaluation function and the recent decision to separate evaluation and monitoring functions are seen as positive and promising.

There is, however, presently no Evaluation Policy in place and no clear definition of roles and responsibilities for planning, managing and conducting evaluations. There has nevertheless been progress towards functional independence and the fact that the MEU is located in the Office of Executive Direction and Management with a direct reporting line to the Executive Director is an indication of this. The panel is hesitant, however, towards the intention of UN-Habitat management to bring a future Evaluation Office under the authority of a to-be-created Executive Office, thus no longer directly reporting to the Executive Director. By doing so, the evaluation function would not be located independently

from the Executive Office' line management function anymore, as required under the UNEG Norms.

It is, furthermore, a concern to the panel that the allocation of resources for evaluation is not done in a transparent and independent manner and that the MEU does not have an evaluation budget under its control; thus, has limited independence in the choice of evaluations. This negatively affects the possibility of the MEU to independently decide on its evaluation programme. In practice, the evaluation work programme is largely determined outside the MEU by donors, the CPR or senior and programme management. This limits the functional independence of the MEU.

As evaluations are indistinctly commissioned by the MEU, programme units, donors and by decentralized functions, there is little clarity in the total number of evaluations conducted. Moreover, as mentioned above, independence is constrained by inadequate volume and transparency in the allocation and control over human and financial resources. The number of evaluations conducted is small and the coverage not fully representative of UN-Habitat's mandate and activities. Few strategic evaluations are conducted and the same can be said for country evaluations, evaluations of emergency type interventions, evaluations of normative work and evaluations of pilot interventions.

The credibility of the evaluation function is affected by the limited scope and coverage of its work, the limited amount of resources available for evaluation and the fact that there are areas of UN-Habitat that are not sufficiently evaluated. Moreover, there have been few synthesis reports or reports highlighting lessons learned.

No annual evaluation report is being issued thus no systematic reporting on recurrent and strategic findings, lessons learned and implementation of recommendations is available. The panel is concerned that future staffing and other resource endowments will continue to be insufficient for the evaluation function to carry out its mandate in an independent and credible manner.

Furthermore, the evaluation function's independence would be strengthened if findings and recommendations of evaluations were communicated directly by the Head of the MEU to the Executive Director, senior management and the CPR.

The peer review panel considers the current practice of externally recruited professional staff for the evaluation function appropriate. Moreover, evaluations are conducted transparently, are assessed as impartial and are conducted independently without interference from management and found to comply with UNEG Norms and Standards. Stakeholder consultation takes place at various parts of the process but do not always engage all stakeholders, for instance, with stakeholders in recipient countries, including government counterparts. Evaluators are found to be competent and the evaluation process was found to be rigorous and encompass good guidance from the MEU. A proper roster of evaluation consultants is not yet in place but a quality assurance system exists and is functioning in a satisfactory manner. Gender issues were not found to be systematically mainstreamed in evaluation ToRs or evaluation reports.

The panel finds that, generally, evaluations conducted are credible, balanced, of good quality and the evaluations that have been carried out have been found to be useful. A high percentage of the recommendations are being accepted and implemented. There is a management response system in place to follow up on acceptance and implementation of recommendations. Evaluations are found to have influence in that findings, and recommendations often feed into the planning of new project or programme phases. However, as there is little attention to strategic level

evaluations, there is marginal influence on policy and strategy formulation. This affects institutional credibility and limits the usefulness of evaluation for accountability and learning. The potential contribution to knowledge management and organizational learning remains untapped.

All evaluation reports are circulated to internal and external stakeholders for review of accuracy and technical quality of the information. Where there is disagreement on issues or conflicting views the comments or dissenting views are published with the report. All evaluation reports are available on the UN-Habitat website.

In conclusion, the panel finds that, presently, the evaluation function of UN-Habitat cannot be considered as fully independent, that its credibility is satisfactory but, as the scope and coverage is limited, the utility in terms of providing evaluative evidence of UN-Habitat results and for accountability and learning is not fully tapped.

## **7.2. OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are linked to the findings and conclusions presented earlier in this report. The aim of the recommendations is to suggest ways to improve and amend aspects of UN-Habitat's evaluation function and where the peer panel has identified problems or shortcomings in relation to UNEG's Norms and Standards or to established evaluation practice.

The recommendations are presented under the headings of a number of issues and not along the three main dimensions for the review in order to make it easier to see to which area or function a recommendation should be applied. While all recommendations are in principle directed to the management of UN-Habitat, i.e., the Executive Director, they are for practical reasons addressed to either UN-Habitat or to the MEU, depending on whether it concerns an overall, corporate issue or an issue that can be addressed by the MEU directly. The overall rationale of the below recommendations is the identified need to have

an independent and credible evaluation function that clearly contributes to the accountability needs of various stakeholders, including Member States and to organizational learning.

### **EVALUATION POLICY**

Given the crucial importance of an enabling environment for evaluation and in ensuring that the role and function of evaluation is clearly stated and reflecting the principles of the UNEG Norms, an Evaluation Policy, aligned to UNEG Norms and Standards, needs to be finalized and endorsed by governing bodies. The policy should spell out guiding principles, roles and responsibilities and types of evaluations to be conducted.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEU AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND GOVERNING BODIES**

UN-Habitat management is invited to reconsider its plan to bring the MEU (renamed into Evaluation Office) under the authority of the to-be-created Executive Office. A direct reporting line to the Executive Director should preferably be kept to avoid interference with the line management functions of the Executive Office. A direct reporting line should also be established to the CPR.

### **FOSTERING AN EVALUATION CULTURE**

The panel advises the ED and senior management to further promote conditions in which independent and high-quality evaluation is regarded as a basic instrument for learning and to strengthen accountability to the general public and partners. Advantage should be taken of basic requirements for evaluation which are already in place and build on initiatives currently undertaken to foster results-based management in the programme and project cycles. More specifically, the panel recommends that evaluation feed into higher-level policy-making and strategic planning.

### **STAFFING OF MEU**

The panel recommends that the human resource

capacity of the MEU should be further strengthened and adequately provided for in a future Evaluation Office in order to cover increasing demand for and increased coverage of evaluations and provide additional support to learning, strategy formulation and knowledge management. The panel recommends a minimum of three professional staff (two international and one national post) for the evaluation office. The panel also invites UN-Habitat management to explore how the authority of the Chief of the evaluation function could be reinforced.

### **EXTERNAL EVALUATION EXPERTISE**

The evaluation function should develop a proper evaluation consultant roster. More attention should be paid to ensuring an adequate balance between international and national experts. For larger evaluations, the panel recommends the establishment of external evaluation reference groups to enhance the quality and credibility of the evaluations.

### **BUDGET FOR EVALUATIONS AND EVALUATION WORK PLAN**

The UN-Habitat management should ensure that the evaluation function has an adequate level of predictable budgetary resources to operate in an independent and credible manner. For transparency and accountability purposes, the evaluation function should be endowed with budgeted annual evaluation work plans and have resources specifically allocated to various types of evaluations under its control. All projects and programmes above a minimal level (to be decided by UN-Habitat management) or considered strategically important should have a mandatory budget for evaluation.

### **EVALUATION COVERAGE**

The Evaluation Office needs to do more in terms of volume and coverage. To the extent that the evaluations are decentralized to the field, the MEU should be informed of their process and results and be involved with their quality

assurance. Consideration should be given to identifying explicit criteria for selection of evaluations that ensure good coverage of UN-Habitat's work programme and thematic priorities and include strategic evaluations, evaluations of sub-programmes and country-level evaluations. There should also be rules for independent evaluations of projects, for instance related to the project budget or the project's strategic importance.

### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

UN-Habitat should, both in principle and in practice, establish a clear division of responsibility between the evaluation function and the organization's line management regarding the management of the response to evaluation system. Efforts to document and track management response to evaluations, including those managed outside the MEU, should be further strengthened and synthesis reports developed on an annual basis tracking, among other things, acceptance and implementation of recommendations.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

The MEU should establish mechanisms to systematically harvest lessons from existing evaluations. An annual evaluation synthesis report

should provide information on main findings and learning stemming out of evaluations. The panel recommends, however, that the Head of the MEU or of a future Evaluation Office rather serves as an adviser to a programme/project review or approval committee than as a member with decision-making powers, in order to minimize bias and conflict of interest. Information on generalized findings and recommendations of evaluations should be discussed at the Senior Management Board and in the CPR.

### **MONITORING AND RBM**

UN-Habitat should give high priority to address the disconnect between its various results-focused data collection, reporting and monitoring tools in order to foster the availability of reliable data that can be used by the organization, including its evaluation function.

The results-based management workshop held together with representatives of Norway, Spain and Sweden on 14 October, 2011 recommended that a strategy should be prepared to strengthen feedback links between the three RBM pillars of planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective learning, performance improvement, management decision-making and policy. This recommendation, aligned to the MTSIP road map, is endorsed by the peer review panel.



## Annex 1

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## PROFESSIONAL PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTIONS UNEP AND UN-HABITAT

### THE PEER REVIEW

Both agencies requested a peer review at the same time, which led to the decision to undertake the two reviews in parallel. This approach has the advantage of one peer panel working with both evaluation offices – sharing a common approach, using resources efficiently by saving travel cost, etc., – and organizing joint peer exchanges during the review. The latter are an important part of the peer review process and should benefit from a larger participation of peers. At the same time, separate reports for each agency will be produced. The panel composition is indicated below.

### PURPOSE OF THE PROFESSIONAL PEER REVIEW

The peer review will provide an assessment of the evaluation offices of UNEP and UN-Habitat against UNEG norms and standards. In preparation of the Approach Paper, the evaluation functions of both Agencies were asked to specify the purposes the peer review should serve, which can be summarized as follows:

- Enhancing knowledge about, confidence in and use of evaluations by governing bodies and senior management of each of the two agencies, and in the case of UN-Habitat lead to informed decisions about increasing the independence of the evaluation office;
- Improving evaluation policy and practice, including stronger planning and resourcing of evaluation (also based on greater appreciation and support of evaluation by governing bodies and senior management), by sharing good practice and building internal capacities and confidence of the evaluation offices, including taking informed decisions about monitoring activities at UN-Habitat; and

- Supporting the evaluation offices' efforts to ensure greater acceptance and integration of evaluation findings in each agency's performance management system.

The peer review will also be shared with the DAC and UNEG members as feedback on the quality of evaluation in two UNEG members.

### CORE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The peer review will apply three core criteria, which are defined in the UNEG Framework as follows:

- “Independence of evaluations and evaluation systems. The evaluation process should be impartial and independent in its function from the process concerned with the policy making, the delivery, and the management of assistance. A requisite measure of independence of the evaluation function is a recognized precondition for credibility, validity and usefulness. At the same time, each review should bear in mind that the appropriate guarantees of the necessary independence in a particular organization will differ according to the nature of its work, its governance and decision-making arrangements, and other factors. Moreover, most organizations aim to encourage the active application and use of evaluations at all levels of management, meaning that systemic measures for ensuring the necessary objectivity and impartiality of this work should receive due attention. Indicators of independence are broadly covered by UNEG Norms N6.1 – N6.5 and amplified in the relevant Standards.”
- “Credibility of evaluations. The credibility of evaluation depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the degree of transparency of the evaluation

process. Credibility requires that evaluations should report successes as well as failures. Recipient countries should, as a rule, fully participate in evaluation in order to promote credibility and commitment. Whether and how the organization's approach to evaluation fosters partnership and helps build ownership and capacity in developing countries merits attention as a major theme. Indicators of credibility are mainly treated in UNEG Norms N5.1 – N5.3, N8.1, N9.1 – N9.3 and N11.1 – N 11.5 and amplified in the relevant Standards.”

- “Utility of evaluations. To have an impact on decision-making, evaluation findings must be perceived as relevant and useful and be presented in a clear and concise way. They should fully reflect the different interests and needs of the many parties involved in development cooperation. Importantly, each review should bear in mind that ensuring the utility of evaluations is only partly under the control of evaluators. It is also critically a function of the interest of managers, and member countries through their participation on governing bodies, in commissioning, receiving and using evaluations. Indicators of utility are mainly treated in UNEG Norms N2.6, N1.3, N 8.2, N10.1, N 10.2 and N.12.1 – N12.3 and amplified in the relevant Standards.”

The evaluation offices of both Agencies agree that all three criteria are relevant to the exercise and inter-related. They emphasized the greater importance of utility and credibility and requested that related criteria (such as impartiality, transparency and effectiveness of evaluation) are reviewed as well. In the case of UNEP, it was emphasized that its mandate is primarily at global and regional level, thus the provision of the second criteria and its focus on “ownership and capacity in developing countries” would need to be seen from this perspective.

The core criteria are elaborated and adapted for this peer review in the Normative Framework which relates these criteria to questions about

(a) what is evaluated; (b) how are evaluations conducted: and (c) how are evaluation findings communicated, with the ultimate aim to determine whether the evaluation offices are effective and what role the core criteria play (support, hinder, etc.).

## **APPROACH, SCOPE OF AND LIMITATIONS TO THE PEER REVIEW**

The peer review uses a ‘reduced’ framework, which according to the UNEG Framework applies to ‘small organizations’, where smaller evaluation functions do not justify the time and financial resources that previous peer reviews have required. This choice was made by the agencies concerned and agreed to by the joint DAC-UNEG Task Force on Peer Reviews. It means that the scope of the peer review and associated work by the peer review panel are reduced, but should still render a credible assessment of the evaluation functions.

A review matrix takes each of the questions in the Normative Framework and identifies assessment criteria (which in many cases are qualitative), key informants, documented sources for the assessment, and preliminary discussion points for peer exchanges.

The peer review will emphasize the discussion among peers and with key informants, both to obtain information. In particular, the panel will engage with:

- Stakeholders in governing bodies and senior management to gain an understanding of their concerns and share with them insights into good evaluation practice to address the expressed intention to enhance their knowledge and confidence in evaluation;
- Peers in the evaluation function to learn about the evaluation functions’ practices and discuss additional or alternative ways to address common evaluation challenges. These peer discussions will be organized to bring together the evaluators from both of the Nairobi-based agencies and the panel

members to broaden the exchange and foster learning across both offices and those from which the panel members originate;

- Operational management to gain an understanding of their concerns and discuss issues related to learning and implementing evaluation recommendations (in particular related to UNEP). Operational management includes stakeholders outside Nairobi, who will be consulted by telephone conference prior to the panel's work in Nairobi, and possibly involved in a group discussion (via conference call) with Nairobi-based colleagues.

The review of documents will be limited.

The peer review's strongest limitation is that it cannot undertake an independent assessment of the technical credibility and independence of evaluation work conducted by UNEP and UN-Habitat; to do so, it would require technical advisers with relevant expertise, which would be difficult to accomplish and go beyond a peer review of the evaluation function. Instead, the panel will address this question by reviewing and determining whether the evaluation processes of each of the Agencies include adequate measures to ensure the best possible technical credibility and independence of evaluations.

## PANEL COMPOSITION

A number of important considerations were taken into account when composing the panel membership: (i) relevant professional experience, in particular evaluation but also normative work; (ii) independence – to avoid any potential or alleged conflict of interest or partiality, the panel members do not have any close working relationship to UNEP and/or UN-Habitat that might influence the panel's position and deliberations; and (iii) level of seniority of panel members.

The combination of these criteria together with the voluntary nature of serving on the panel resulted in the following composition:

- Margareta De Goys, Director, Evaluation

Group, UNIDO, (Chair)

- Dominique de Crombrugghe, Special Evaluator for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
- Oscar A. Garcia, Senior Evaluator, United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office

Roland Rodts, will function as adviser to the peer panel. His participation is financed by the Government of Belgium.

## REVIEW PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

The peer review will follow a simplified approach, as suggested in the UNEG Framework, and entail only one visit to Nairobi. UNEP and UN-Habitat stakeholders at global, regional and country level will be consulted by phone and not through country visits. It is expected that a total of 25 working days per panel member is required to participate in the peer review, including preparatory reading, interviews (Nairobi and by phone), peer discussions in Nairobi, travel time and report writing.

Preparation of the Approach Paper	July/August 2011
Self-assessment by UNEP and UN-Habitat Evaluation Offices	September 2011
Preparatory Reading	September 2011
Conference call interviews with stakeholders not based in Nairobi	3 to 14 October 2011
Meetings in Nairobi, including report writing	17 to 28 October 2011
Finalization of draft report and circulation for comments	5 December 2012
Report revisions and finalization of report	January 2012

Conference calls with stakeholders not based in Nairobi will be organized by the chair of the peer panel and involve the panel members and adviser. The peer review process will be

supported by the evaluation offices of UNEP and UN-Habitat who will be responsible for setting up all necessary appointments, making available documentation as requested, and facilitating the panel contacting other stakeholders.

## **REPORTING**

A separate report will be prepared for each of the Agencies. The reports will be submitted in electronic format and printed by each Agency concerned depending on their needs for hard copies.

Each report will be prepared by the peer panel and its adviser and issued as their independent assessment. The draft reports will be shared with

stakeholders for comments and revised to correct factual errors and make other changes, as the panel sees fit.

The final reports will be shared by the agencies with its stakeholders and posted on their respective Internet sites. It will also be shared with the UNEG and DAC Secretariats for distribution and posting on respective Internet sites.

Resources

The panel members will participate without receiving remuneration and cover the cost of their travel and conference call participation. The cost of the adviser will be covered from the contributions of Belgium.

## Annex 2

# NORMS FOR EVALUATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

## UNEG - APRIL 2005

### INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 The present document outlines the norms that are the guiding principle for evaluating the results achieved by the UN system, the performance of the organizations, the governing of the evaluation function within each entity of the UN system, and the value-added use of the evaluation function.
- 0.2 Complementary to these norms, a set of standards has been drawn from good practice of UNEG members. These will be revised from time to time and are intended to be applied as appropriate within each organization.

### N1 – DEFINITION

- 1.1 Purposes of evaluation include understanding why, and the extent to which, intended and unintended results are achieved, and their impact on stakeholders. Evaluation is an important source of evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance. Evaluation is also an important contributor to building knowledge and to organizational learning. Evaluation is an important agent of change and plays a critical and credible role in supporting accountability.
- 1.2 An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining

the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the UN system and its members.

- 1.3 Evaluation feeds into management and decision-making processes, and makes an essential contribution to managing for results. Evaluation informs the planning, programme, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. It aims at improving the institutional relevance and the achievement of results, optimizing the use of resources, providing client satisfaction and maximizing the impact of the contribution of the UN system.
- 1.4 There are other forms of assessment being conducted in the UN system. They vary in purpose and level of analysis, and may overlap to some extent. Evaluation is to be differentiated from the following:
  - a. Appraisal: A critical assessment of the potential value of an undertaking before a decision is made to implement it.
  - b. Monitoring: Management's continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking to track compliance with the plan and to take necessary decisions to improve performance.
  - c. Review: The periodic or ad hoc often-rapid assessments of the performance of an undertaking, that do not apply the due process of evaluation. Reviews tend to



emphasize operational issues.

- d. Inspection: A general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.
  - e. Investigation: A specific examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.
  - f. Audit: An assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes.
  - g. Research: A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge.
  - h. Internal management consulting: Consulting services to help managers implement changes that address organizational and managerial challenges and improve internal work processes.
- 1.5 Evaluation is not a decision-making process per se, but rather serves as an input to provide decision-makers with knowledge and evidence about performance and good practices. Although evaluation is used to assess undertakings, it should provide value-added for decision-oriented processes to assist in the improvement of present and future activities, projects, programmes, strategies and policies. Thus, evaluation contributes to institutional policy-making, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness.
- 1.6 There are many types of evaluations, such as those internally or externally-led, those adopting a summative or formative approach, those aimed at determining the attribution of an organization's own action or those performed jointly to assess collaborative efforts. An evaluation can be conducted in

an ex-post fashion, at the end of phase, mid-point, at the terminal moment or real-time. The evaluation approach and method must be adapted to the nature of the undertaking to ensure due process and to facilitate stakeholder participation in order to support an informed decision-making process.

- 1.7 Evaluation is therefore about *Are we doing the right thing?* It examines the rationale, the justification of the undertaking, makes a reality check and looks at the satisfaction of intended beneficiaries. Evaluation is also about *Are we doing it right?* It assesses the effectiveness of achieving expected results. It examines the efficiency of the use of inputs to yield results. Finally, evaluation asks *Are there better ways of achieving the results?* Evaluation looks at alternative ways, good practices and lessons learned.

## **UN2 – RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVALUATION**

- 2.1 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations in the UN system are responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation and ensuring that the role and function of evaluation are clearly stated, reflecting the principles of the UNEG Norms for Evaluation, taking into account the specificities of each organization's requirements.
- 2.2 The governance structures of evaluation vary. In some cases, it rests with the Governing Bodies in others with the Head of the organization. Responsibility for evaluation should be specified in an evaluation policy.
- 2.3 The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations are also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent fashion. They are also responsible for

ensuring that evaluators have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career development.

- 2.5 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations are responsible for appointing a professionally competent Head of the evaluation, who in turn is responsible for ensuring that the function is staffed by professionals competent in the conduct of evaluation.
- 2.6 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluation contributes to decision-making and management. They should ensure that a system is in place for explicit planning for evaluation and for systematic consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in evaluations. They should ensure appropriate follow-up measures including an action plan, or equivalent appropriate tools, with clear accountability for the implementation of the approved recommendations.
- 2.7 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that there is a repository of evaluations and a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons to improve organizational learning and systemic improvement. They should also make evaluation findings available to stakeholders and other organizations of the UN system as well as to the public.

### **N3 – POLICY**

3.1 Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; and a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.

### **N4 – INTENTIONALITY**

- 4.1 Proper application of the evaluation function implies that there is a clear intent to use evaluation findings. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work has to be carefully done. Evaluations must be chosen and undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information. Planning for evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of the evaluation function and/or the organization as a whole. Annual or multi-year evaluation work programmes should be made public.
- 4.2 The evaluation plan can be the result of a cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics. The purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders. The plan for conducting each evaluation must ensure due process to ascertain the timely completion of the mandate, and consideration of the most cost-effective way to obtain and analyse the necessary information.

### **N5 – IMPARTIALITY**

- 5.1 Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. In the event that interested parties have different views, these are to be reflected in the evaluation analysis and reporting.
- 5.2 Impartiality increases the credibility of evaluation and reduces the bias in the data gathering, analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Impartiality provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflict of interest.
- 5.3 The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning of evaluation, the formulation

of mandate and scope, the selection of evaluation teams, the conduct of the evaluation and the formulation of findings and recommendations.

## **N6 – INDEPENDENCE**

- 6.1 The evaluation function has to be located independently from the other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. It needs to have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation.
- 6.2 The Head of evaluation must have the independence to supervise and report on evaluations as well as to track follow-up of management's response resulting from evaluation.
- 6.3 To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future.
- 6.4 Evaluators must have no vested interest and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.
- 6.5 The independence of the evaluation function should not impinge the access that evaluators have to information on the subject of evaluation.

## **N7 – EVALUABILITY**

- 7.1 During the planning stage of an undertaking, evaluation functions can contribute to the process by improving the ability to evaluate the undertaking and by building

an evaluation approach into the plan. To safeguard independence this should be performed in an advisory capacity only.

- 7.2 Before undertaking a major evaluation requiring a significant investment of resources, it may be useful to conduct an evaluability exercise. This would consist of verifying if there is clarity in the intent of the subject to be evaluated, sufficient measurable indicators, assessable reliable information sources and no major factor hindering an impartial evaluation process.

## **N8 – QUALITY OF EVALUATION**

- 8.1 Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data-collection, analysis and interpretation.
- 8.2 Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

## **N9 – COMPETENCIES FOR EVALUATION**

- 9.1 Each organization of the UN system should have formal job descriptions and selection criteria that state the basic professional requirements necessary for an evaluator and evaluation manager.
- 9.2 The Head of the evaluation function must have proven competencies in the management of an evaluation function and in the conduct of evaluation studies.

9.3 Evaluators must have the basic skill set for conducting evaluation studies and managing externally hired evaluators.

## **N10 – TRANSPARENCY AND CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- 10.2 Evaluation Terms of Reference and reports should be available to major stakeholders and be public documents. Documentation on evaluations in easily consultable and readable form should also contribute to both transparency and legitimacy.

## **N11 – EVALUATION ETHICS**

- 11.1 Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity.
- 11.2 Evaluators must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them.
- 11.3 Evaluators must be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work.
- 11.4 In light of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.
- 11.5 Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Also, the evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of

individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.

## **N12 – FOLLOW-UP TO EVALUATION**

- 12.1 Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.
- 12.2 There should be a systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies.
- 12.3 There should be a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization.

## **N13 – CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE BUILDING**

- 13.1 Evaluation contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement. Evaluations should be conducted and evaluation findings and recommendations presented in a manner that is easily understood by target audiences.
- 13.2 Evaluation findings and lessons drawn from evaluations should be accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. A repository of evaluation could be used to distil lessons that contribute to peer learning and the development of structured briefing material for the training of staff. This should be done in a way that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system, through a clear dissemination policy and contribution to knowledge networks.

## Annex 3

# NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

	<b>Independence</b>	<b>Credibility</b>	<b>Utility</b>
<b>Question 1: What is evaluated?</b>	<p>Is the evaluation work programme affected by the independence of the evaluation function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ who decides/ approves;</li> <li>▪ what is included/ excluded;</li> <li>▪ how representative is the evaluation work programme</li> <li>▪ what is budgeted for?</li> <li>▪ For UN-Habitat: does the combination of monitoring and evaluation functions affect the independence of evaluation?</li> </ul>	<p>Is the credibility of the evaluation function affected by what is included/excluded in the evaluation work programme?</p> <p>Does the credibility of evaluation affect what can be included in the evaluation work programme?</p>	<p>Does the evaluation work programme focus on/ include subjects that are critical/most useful to stakeholders?</p> <p>For UN-Habitat: does the combination of monitoring and evaluation functions affect the utility of evaluation?</p>
<b>UNEG Norms</b>	<p>N2.3: the governing bodies/heads of organizations are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence</p>		<p>N1.3: evaluation feeds into management and decision-making processes and makes an essential contribution to managing for results</p> <p>N2.6: a system for explicit planning of evaluation and systematic consideration of findings</p> <p>N4.1 and N4.2: intent to use, selection of evaluation work is carefully done, the evaluation plan can be the result of a cyclical or purposive selection</p>



<p><b>Question 2: How are evaluations conducted?</b></p> <p><b>UNEG Norms</b></p>	<p>Are evaluations conducted transparently and impartially?</p> <p>Do evaluations safeguard against conflict of interest?</p> <p>N.5.1: impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. The requirement for impartiality exists at all points in the process: planning, conduct, reporting</p> <p>N6.2: the head of evaluation must have the independence to supervise and report on evaluations</p> <p>N6.3: to avoid conflict of interest, evaluators must not have been responsible for the subject of the evaluation</p> <p>N6.4: evaluators must not have any vested interest and have the full freedom to undertake the evaluation impartially</p>	<p>Are evaluations/evaluators (perceived to be) transparent, impartial, of high quality/technically competent, and are using evaluation resources efficiently?</p> <p>N4.2: the purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders, evaluation must ensure due process timely completion and cost-effective way to obtain and analyse information</p> <p>N5.2: Impartiality increases the credibility of evaluation and reduces the bias in data gathering, etc.</p> <p>N8.1: each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented</p> <p>N9: the head of the evaluation function, evaluation staff and evaluators should have proven competencies to manage and/or conduct evaluations</p> <p>N10.1: transparency improves credibility and quality</p> <p>N11: evaluators must have personal and professional integrity, respect people and their rights, and be sensitive to beliefs etc.</p>	<p>Does the evaluation process engage stakeholders in ways that make evaluations useful, while maintaining independence and credibility?</p> <p>N4.1 and N4.2: evaluations must be undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information</p> <p>N10.1: transparency and consultation in the evaluation process can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation</p>
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<p><b>Question 3: How are evaluation findings communicated?</b></p>	<p>Is there interference in the communication of evaluation findings?</p>	<p>Are evaluation findings communicated in an impartial way with adequate levels of technical and political credibility?</p>	<p>Are evaluation findings communicated in a useful, constructive and timely way?</p>
<p><b>UNEG Norms</b></p>	<p>N6.1: the head of evaluation should have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making</p>	<p>N8.2: evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations</p> <p>N10.2: documentation on evaluations in easily consultable and readable form should also contribute to both transparency and legitimacy</p>	<p>N2.7: governing bodies and/or heads of organizations and of the evaluation function are responsible for ensuring that there is a repository of evaluation and a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons to improve organizational learning and systemic improvement</p> <p>N13: evaluation contributes to knowledge building, findings and lessons should be accessible to target audiences and user-friendly</p>
<p><b>Question 4: Is there a system in place to follow up on evaluation recommendations?</b></p>			<p>N12: evaluation requires an explicit response by governing bodies and management to address recommendations. There should be systematic follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations and a periodic status report, which should be presented to governing bodies</p>

## Annex 4

# PEOPLE CONSULTED

### UN-HABITAT SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, and Undersecretary-General

Paul Taylor, Chief, Office of the Executive Director

Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, Special Adviser, Office of the Executive Director

Mohammed Robleh, Method and Oversight Officer (Audit Focal Point)

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Alioune Badiane, Acting Director, Regional Office for Africa and Arab States (ROAAS)

Abdallah Kassim, Human Settlements Officer, ROAAS

Alain-Clement Kanyinda, Human Settlements Officer, ROAAS

### MONITORING AND RESEARCH DIVISION

Oyebanji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, Director

Ananthkrishnan Subramonia, Senior Adviser, Partners and Youth Branch

Maharufa Hossain, Human Settlements Officer

### GLOBAL DIVISION

Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, Director

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Clarissa Augustinus, Chief, Land Tenure and Property Administration Section

Mohammed Halfani, Head, Urban Development Branch

Mohamed El-Sioufi, Head, Shelter Branch

Raf Tuts, Chief, Urban Environmental Planning Branch

### PROGRAMME SUPPORT DIVISION

Antoine King, Director

Dorothy Mutizwa-Mangiza, Chief, Planning and Coordination Unit

Geoffrey Oluput, Programme Officer, Planning and Coordination Unit

### HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FINANCING DIVISION

Albert Diphoorn, Action Director

Andre Dzikus, Chief, Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch

Avi Sarkar, Regional Technical Adviser, South East Asia, Laos

Jean Ives Bonzi, Human Settlements Officer

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNIT

Martin Barugahare, Chief

Asenath Omwega, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Susanne Bech, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Zadoc Ogutu, Programme Officer

Michael Ojil, National Officer

### OTHER INTERVIEWEES

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Britha Mikkelsen, Consultant

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Representative, Sweden  
Erik Berg, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs, Norway  
Y. Khamati-Kilonzo, Deputy Permanent  
Representative, Kenyan Mission to UN  
Habitat  
Ricardo Losa, Deputy Head of Mission,  
Embassy of Spain  
Ester Borrás, First Secretary, Embassy of Spain  
Corazone Chavez, Chief, Nairobi Audit Service,  
OIOS

## Annex 5

# LIST OF EVALUATIONS

### INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATIONS

- The First Assessment of the Habitat Country Programme Documents
- Review of UN-Habitat's Participation in the Delivering as One Initiative
- Evaluation of Cooperation Agreements by UN-Habitat
- Assessment of "Excellence in Management" Programme Agreement between UN-Habitat and Norway
- Organizational Effectiveness Staff Survey
- Peer Review of the Implementation of UN-Habitat's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2008-2013)
- Mid-Term Review of the Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery
- Review of UN-Habitat's Participation in the Delivering as One UN Initiative- Opportunities and Challenges
- Evaluation of the Iraq Programme

### THEMATIC EVALUATIONS

- Midterm Review of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund
- Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UN-Habitat
- Review of the World Urban Forum Sessions 2002-2008
- Slum Upgrading Facility End Programme Evaluation
- Evaluation of the World Urban Forum IV, Nanjing China
- Mid-Term Assessment of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)
- Evaluation of World Urban Forum V, Rio Janeiro, Brazil
- Evaluation of the Water and Sanitation Trust

Fund (WSTF)

- Impact studies of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund (WSTF) country studies Kenya and Nepal and Gender mainstreaming study
- Slum Upgrading Facility Mid-term Review

### PROGRAMMATIC EVALUATIONS

- Evaluation of the Youth Programme, including the Youth Opportunities Fund
- Evaluation of Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations (ERSO)

### PROJECT EVALUATIONS

- Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme (SIRP) in Serbia
- Review of Phase III Safer Cities: Tanzania Initiative
- Final Evaluation of the Somalia Urban Development Programme
- Impact Assessment Study for the Community-based Water and Sanitation Project (Laos)

### EVALUATIONS IN PROGRESS

- UN-Habitat Staff Survey on Implementation of MTSIP
- Evaluation of the Programme Review Mechanism
- Evaluation Phase I and II
- Evaluation of the Implementation of the MTSIP
- Evaluation of the Decentralized Programme
- Evaluation of the Cooperation Agreement 2008-2010
- Evaluation of the Rafik Hariri Memorial Award Cycle 1



Mid-term Evaluation of the Urban Planning  
Projects at the Country Level (Egypt)

Evaluation of the Cities and Climate Change  
Initiative 2008-2011 Phase 1 & 2

Evaluation of the International Urban Training  
Centre, Korea

Evaluation of the Sustainable Neighborhood  
Programme

## Annex 5a

# LIST OF EVALUATIONS SELECTED FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

External Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. Hugo Ross, Zoran Kaya, Anton Rijdsdijk and Stein-Erik Kruse, July 2011.

Evaluation of the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, October 2010.

Peer Review of the implementation of UN-Habitat's Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2008–2013), Peer Panel with 9 members, August 2010.

Impact Assessment Study for Community Based Water and Sanitation Project. Authors not mentioned, January 2010.

The Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UN-Habitat. Lucy Earl and Dominic O'Reilley, February 2011.

## DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

### GENERAL BACKGROUND

UN-Habitat Organizational Chart

The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action.

Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan 2008-2013. Focus Area Policy and Strategy Papers

Six-monthly Progress Reports on the Implementation of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013

Twenty-Third Session of the Governing Council. Dialogue on the Special Theme. January 2011

Proposed Strategic Framework for the period 2012-2013

Proposed Work Programme and Budget for the biennium 2012-2013, January 2011

Programme Performance Reports

Programme and Project Cycle Management Manual

Audit Report Internal Governance in UN-Habitat, September 2010.

Financial report for the Biennium ended 31 December 2009 and Report of the Board of Auditors.

General Assembly, Strengthening the Mandate and Status of UN-Habitat, February 2002.

In-depth Evaluation of the UN-Habitat. Note by the Secretary General, April 2005.

Annual Work Plans

### EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, June 2003.

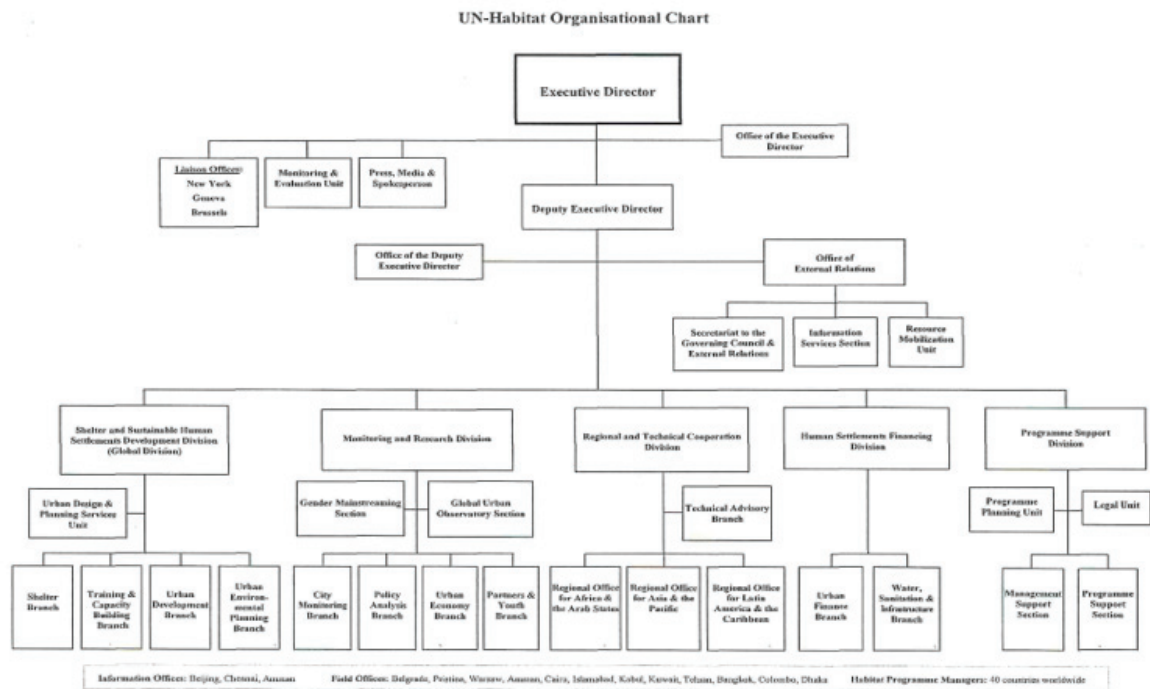
Standard Format for Evaluation Reports

Scoring for Evaluation Reports

Criteria for Assessing Evaluations/Other Consultancy Work

Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

# UN-HABITAT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



August 2010



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**  
Federal Public Service  
**Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and  
Development Cooperation**