



Report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2009

Location: UN Gigiri Compound, Nairobi, Kenya

Host agencies: UNEP and UN-Habitat

Date: 25-27 March 2009

This report, prepared by the UNEG Secretariat, encompasses the discussions and outcomes from the UNEG AGM 2009.

Report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2009

1. The United Nations Evaluation Group Annual General Meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 25-27 March 2009. The meeting was hosted by UNEP and UN-Habitat.
2. The opening speech was given by Ms. Inga Kleby, Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT on behalf of Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-Habitat. Ms. Kleby congratulated UNEG for its work in particular the UNEG Norms and Standards, the training course and the evaluability study of the Delivering as One UN in pilot countries. She highlighted UNEG's growing recognition throughout the UN system and the importance of evaluation not only as the UN goes through a process of reform but also during a time of global economic crisis when donors are increasingly demanding results and accountability. She concluded by welcoming UNEG to Nairobi and declared the meeting open.
3. Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair, began by thanking UNEP and UN-Habitat for hosting the UNEG AGM 2009 and regretted, due to the economic crises, that many UNEG members could not participate in the first UNEG meeting to be held outside of Europe or North America. She reflected on the demands made on UNEG through the DaO evaluability study, the South Africa and UNEG joint evaluation of the UN system in the country and the CEB. She highlighted the accomplishments made because of the commitment and involvement of all UNEG members, thanking in particular the Task Forces and their co-Chairs. She also addressed the challenges that UNEG faces for the coming year including fulfilling responsibilities as members of a professional network, meeting the rising tide of expectations and clarifying the governance and work programme of UNEG. In particular, she noted that UNEG's work programme needs to be much more responsive to the varied interests of UNEG's growing membership, enabling broad based participation whilst maintaining the sense of ambition that has driven UNEG in the past.

Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Draft Agenda was approved.

Session 1: Annual Report by the Secretariat

5. The UNEG Executive Coordinator, Mr. Nurul Alam, presented the Secretariat Annual Report. He highlighted that each year the report is more comprehensive covering the work of the Task Forces but that due to the late submission of reports by some Task Forces, their report would be covered during their Sessions during the course of the AGM.
6. Mr. Alam provided an overview of the work of the Coordination Committee (CC) which met frequently throughout the year, providing an opportunity for Task Force co-Chairs to share work updates and get feedback. The CC meeting minutes were distributed to UNEG Heads and systematically made available on the UNEG website. He also welcomed those new members to UNEG and thanked those who had left over the past year for their contributions.

7. The Evaluation Capacity Development Task Force was dissolved during the course of the work year. It had been suggested to incorporate the work into the remaining Task Forces but this was not possible because of already heavy workloads. The TOR developed by the ECD Task Force was to be presented for discussion under Session 6.

8. The Executive Coordinator and UNEG professional provided on-going support to the UNEG Chair and Task Forces throughout the year. The UNDP Evaluation Office financial officer also assisted with the timely processing of budget reporting and financial transactions related to DaO and South Africa evaluations, as well as organizing contracts for consultants for the UNEG Task Forces.

9. The Executive Coordinator indicated his intention to conduct an external audit of UNEG financial activities through the treasury of UNDP prior to the AGM. However, the internal audit office will only look at UNEG's evaluation budget when UNDP EO is audited. The Head of the UNDP Financial Division is preparing a certified expenditure statement for UNEG which will be circulated to UNEG Heads when finalized.

10. A UNEG financial report has been included in the Secretariat report since 2004, indicating contributions received and accumulated from UNEG members for UNEG programme activities. Over the financial year 2008, Task Forces have been allocated financial assistance from the UNEG budget (see Financial Report in the Secretariat Annual Report). The total committed and expended expenditure from the UNEG budget totaled USD89587. The UNDP Evaluation Office covers the cost of the UNEG Secretariat including salary, office space, IT needs. As such, the full cost of UNEG was USD228k. In kind contributions and direct costs are not indicated. He indicated that issues of UNEG financing needs to be considered under the revision of the Principles of Working Together.

11. UN-Habitat and GEF indicated financial contributions to UNEG of USD6K and USD5K respectively. JIU confirmed their participation as observers in UNEG.

Revision of the UNEG Principles of Working Together

12. The UNEG Principles of Working Together were circulated for comments prior to AGM and were discussed at length during the meeting. The main inclusion to the Principles was the creation of the role of UNEG vice-Chair. The position of vice-Chair would allow a more equitable distribution of work; provide a think tank between AGMs helping maintain the strategic direction of UNEG and allow smaller organizations to become actively involved in the leadership of UNEG. Following a vote, it was agreed that the position of UNEG vice-Chair be created (see Principles of Working Together, para. 11).

13. The post of UNEG Executive Coordinator within UNDP was reconfirmed and the revised Principles were adopted by UNEG members (see Annex 3).

Election of the UNEG Chair and vice-Chair

14. In accordance with the UNEG Principles of Working Together (2007) elections were held for the position of UNEG Chair. In addition, following the discussion at the AGM 2009 and the subsequent inclusion in the revised Principles of Working Together, the position of vice-Chair was created for which elections were also held.

15. Mr. Normand Oullet, Head of OIOS in Nairobi, acted as polling officer for the elections. Nominations were made for both Chair and vice-Chair and submitted directly to the OIOS office. UNEG Heads unable to attend or send a designated representative were asked to send their nominations by email directly to the polling officer. There were two nominees for the position of UNEG Chair and three for the position of UNEG vice-Chair. However, one nominee for the position of UNEG Chair and two of the three nominees for position of UNEG vice-Chair withdrew. As a result Ms. Caroline Heider was elected UNEG vice-Chair and Ms. Saraswathi Menon was re-elected as UNEG Chair for the period 2009/11.

16. Given the complexities experienced with the nomination and acceptance process, it was agreed that for subsequent elections UNEG members would consult with those they wish to nominate to the position of UNEG Chair or vice-Chair and identify a second UNEG member to support the nomination. Nominations are to be sent to the UNEG Secretariat who will then distribute to all UNEG members at least three months before the AGM. The elections would then follow the process as outlined in the Principles of Working Together. These revisions were included in the revised Principles.

Session 2: UN REFORM AND EVALUATION

17. The Session was Chaired by Ms. Caroline Heider (WFP) and focused on the evaluability study of the Delivering as One UN pilots (Mr. Lucien Back, UNICEF), the joint UNEG/ Republic of South Africa evaluation (Mr. Oscar Garcia, UNDP), the Country Level Evaluation Task Force (Mr. Juha Uitto, UNDP and Ms. Carla Henry, ILO) and the discussions on a UN system-wide evaluation mechanism (Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair). Mr. Alaphia Wright (UNESCO) also presented UNESCO's Delivering as One evaluation.

Delivering as One

18. Mr. Lucien Back (UNICEF) gave a brief overview of the evaluability study and began by highlighting the active participation by UNEG Heads in the DaO evaluability study (report writing, participating in missions) which was key to the success of the process. The process itself started with a request from the CEB following the recommendation by HLCP to do an evaluation of the one UN pilots. UNEG proposed a three pronged process - an evaluability assessment, a process evaluation in 2009 and an outcome/ impact evaluation in 2010/11. Since the 2007 TCPR asked for an independent evaluation, the HLCP suspended the latter stages of the evaluation to be conducted by UNEG to avoid parallel processes. It therefore did not make sense to have two evaluations in parallel.

19. Funding for the evaluability assessment was ensured both in kind and financial contributions with equitable burden sharing among UNEG members. The evaluability assessment has now been completed and the report has been published.

20. Despite the ad hoc manner in which it was conducted, UNEG stood up to the challenge of doing the evaluability study. That being said, it was agreed that UNEG is not fully equipped to fulfil the role of a system-wide evaluation unit.

21. UNEG had to address diverse expectations of the evaluability study. The country teams (RC's and national authorities) were initially sceptical about the need for such an evaluation. However, they found it

useful in particular in terms of the feedback on RBM and M&E systems, process indicators (national ownership and leadership and inclusiveness) and transaction costs.

22. The 2007 TCPR asked countries to conduct a self evaluation and an independent evaluation. It was agreed that UNEG does not have the capacity to conduct the independent evaluation but it was felt that the evaluability study would contribute greatly to this future process. The evaluability assessment was also found to be useful for proposed self-evaluations in the pilot countries and for the M&E network among pilot countries supported by UN-DOCO.

Decisions taken:

- Dissemination strategy needs to be developed for the DaO publication to be sent to RC's, missions (New York), HLCP members, and UNDOCO.

UNESCO evaluation of the DaO pilots

23. UNESCO conducted a separate evaluation which looked at the Delivering as One practice. The experience from this evaluation was presented by Alaphia Wright (UNESCO). UNESCO has a decentralisation strategy currently being implemented via a mix of regional, cluster and national offices – known as the decentralised units. The DG reports to the board on an annual basis on the performance of the decentralised units. This report is in part informed by the results of evaluations of selected decentralised units. When discussions on DaO began the Evaluation Section of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) prioritised the evaluation of the eight pilots in the approved evaluation plan for 2008-2009 within the context of its ongoing evaluation of decentralised units. The purpose of the UNESCO evaluation was to identify and analyse key opportunities and challenges for UNESCO in delivering as one.

24. The evaluation was tailored to all eight pilot countries, with field visits to each. Extensive desk studies and at least 200 interviews were conducted in the eight countries.

25. The findings from the evaluation highlighted issues that were specific to UNESCO and raised issues that could eventually concern UNEG and the UN system as a whole. Overall, UNESCO found that the DaO pilot delivered concrete opportunities for improved programme delivery and the achievement of results; increased visibility within the country for non resident agencies in particular in terms of their mandates; and illustrated that programme design is becoming more efficient for all agencies (not just UNESCO). Additional conclusions from the evaluation include that the process has been resource intensive, sometimes diverting focus from non-pilot countries and it is expected that as implementation proceeds, efficiencies will improve.

26. It also highlighted weaknesses such as intensive programme planning within DaO pilot countries, questions over the role of the one leader and the one "house" issue has to be critically examined.

South Africa and UNEG joint evaluation

27. Mr. Oscar Garcia (UNDP) began by highlighting that the demand for country level evaluations is increasing and is being discussed at the AGM so that some principles for evaluations with member states can be defined from a practical perspective.

28. The evaluation was conducted at the request of a member state and is in line with the GA Resolution 62/208 which specifically states and requests "the UN development system to support the development of specific frameworks aimed at enabling programme countries at the request to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities to achieve national development goals and strategies". The TCPR also urges all organisations of the UN system to intensify inter-agency sharing of information at the system wide level on good practices and experiences gained, results achieved, benchmarks and indicators and monitoring and evaluation criteria concerning their capacity building and capacity development activities.

29. Within this framework UNEG responded to South Africa's request in 2006 to conduct an evaluation of the UN system in the country. The evaluation was designed with an integral approach around four areas: support to development, humanitarian activities, peace and security and environment. The evaluation was also action oriented since the decision to nominate the new Resident coordinator in South Africa was held until the conclusion of the evaluation.

30. This was the first system-wide evaluation conducted by UNEG and covered the period from the end of apartheid in South Africa to 2008. This extended coverage tried to capture the responsive nature of the UN system to emerging needs in South Africa. When designing the evaluation, three types of UN interventions were identified: normative, analytical and operational. The evaluation team developed a framework which took into account these types of intervention and crossed with two types of evaluation criteria - effectiveness and relevance. Limitations of the evaluation included, disproportionate required for the start up of the evaluation as compared with the time allowed for its implementation and partial discontinuity in the composition of the evaluation team with one consultant having to be replaced during the exercise. However, the evaluation was completed successfully and was well received both in South Africa and in the UN system. It clearly exemplified the type of evaluations requested in the 2007 TCPR resolution.

31. The seven lessons learned from the evaluation include:

- a. Independence should be pursued by all parties involved in the management of a joint evaluation since independence allows those involved to address sensitive issues for both parties whilst strengthening the principles of national ownership over evaluation processes.
- b. The scope of joint evaluations tends to be overly ambitious.
- c. The methodology used should be consistent with the level and depth of the analysis expected in the evaluation.
- d. Managing the process is as important as the end result. A consultative decision making process meant that there was greater ownership by both parties.

- e. The potential use of evaluation and recommendations is higher given that both parties shared costs, responsibilities, expertise and the evaluation main findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- f. Conducting such evaluations in such middle income countries required a mutual understanding.
- g. The exercise was unique - it was demand driven, there was a strong capacity in the country and there was a strong leadership from both the SA and UNEG side - through which UNEG can derive principles of working together in such evaluations.,

Country Level Evaluation Task Force

32. Mr. Juha Uitto (UNDP) and Ms. Carla Henry (ILO) were co-Chairs of the Country Level Evaluation Task Force and they presented the work of the Task Force over the year. The Task Force's basic objective was to promote country level evaluation amongst and jointly between UNEG members and to support the development methodologies for these evaluations.

33. The Task Force developed an issues paper which examined the country level evaluation policies and practices of the UNEG agencies in the context of the UNDAF and to identify opportunities and challenges to improving the fit between the two. The paper was not distributed because of a number of outstanding issues to be resolved post-AGM discussions.

34. The Task Force also conducted a survey among UNEG members on country level evaluations (defined as an evaluation that encompasses the totality of support by an agency to a country). One issue identified is that the different practices used by UNEG members in conducting country level evaluations. The majority of UNEG members do not conduct CLE as defined above. The survey suggests there are only 10 UNEG members who conduct CLE. The survey looked at agencies' main purpose and accountability links of the CLE (both at a global and national level); links with the UNDAF M&E framework; who were the primary target groups for the evaluation; country selection criteria; responsibility for financing and conducting the evaluations; types of methodology followed; decisions linked to the evaluations; responsibilities for follow-up; and their attempts at linking their own evaluations to the UNDAF M&E system.

35. Some recommendations from the Task Force on how agencies can help make their CLE more reinforcing of the UNDAF M&E work included:

- a. In identifying, scheduling and implementing a specific CLE, UNEG member agencies should use decision criteria relating directly to country situation, opportunity to contribute to future programme direction and contribution to UNDAF M&E;
- b. Raise governance-level awareness to the need for agency-level contribution to UNDAF M&E; consistent designation of results between UNDAF and agency matrices;
- c. Align the CLE to the extent possible to M&E requirements within the UNDAF and needs identified by the UNCT;

- d. Agency-specific CLE budgets could be pooled in the case where a joint evaluation is envisioned or smaller UN partners given coverage in CLE evaluation (e.g. UNV & UNDP);
- e. Agency-specific CLE need to involve national partners to build national capacities.

Session discussions

36. The discussions on the above presentations highlighted that efforts to assess the totality of the UN contribution to development at country level are important initiatives. They respond to an increasing demand from the aid community and the countries themselves. They are also instrumental to evaluation practitioners in striving for harmonization.

37. The UNESCO evaluation is a good example of how to look at the totality of a sector or the development challenges a country faces and the role and contributions of the UN within that context. While, in light of harmonization (Rome, Paris, Accra), CLEs should ideally be done as inter-agency efforts, they may also need to be done for specific stakeholders. However, developing harmonized methods UNEG efforts on CLE could be building blocks and stepping stones in the larger picture of the wider development process taking place within the framework of the Paris Declaration.

38. It was agreed that lessons from the DaO, South Africa Evaluation and the CLE Task Force should be brought together by the CLE Task Force. Issues raised through joint evaluations should also be addressed by other Task Forces. For instance, the issue of management responses and follow up could be taken up by the EQE-TF in the framework of its work on follow up to evaluation.

39. The CLE TF should look at the key aspects of accountability in joint evaluations, including the multiple and divergent demands among governing bodies for accountability, the emerging demand for accountability from countries themselves, and accountability beyond aid effectiveness. Various modalities should be explored to satisfy the need for accountability at different levels, with governments being recognized as a full partner of the UN. In this respect, it was recognized that not one size fits all and that, while the CLE will continue promoting joint evaluations, coordination of evaluation efforts and harmonization may be the most realistic approach.

System Wide Evaluation Mechanism

40. Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair, presented the background of UNEG's involvement in the UN system-wide evaluation mechanism discussions. In response to a request from the CEB, UNEG developed a proposal on what would be necessary to do system wide evaluation. This was taken to the HLCM/ HLCP joint session who asked UNEG to further develop and the revised paper was presented at the HLCM session as a managerial issue. The paper was again revised and finally discussed in September 2008. UNEG members were consulted extensively throughout the process.

41. At the last HLCM meeting, UNEG was asked to take on the responsibility for system-wide evaluations but the UNEG Chair highlighted to the body that JIU has the mandate for external evaluation but that they may need the capacity to do this. Another full round of consultation followed and UNEG unanimously responded that UNEG cannot do system-wide evaluation mechanisms.

42. At the HLCP meeting where the DaO report was presented the issue was raised once again as they still see the need for this from a programme policy side. The decision at the meeting was that the Chairs of HLCP, HLCM and UNDG would discuss system wide evaluation further. Most recently UNEG also participated in the Fifth Committee meeting where it was made clear that as far as UNEG was concerned the decision is to be taken by senior bodies.

43. There is strong confidence in UNEG and its professional capacity, and informally the Chair of UNDG, donors, and G77 countries have asked whether UNEG would be willing at least to participate in development of the TOR of the independent evaluation, as an advisory and quality assurance body. When the RC of the pilot countries met with the DSG, the quality assurance role of UNEG was raised and it was agreed that it made sense for UNEG to participate and support the process.

Decisions taken

- The DaO Management Group and the UNEG South Africa Task Force had completed their mandates and were disbanded.
- UNEG members agreed that work on the system wide evaluation mechanism is complete until there is a further request to revive it (if it comes).
- In terms of a potential role for UNEG following on from the DaO evaluation and South Africa Joint Evaluation, UNEG agreed to act as an evaluation advisory body, supporting the evaluations at various stages of the process including development of the Terms of Reference and quality assurance.
- The Country Level Evaluation Task Force would continue for the Work Programme year 2009/2010, taking into consideration comments and suggestions made during discussions (see above).

Session 3: The Evaluation Function

44. Session 3 was Chaired by Mr. Luciano Lavizzari (IFAD) and focused on the work of the Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force, Evaluation Quality Enhancement Task Force, Distinctiveness of the Evaluation Function Task Force, and Impact Evaluation Task Force. There was also a discussion on the JIU Terms of Reference for an evaluation of the evaluation function in the UN system.

Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force

45. The work of the Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force was presented by Inga Sniukaite (UNIFEM) (on behalf of Belen Sanz, UNIFEM) and Yuen Ching Ho (UNCTAD). The presenters gave a synopsis of the work of the Task Force over the work year and a status report of the Guidance paper. The TF was also involved in developing a module for the UNEG Training course. The Task Force also presented the work previewed for the year ahead including finalizing and testing the guidance document and handbook to be presented at the AGM for approval in 2010. They presented a number of potential challenges including how to integrate HR and GE mainstream in management response and how to pilot the guidance for which they request collaboration from among UNEG members.

46. UNEG members expressed their appreciation for work so far and acknowledged the importance of completing the guidance paper. The Task Force will revise and complete the guidance compendium, produce a handbook, and test and finalize for approval at the AGM 2010. UNEG members were asked to send written comments on the guidance document by 10 April 2009.

47. Collaboration with other Task Forces was encouraged, in particular with the Impact Evaluation and Training Task Forces. The clear room for collaboration with OCHA in adapting GE indicators for evaluation of humanitarian interventions was also noted and self-training modules could be envisaged.

48. A number of UNEG members indicated their willingness to pilot the guidance: UNDP in one ADR; OIOS on evaluation of normative work; UNECA; IFAD. UNESCO will provide contact for the Task Force with its Gender Section. The Belgian cooperation also expressed support.

Decisions taken

- The HRGE Task Force would continue for the work year 2009/2010 and would focus on completing the guidance document.
- The HRGE Task Force would collaborate with other UNEG Task Forces, notably the Impact Evaluation and Training Task Forces.
- UNEG members were asked to commit to use the final product in their evaluation practice.

Distinctiveness of the Evaluation Function Task Force

49. Ms. Chandi Kadrigamar (UNCDF) presented an update on the work of the Task Force. During the course of the year, the Task Force hired a consultant to work on the paper and the final version was circulated to the members of the Task Force and comments from only one UNEG member were received. The Task Force co-Chairs, Ms Kadrigamar and Ms Maya Bachner (WMO) requested agreement from UNEG members to circulate the paper one more time for comments, at which point the paper will be finalized and the Task Force closed.

Decisions taken

- The Distinctiveness of the Evaluation Function Task Force will be disbanded once the paper is reviewed. Written comments on the current paper and how the subject can be further discussed in UNEG should be sent by 28 April to the outgoing Task Force co-Chairs.
- The paper will be posted on the UNEG website as an “Issue Paper”, not as a position paper.
- The topic requires further discussion within UNEG. Consideration needs to be given on how this is done.

Evaluation Quality Enhancement Task Force

50. Ms. Rachel Bedouin (FAO) and Mr. Rob D. van den Berg (GEF) presented the work of the Task Force for the work year 2008/09. Due to the number of deliverables the Task Force committed to at the

beginning of the work year 2008/09, the Task Force subdivided into five working groups and the level of progress made by the working groups varied. The working group developing indicators was at an initial stage whilst the standards for evaluation reports were in progress. Progress has also been made on the Management Response and Follow-up paper although it had not yet been reviewed by members. The Session at the Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar on the paper which the Task Force found helpful. The online Fact Sheet was launched mid-2008 but had a disappointing response rate from among UNEG members (only eight of 43 members had completed it at the time of the meeting). Development of the self assessment sheet was completed although, due to the poor response rate of the online Fact Sheet, development of an online version was halted.

51. The peer review process is considered useful by all for enhancing effectiveness. Members agreed that UNEG needs to be more involved with the management of the peer reviews, contributing to shaping the PR concept and safeguarding the independence of the peer review function. The need to harmonize the PR approach (with that of other evaluation networks), as well as other standards, was expressed and the eventual need to revise the UNEG Norms and Standards was envisioned.

52. Mr. Dominique de Crombrughe, vice-Chair of the [DAC Network on Development Evaluation](#) informed UNEG that the DAC standards were revisited recently at a meeting in Auckland. DAC decided to have a shorter document, organized in a more logical way. Australia is leading the work which will be presented for discussion among DAC members in June. The outcome will be shared with UNEG.

Decisions taken

- The work of the Task Force will continue but with greater clarity.

Impact Evaluation

53. Ms. Margareta de Goys (UNIDO), Mr. David Todd (GEF) and Ms. Fumika Ouch (IAEA) presented the work of the Impact Evaluation Task Force. Over the course of the year the Task Force sent out a survey to UNEG members requesting details on impact evaluations they had conducted; served on the NONIE Steering Committee and developed the online Impact Evaluation database (within the UNEG website). As members of NONIE, the Task Force also highlighted the current issue of identifying where the NONIE Secretariat should be located as well as the elections of the NONIE Chair.

54. UNEG members were encouraged to use the online database developed by the Task Force and the Secretariat was to send an email post-AGM to remind members to submit the names of those to be given administrative access to submit and update the contents. The Impact Evaluation stocktaking exercise showed that only five UNEG members have conducted impact evaluations whilst others included assessment of impact in other types of evaluation. This needs to be further clarified with many challenges identified.

55. UNEG members agreed that the NONIE Secretariat should not be hosted by 3IE; an IFI or major donor would be a more desirable location. If appropriate, the TF should call on the UNEG Chair to discuss on NONIE matters with DAC and ECG Chairs. Collaboration with other UNEG Task Forces was also encouraged and the Country Level Evaluation Task Force indicated their intention to develop an

online database for Country Level Evaluations based on the one developed by the Impact Evaluation Task Force.

Decisions taken

- It was agreed that there is still much work to be done on impact evaluation and the Task Force was given the mandate to continue for the work programme year 2009/2010 (see work programme Annex below).
- The Task Force would also continue attending NONIE and other related events and fora, possibly more in force to advocate a broader vision and understanding about IE.
- The Impact Task Force would actively collaborate with other UNEG Task Forces.

JIU TOR for evaluation

56. Mr. Even Fontaine Ortiz, Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) gave a briefing on the functions of the JIU and clarified the reform status indicating that it is more client oriented and intended to strengthen the consultation processes with agencies under review. He also explained that JIU sees evaluation as a contribution to management as an oversight tool. He gave a description of JIU work highlighting the difference between reports and notes depending on the type of recommendations and of addressee. In principle, a peer-review of JIU could be appropriate although suitable resources would be necessary and JIU only has a small budget.

57. Prior to the AGM, JIU circulated a draft Terms of Reference for an evaluation of the evaluation function in the UN system to which a number of UNEG Heads made written comments. In response to these comments, Mr. Fontaine Ortiz clarified that coverage of the evaluation will include only bodies under JIU statute and will take into account relevant assessments. He also clarified that JIU has not yet adopted the UNEG Norms and Standards but would apply the 1998 JIU Standard Guidelines. However the UNEG Norms and Standards would be taken into consideration informally. JIU would welcome an opportunity to consult with UNEG on ideas, human and financial resources for the evaluation.

58. UNEG members welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with JIU on this evaluation and the participatory character of the exercise. UNEG members stated that the draft TOR did not meet the criteria for an evaluation in terms of methodology and scope. They further expressed the need for the exercise to be better in line with best practices for an evaluation. It was also suggested that more clarity on the evaluation objectives and utility was required.

59. The Session Chair thanked Mr. Fontaine Ortiz for the frank and open exchange and agreed that the objective and purpose of the exercise needs to be further clarified and that to be an evaluation the TOR would need to be revised. Furthermore, UNEG's participation could be both formal and informal although UNEG members expressed the opinion that it should be on a formal basis. JIU should clearly and officially specify what kind of support they would like to receive from UNEG.

Decisions taken

- UNEG is willing to collaborate with the JIU on its evaluation of the evaluation function once it is clearly established as an evaluation and not a review.
- The terms of the collaboration need to be clearly defined.

Session 4: Professionalizing Evaluation

60. The Session was Chaired by Ms. Silvia Alamo (CTBTO) with presentations given by Ms. Sukai Prom-Jackson (UNDP) and Mr. Alaphia Wright (UNESCO) on behalf of the Training Task Force, and Mr. Michael Spilsbury (UNEP) and Ms. Tullia Aiazzi (FAO) on the Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2009.

Training Task Force

61. The Training Task Force co-Chairs presented the work of the Task Force over the year including launch of the needs assessment, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNEG and UNSSC, review of the course content and the quality assurance TOR. The co-Chairs indicated that the Training Course held in Nairobi the week prior to the AGM was a success and there had been positive feedback from many of the participants. The Task Force co-Chairs indicated that due to the time spent developing the business relationship with the UNSSC the Task Force was not able to advance on other aspects of the Task Force work programme.

62. The UNEG UNSSC MOU was developed by a small team of senior managers as identified at the UNEG AGM 2008. UNEG Heads were given the opportunity to comment on the MOU during the course of the year and questions and concerns about the legality of UNEG signing such a document were raised. The UNEG Secretariat submitted the document to the UNDP Legal Office for their comments and they too indicated that UNEG, as a non legal entity, could not enter into a legal agreement. UNDP Legal Office revised the TOR omitting any text relating to operational details which should be contained within a business plan. The revised MOU was circulated at the AGM and UNEG Heads were asked to submit comments by 10th April 2009. Despite requests from the Training Task Force, the UNSSC did not prepare a business plan which the Task Force had expressed the wish to submit for discussion at the AGM.

63. UNEG members highlighted that the issue of working arrangements between UNEG and UNSSC has been on-going and, although the delivery of the course has improved, course arrangements continue to be ad hoc. Communications between UNEG and UNSSC have also not improved. UNEG members were urged to consider the impact on credibility and reputation that such arrangements are having on UNEG, in particular the case of Cairo course which was cancelled at a very late stage.

64. The TOR for the advisory panel was approved but has not yet been implemented. The Task Force will give consideration to possible financial implications.

Decisions taken

- UNEG expressed renewed commitment to the course.

- The Training Task Force is to focus on the content and quality of the course as well as quality assurance.
- Ms. Caroline Heider, UNEG vice-Chair, Mr. Nurul Alam, UNEG Executive Coordinator and Ms. Carla Henry (ILO) to take responsibility for the business side and relations with UNSSC.
- The Training Course Business plan and MOU to be developed simultaneously.
- UNEG Heads to provide feedback on the MOU by 10th April 2009.

Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2009

65. The purpose of the EPE is to share best practices and experiences in evaluation among UNEG members. To help define the agenda for the EPE09, the Task Force created an online learning/ demand survey to which members gave feedback on abstracts and draft presentations. This year, the discussion in break-out groups of specific Task Force deliverables was introduced successfully as a modality for exchange and learning.

66. Issues that emerged during the EPE for UNEG's attention beyond the mandate of any Task Force included:

- a. The need for a "strategic" UNEG programme of work to identify priorities and harmonise scope and efforts of Task Forces; and
- b. The very poor accountability (under evaluation) of Peace Keeping operations might be an area for UNEG advocacy work.

67. Overall it was agreed that the EPE continues to be a useful forum for UNEG members to exchange experiences and information. It was suggested that the EPE be tied to the work of the Task Forces and it was agreed that there could be better linkage between the two.

Decisions taken

- The EPE2010 is to be organized by the next hosts of the AGM. The New York based agencies are to meet after the AGM to agree who will be responsible.
- The Task will need to identify topics for the next EPE Seminar taking into consideration suggestions and proposals made during the EPE Seminar 2008

Session 5 – Work Planning 2009/10

68. The Work Planning session focuses on developing UNEG's work plan and modalities of working for the forthcoming year (2009/10) in light of discussions held over the previous two days.

69. The session was Chaired by Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair who began by summarizing the outcomes of the discussions and the decisions taken during the previous Sessions. It was clear that of the Task Forces for the work year 2008/09, five would continue for the work year 2009/10. The Evaluation

Quality Enhancement Task Force was divided into two new Task Forces – Evaluation Quality Standards and Evaluation of the Evaluation Function.

70. Members were invited to indicate their participation in the Task Forces and conveners for the first Task Force meetings were identified. Task Force co-Chairs should be nominated on a personal and not organizational basis. Task Force conveners were asked to hold the first meeting of the Task Force within a month of the AGM so that the Coordination Committee for 2009/10 could be established.

Decisions taken

- Two new Task Forces were established and five continued from the work year 2008/09.
- Conveners to convene the first meeting of the Task Forces were identified at which Task Force co-Chairs were to be elected.
- The EPE and AGM 2010 will be held in New York and will be hosted by the New York based UNEG members (exact dates to be confirmed).
- The New York based agencies are to meet after the AGM to agree who will be responsible for the Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2010.

ANNEX 1

Opening Speech by Ms Anna Kadjumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.

Ms. Saraswathi Menon, Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Heads, Colleagues and Friends.

I am Inga Klevby, Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT and I am representing Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka our Executive Director.

I want to start by congratulating you for the good work you are doing, as a group of professionals trying to strengthen evaluation function across the UN systems. And results of what you are doing are very evident. The UNEG Norms and standards for evaluation, developed and adopted by this Group in 2005, are now very well recognized throughout the UN system. The training courses you are conducting are enhancing competences of our staff. The evaluability of delivering as One UN in pilots countries is a major effort in improving programming and implementation of the initiative. And much you have done.

Indeed, the United Nations Evaluation Group has transformed itself in a few short years from being a relatively low-key inter agency group to a dynamic ‘community of evaluation practice’ advocating the importance of evaluation for learning, decision making and accountability. And your good work is being recognized by various entities and bodies including the CEB. It was even more impressive because, in the absence of a central evaluation unit in the UN system, UNEG is being seen as taking control even though the network is not set up to conduct evaluations. I hope most of you have read fox news on Joint Inspection Unit and UNEG and this is also an indication that you are becoming powerful.

We, UN Habitat and UNEP, as the only UN Agency Headquarters location in a Developing Country, are proud to host your 2009 Annual General Meeting and Practice Exchange Seminar here in Nairobi. You will recall, we wanted to host the 2008 Annual General Meeting but consequences of the post- election situation in Kenya did not allow it happen.

Last week, I attended the closing session of UNEG and United Nations System Staff College evaluation training course and recommended that we needed such training at executive level. I do understand that you have also held, over the last two days, the 2009 Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar, and that this event, the third in UNEG’s history, provides an invaluable opportunity for evaluation professionals across the UN System to, share experiences, identify good practices and benefit from the lessons learned by others.

This Annual meeting also provides a forum for you, as a professional network, to plan your work for the coming year. I would like to state from the outset that what you do as evaluators, while often not celebrated in our various organizations, is critical to the United Nations as it tries to reform itself and to deliver as one. In an era of Global Economic crisis, donor demand for results and accountability from the use of the ever more scarce resources provided to organizations like the UN will, no doubt, increase.

Organisations are spending considerable time and effort defining their ‘comparative advantage’. However, organisational learning is a large part of evaluation functions. Feedback and follow up are fundamental for any evaluation function, and we need to be accountable. But just as organisations must learn and be accountable, so must the evaluation functions within them.

I was interested to learn that the work of UNEG is outward-looking, and includes practical cooperation with the DAC evaluation network in undertaking voluntary ‘peer reviews’ of the evaluation functions of UNEG members. These peer reviews are of much interest to UN-HABITAT as we are soon to conduct our peer review on our MTSIP and will need UNEG assistance in this exercises.

I see from your agenda that UNEG works on issues of common interest through Task Forces that focus collaborative efforts on the production of tangible ‘deliverables’. Deliverables including: approaches to Country Level Evaluations; guidance on good evaluation practice for Human Rights and Gender Equity; Good practices in Evaluation follow-up; and UN Training courses in Evaluation developed and operated collaboration with the UN Staff College; Are indicative of the learning culture of UNEG as it seeks to improve evaluation processes for the greater good of the UN.

With those few remarks, I would now like to welcome you to Nairobi, and declare the UNEG 2009 Annual General Meeting Officially open.

Thank you.

ANNEX 2

Opening speech by Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair

Ms. Kleby, Dear Colleagues

Good morning and welcome,

It is wonderful that we are all together here in Nairobi. This is the first time that we are meeting outside Europe or North America – as UNEG or even as UNEG’s predecessor, the Inter Agency Working Group on Evaluation. This is a reflection of the global reach of evaluation in the UN and also of the fact that evaluation is on an upsurge on the African continent. Last week IDEAS met in Johannesburg and next week a major conference on impact evaluation will be held in Cairo. We are very grateful to our friends in Nairobi, UN HABITAT and UNEP, for working tirelessly to bring us here and also for hosting a very successful evaluation training workshop last week and the rich presentations and discussions at the EPE these past two days. Given the economic crisis regrettably many agencies could not be represented here, but they are here in spirit having contributed actively to our work programme throughout the year and we will make sure that they are engaged in the important decisions that we will take here. I am sure that crossing new oceans to attend this meeting will help us take a broader view of our challenges and aspirations and encourage us to take a new and innovative approach to the rich agenda that we have before us.

UN organisations have worked together on evaluation through the IAWG and UNEG for 25 years. Where I come from reaching the age of 25 is an important milestone – you are considered mature enough to run for Parliament. Indeed UNEG has matured in many ways and even in the five years since I have been associated with UNEG, I have witnessed a progress marked by leaps and bounds. Let me highlight just a few. We have Norms and Standards, ethical guidelines and a code of conduct. We have standardized core competencies and job descriptions and a common highly rated training programme. We are working on cutting edge methodologies – gender, human rights and impact evaluation. We have a credible peer review process that is predicated on partnership.

We have been responsive to demands in evaluation. Through the DAO evaluability study we responded to the CEB’s request to establish parameters by which a major UN wide undertaking could be systematically evaluated. At the request of the Government of South Africa we engaged in a joint, independent evaluation of the UN’s contribution which is pathbreaking in its implications for country-led evaluation and for looking at the UN’s work in development, environment, humanitarian and peace and security spheres in an integrated way. At the request of CEB we thought through how best system wide evaluation can be conducted to meet international standards.

All these accomplishments were only possible because of the commitment and involvement of all UNEG members. Many of these achievements reached fruition or were moved forward in the past year. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the task forces and their co-chairs who have collaborated to achieve so much. We will have time to discuss this impressive body of work and to reflect on lessons learned, gaps unfilled and implications for the future.

As we commend each other on our year's results and plan our work for the coming year, I would raise three challenges that I think we need to address. Each of these challenges reflects the progress we have made which have brought us to crossroads. Much as we would like to go in all directions at the same time we will have to make some choices.

The first and most important challenge is to fulfill our responsibilities as members of a professional network. Sometimes I think we have done the easy part. Together, we have established Norms and Standards, guidelines, codes of conduct and so on. But do they make a difference if they are not practiced? The Norms and Standards call for organization specific policies to be established by each of our agencies in consultation with management and our governing bodies. Only if professional guidelines and standards are planted deep in an organization's culture and reality do they have meaning. Only then can they begin to contribute to change. This is why the GA in the TCPR calls on all UN organisations to strengthen their evaluation function. The training, self assessment and peer reviews that we do are essential means of support. But I think we need to do more to translate our professional innovations in UNEG into real practice. If we do not do this we will continue to proliferate standards and methodologies and be respected as a network of professional innovators but would not have moved the UN forward.

The second and increasingly important challenge is to meet a rising tide of expectations on our own terms. We are a little bit a victim of our success. The professionalism of UNEG is widely recognized. As a result the CEB approached us to help with the evaluation of the pilots. Two successive TCPRs called upon UNEG to harmonise methodologies and evaluation cycles as well as to continue the professional work that we are doing. Our assessment has been that there is a vacuum in conducting system wide evaluation. Our feeling is that this must be done while drawing on the strengths of individual evaluation units and preserving the innovation and consultative processes of UNEG. My sense is that it is not enough to propose ideas to plug such holes. We need to think through the critical issues of UN reform and to clearly articulate the contribution that we can make as UNEG without violating our mandate as a professional network. We should be prepared to innovate and prepare the ground for new approaches such as country-led evaluation. But we also need to agree where to draw the line. What is clear though, is that we cannot only look inward at efforts to improve our own professional work. External demands cannot be wished away and so we must set our sights on the emerging issues of UN reform and identify how best we can contribute.

The third challenge is that of governance and the work programme of UNEG. It is good that this year we have an opportunity to revise our Principles for Working Together and to hold an election. There is much that is working and there is much that can be improved. As your Chair my practice has been to consult all heads of evaluation electronically whenever there are major decisions to be taken as when the head of UNFPA as chair of HLCCM asked UNEG to take on the responsibility of system wide evaluation. UNEG has an ever expanding membership as the push for increased accountability and oversight grows within the UN and this is healthy. But the result is that this process of consultation is not always efficient or satisfactory. The Coordination Committee was set up to coordinate and deliver the agreed work programme and the Secretariat through the website provides tools for transparency and consultation. But the CC is not strictly speaking a governing body. How do we ensure participatory decision making that reflects the opinion of all evaluation units? We must get our Principles right.

We have always been ambitious in what we do and I have often felt that we have overreached ourselves when we develop our programme of work. And yet it is this ambition combined with strong champions

like Jean Quesnel that led to major results. Our work programme needs to be much more responsive to the varied interests of our growing membership. At the same time it must be discriminatory and realistic enough to enable broad based participation. And yet we must not lose the sense of ambition that has driven us so effectively in the past. It is this reaching well beyond what we could possibly do individually that has enabled us to achieve so much.

I do believe, therefore, that we can be confident as we move forward. We can begin to turn our normative frameworks into action. We can contribute to transforming the UN while managing expectations. And it is in our hands to fine tune our Principles for Working Together to better meet our collective purpose. Let us practice what we preach as evaluators – be evidence based in identifying lessons; be analytical and critical in assessing our results; and constructive and focused on the ideals of the United Nations in charting out our future.

Thank you very much.