



Report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2007

Location: Palais des Nations, Geneva

Host agencies: ILO, IOM, UNCTAD, UNHCR, WIPO, WHO and WMO

Date: 18-20 April, 2007

This report, prepared by the UNEG Secretariat, encompasses the discussions and outcomes from the UNEG AGM 2007.

Report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2009

Opening

1. Mr. Masahiro Igarashi (UNCTAD) welcomed UNEG members to the UNOG on behalf of the host agencies¹ and also delivered the speech on behalf of UNCTAD's Secretary General who was unable to attend in person. The Secretary General emphasized the important role of evaluation in the UN, citing both the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's "Investing in the United Nations" and the more recent High Level Panel on Coherence Report. He encouraged UNEG's support to the CEB towards establishing a system-wide evaluation mechanism².

2. Ms. Saraswathi Menon (UNEG Chair), delivered her opening remarks to UNEG members. Ms Menon thanked the Geneva based agencies for hosting the 2007 AGM. Forty three out of a possible 56 UN "entities" are members of UNEG, with members sharing not only a vision of the UN but also a purpose to make evaluation relevant to achieving that vision. Over the past year UNEG has continued to show its potential as a professional group - defining professional parameters such as the UNEG Principles of Working Together, engaging with national partners and proactively engaging in the work by the High Level Panel on Coherence concerning evaluation in the UN. The achievements in 2006 have laid the foundations for the work that needs to be done by UNEG members in 2007 in particular concerning the strengthening the function and practice of evaluation, in collaborating with partners and working together for the whole UN system³.

Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Chair announced some minor changes to the Draft Agenda, in particular concerning changes in the Rapporteurs.

4. The Draft Agenda was approved.

Session 1: Adoption of the Principles of Working Together

5. Sessions 1-3 were chaired by Ms Saraswathi Menon (UNEG Chair).

6. The Principles of Working Together Working Group was established at the UNEG AGM 2006. It was tasked to finalize issues outstanding from the AGM 2006, including the appointment of the UNEG Chair and the role of the Executive Coordinator and UNEG Secretariat.

¹ The UNEG AGM 2007 was hosted by: ILO, IOM, UNCTAD, UNHCR, WIPO, WHO and WMO.

² A full transcript of the speech is available in Annex 1.

³ A full transcript of the UNEG Chair's speech is available in Annex 2.

7. The Working Group was co-chaired by Mr. John Markie (FAO) and Ms. Susanne Frueh (OCHA) and work was carried out in full consultation with all UNEG members.

8. Mr. Markie thanked all members of the Working Group, Coordination Committee and members who had contributed to the work. He outlined the work undertaken over the year⁴ and put forward the Principles for approval by UNEG members.

9. The UNEG Chair reminded members that UNDP had agreed to underwrite the costs of hiring a full time professional and this agreement has been reflected in the Principles. It was agreed that the role of Executive Coordinator would stay within UNDP.

10. It was agreed that the text would be slightly modified to reflect the participation of the specialized agencies in UNEG (IAEA, OPCW and CTBTO). Text changes would also allow IOM to be accepted as a full member, rather than an observer.

11. Following the agreed amendments⁵, the move to adopt the UNEG Principles of Working Together was made by Ms. Caroline Heider (WFP), and seconded by Ms. Chandi Kadirgamar (UNDCF) and Mr. Backson Sibanda (UNODC).

Session outcome:

- The UNEG Principles of Working Together were adopted.

Session 2: Annual Report by the Secretariat

12. Mr. Nurul Alam (UNEG Executive Coordinator) presented a round up of the work conducted by the UNEG Task Forces and Working Groups over the work year 2006/07. Feedback by the Task Forces and Working Groups indicate that almost 80% of the deliverables set at the AGM 2006 had been achieved. These included:

- The completion of the Evaluation Capacity Development strategy paper and five elements of competency of training (core competencies, core competencies for Heads of Evaluation, generic job descriptions, training needs assessment and core training module).
- A concept paper on joint evaluations and the UNDAF assessment were completed. An online database of members' country level evaluations was launched and now contains over 300 reports.
- The survey on evaluation and results based management was finalized and circulated.

⁴ See document presented under Session 3 at the UNEG AGM 2007.

⁵ Amendments were made to paragraph 5, the heading after paragraph 12 and paragraph 13.

- The Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar Task Force held a two day seminar prior to the AGM. The seminar themes were management response and follow up to recommendations, capturing and using lessons learned from evaluation and strengthening evaluation methodology.
- The Working Group on Evaluation and Oversight finalized their report clarifying the role of evaluation in oversight in the UN System.
- An ad hoc Working Group was created in response to the High Level Panel on Coherence report. The Working Group drafted a proposal on a UN system wide evaluation mechanism. This draft was delivered at the HLCP meeting in Rome in February, 2007.

13. The Executive Coordinator also presented UNEG's expenditure for 2006/07 and the current budget status for 2007/08. Members were reminded of the importance of contributions, both monetary and in kind, which will be included in the next Secretariat report to reflect commitment.

14. The UNEG Secretariat will be responsible for managing the UNEG budget, previously managed by the UNDP Evaluation Office. Discussions clarifying the role of the UNEG Secretariat would be held in the Work Programming session on the last day of the AGM.

Session outcomes:

- Details on how to provide financial contributions will be made available on the new UNEG website.
- The UNEG Secretariat will send out annual reminders for financial contributions and acknowledgements of received contributions.

Session 3: Review and approval of 2006 deliverables

15. This session was the opportunity for UNEG Task Forces and Working Groups to present, for endorsement, deliverables (i.e. papers, reports etc.) which had already been extensively consulted on by UNEG members prior to the AGM, but which required formal endorsement by members.

16. The Evaluation Capacity Development Task Force submitted the core competencies which had been developed as a tool for internal capacity development within the context of promoting professionalisation in UN system.

17. At the 2006 AGM members agreed that further consultation was needed before the competencies could be approved. The consultation was held in October 2006 which led to small changes in the text.

Session outcome:

- The core competencies were endorsed.

Session 4 – UN Reform and Evaluation

18. The session was chaired by Luciano Lavizzari, IFAD who emphasised the unprecedented number of reforms in the multilateral system such as the delivering as one project, and the proposal to establish a UN wide, independent evaluation mechanism. The session examined how UNEG and its members can contribute to the reform process, and in particular reflect on how to:

- Identify elements of system wide evaluation.
- Harmonize approaches and methodologies with a view to defining a common methodology.
- Promote a notion of independence within evaluation outfits.
- Promote evaluation capacity building in the member countries.

Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR)

19. Mr. Lucien Back (UNDESA) presented both the TCPR and the Country Level Evaluations. Mr. Back began by situating the process and explained the relationship with the High Level Panel.

20. The TCPR took place in 2004 and again in 2007 and concerns development operational activities i.e. all the UN does in terms of development. The TCPR is one of the main venues of intergovernmental consensus building on development issues, especially the contribution of the UN at country level in particular vis-à-vis national strategies and international treaties and conventions.

21. UNDESA is currently conducting evaluative research, based on the work of UNEG and also other research projects, to cover the dimensions in the 2004 TCPR that member states gave clear guidance on where they would like the UN to develop and what orientations UNDESA should take in particular vis-à-vis funding, capacity development, south-south cooperation and gender dimensions etc. The draft report of the Secretary General, to be sent to ECOSOC and then the GA, was recently completed on these dimensions including the evaluation function.

22. The UN has an excellent opportunity, through analysis and supporting the recommendation process of the member countries, to give pointers to new policies. In particular, the 2004 TCPR gave orientation to the reform agenda and the One UN was to an extent decided in 2004. The High Level Panel report was commissioned by the Secretary General with a high profile composition of members. It takes a broader vision of the UN including humanitarian and environment. It is perceived as strongly driven by the donor countries.

23. The main evaluation themes in the TCPR are:

- a. National ownership and leadership, and country level evaluation capacity. This is the first time that the GA also said developing countries require evaluation capacities along the strength of the evaluation capacities of developed countries.

- b. UNEG was mentioned as an excellent initiative to bring evaluation professionals together and the Norms and Standards were specifically mentioned.

24. In methodological terms the 2007 TCPR adopted an evaluative approach with 10 research projects and six country consultations. Questionnaires were also sent to member countries and consultations with inter agency bodies, including UNEG, were held. The report is therefore as much as possible evidence based and analytical.

25. The Chapter of the TCPR on the importance of evaluation for accountability and learning highlights includes details on collaboration, members' adaptation of the UNEG norms and standards, independence from management, allocation of resources and issues of decentralization. Weaknesses found include:

- a. It is still very agency/ project specific i.e. not a system wide approach.
- b. Understanding of what is meant by Government ownership and leadership is weak.

26. UNICEF, UNDP and UNIFEM have undertaken activities to promote evaluation capacity development in partner countries, focusing on professionalisation in line with the members governing bodies' recommendation to have local consultants. However, institutionalising the evaluation function remains a challenge.

27. Three issues arose from the discussions to be addressed in the chapter for the TCPR:

- a. Capacity development (including capacity building partnerships and capacity building within the UN family).
- b. Undertaking a system wide evaluation given the absence of a body to do so.
- c. Seeing evaluation as part of public sector reform.

Country Level Evaluations

28. Mr. Back (UNDESA) presented feedback on the work of the Country Level Evaluation Task Force⁶ (created in Rome, 2005). The Task Force has set up a Country Level Evaluation database in the UNEG website containing members' country level evaluation publications. A meta-evaluation of the material found that members are still project focused rather than programme or strategic and that most evaluations are still mono-agency (as opposed to joint evaluations).

29. Ted Freeman was hired as a consultant to identify what kind of country level evaluations members wanted to look at. The following themes were identified:

- a. UNDAF plus – systemic support of UNDAF at country level.

⁶ Created in Rome in 2005.

- b. Transition from relief to development.
- c. HIV/AIDS (although this idea was rejected because of current work dynamics in UNAIDS).

30. The South Africa joint evaluation is underway, driven by a “coalition of the willing”. The scoping mission will be held shortly but implementation will take time. Sierra Leone was a candidate for joint evaluation and there is a proposal again to rally a “coalition of the willing”, to be led by FAO. Sierra Leone would be an interesting case especially for the transition scenario from relief to development as it is an integrated mission combining humanitarian and development with DPKO and other political parts of the UN.

31. The Task Force also conducted an UNDAF evaluability study. The Task Force found that the chapter on evaluation in the UNDAF Guidelines was too ambitious for country teams to manage and that there also needs to be demand at country level.

Session outcomes:

- Members were invited to send comments on the TCPR by 1st May 2007.
- The Task Force deliverables have been produced and work on the Country Level Evaluation database will be on going.
- Country level evaluations should be demand driven and country ownership and leadership needs to be assured and promoted by the UN.
- There is a challenge to expand into the area of peacekeeping.

One UN Evaluation System and the One UN Pilots

32. Mr. Adnan Amin (CEB Secretariat) and Ms. Saraswathi Menon (UNEG Chair) presented UNEG’s collaboration with the CEB Secretariat resulting from the High Level Panel on Coherence Report. This report recommended establishing a common evaluation system for the UN by 2008 to promote transparency and accountability based on a common evaluation methodology (which currently does not exist).

33. In November 2006 an ad hoc Working Group was established to work with the CEB Secretariat to draft a response to these recommendations. This collaboration culminated in a paper entitled “UNEG - Considerations of UN System-Wide Evaluation” which was presented at the HLCP/ HLCM joint session in March 2007⁷. JIU also submitted a paper expressing concern that efforts should be made to avoid any duplication between the work of JIU and any system wide evaluation function that would be carried out through UNEG.

34. Six issues arising from the CEB March meeting include:

⁷ Document available under Session 4, UN Reform and Evaluation, of the UNEG AGM meeting, 18-20 April 2007.

- Governance and location – the HLPC advised that closeness to CEB is advisable but that the outcomes of evaluation should be made available to the governing bodies.
- Independence
- Scope of work – the scope of the work of the Unit needs to be defined very clearly.
- Can this unit do real assessment of impact?
- Collaboration with existing units (e.g. OIOS and JIU)
- Funding

35. The CEB Secretariat and UNEG were subsequently asked to develop a proposal looking at staffing, governance, funding and placement for a small unit for evaluation. Within this context, UNEG was also asked to devise the parameters for the evaluation of the One Pilots. The request from the CEB should be framed with the purpose of the evaluation clearly defined.

36. UNEG members agreed to conduct evaluability studies, country by country, when appropriate with the findings to be reported in real time to management at the country and senior level for them to address issue of establishing a clear results framework and indicators. UNEG would also define a framework for an early nationally owned, self assessment with evaluation elements and would be involved in quality assurance and conducting a meta evaluation, to validate the findings of the self assessment, and eventually conduct and evaluation of the process.

Session outcomes:

- UNEG members agreed the need to be engaged in the evaluation of the One UN Pilots and establishment of a one UN system wide mechanism⁸.
- A Management Group to lead the work was established to lead the work. All UNEG members would serve as a reference group. Technical groups may also be necessary for some work streams.
- A dedicated project manager will be needed to conduct this work.

Session 5 – Collaboration with Partners

37. The session was chaired by Ms. Carla Henry (ILO). Presentations were given by Mr. Aquino Sixto (IADB) on behalf of the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG); Mr. Finbar O’Brien, Chair of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation; and Mr. Ross Conner, President of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE).

⁸ Subsequent to the discussion a paper was prepared for presentation to the CEB meeting, held 19th April 2007 (see Annex 3)

38. The session was an opportunity for information exchange with partners and for UNEG to discuss how it can be more strategic in engaging with other evaluation associations.

Evaluation Cooperation Group

39. Mr. Sixto acknowledged that UNEG and the ECG9 are facing similar issues and that consequently, there is a lot of opportunity for cooperation between the two groups.

40. The ECG meets twice a year and their current work programme includes:

- a. Harmonization and developing best practice standards for country programme evaluation.
- b. Developing best practice standards for evaluating TC's including an evaluation of the Japanese trust fund at the Bank.
- c. An evaluation of development of best practice standards for private and public sector operations. The private sector evaluation is almost complete and is now in the implementation phase.
- d. Review of practices for evaluating the environmental impacts of infrastructure operations.
- e. Development of standards for impact evaluations.

41. The ECG website¹⁰ is currently being improved as a tool to improve communications and help the ECG and UNEG identify opportunities for working together.

IOCE

42. Mr. Ross Conner presented the IOCE¹¹, a coalition of regional, national evaluation organizations, networks and informal groups. IOCE's aims to legitimize evaluation and to support evaluation societies, associations and networks so they can better contribute to good governance and effective decision making as well as strengthen the role of civil society. IOCE is committed to cultural diversity and inclusiveness, and it does this by bringing together and respecting different evaluation perspectives and traditions.

43. The IOCE Board developed a 2006-2007 work plan with four priority areas:

- a. Assisting members and increasing membership
- b. Increasing collaborations with national and regional partner organizations to plan and hold events and activities
- c. Improving communication and increasing sharing among member organizations, and

⁹ World Bank, ADB, AfDB, EBD, and IADB.

¹⁰ <http://www.ecgnet.org>

¹¹ <http://ioce.net/>

- d. Increasing funding to support these activities and our partners' involvement.

DAC Network on Development Evaluation

44. Mr. Finbar O'Brien, Chair of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation presented the Network's current work streams. The Network has tried to be open in the way it does business and sees its collaboration with ECG and UNEG as being quite important and is making efforts to remain open to all evaluation stakeholders.

45. Current work streams where there is overlap with UNEG include:

- Peer reviews and assessing the performance of multilateral organizations.
- Evaluation of the Paris Declaration
- Joint evaluations.
- Capacity building.
- Impact evaluation – the Network of Networks.

46. The Network is also currently working on guidelines for evaluating conflict prevention and peace building.

Session outcomes:

- There is however the feeling among members that the ECG seems rather “closed”. Efforts should be made to work more closely with them.
- It was agreed that partnerships should be driven by a purpose and a strategy that UNEG should consider developing. This could be presented in a "Memorandum of Understanding" that includes 1) the context for collaboration; 2) specific reasons for collaboration (lesson learning from common substantive areas); and 3) peer work on standards to further professionalize evaluation. Alternatively, this could be incorporated in the UNEG Principles of Working Together.
- Members should identify entry points for collaboration (e.g. peer reviews, joint thematic/impact evaluations, conceptual work etc.).

Elections for position of UNEG Chair

47. The elections for the position of UNEG Chair were held at the end of the last session on 18th May, 2007. In accordance with the UNEG Principles of Working Together this session was chaired by Mr. Maarij Qazi, Special Assistant/ Administrative Officer, Office of the Director, Conference Services Division, UNOG. Candidates for the position of UNEG Chair were nominated by UNEG members.

48. Ms Silvia Alamo (CTBTO) nominated Ms Saraswathi Menon (UNDP). The nomination was seconded by John Markie (FAO), Eddie Yee Woo Guo (OIOS) and Backson Sibanda (UNODC). No other candidate was nominated.

Session outcome:

- Ms Saraswathi Menon accepted the nomination and, in accordance with the UNEG Principles of Working Together, agreed to serve as UNEG Chair for a period of two years from April 2007 – March 2009 (see Annex 4).

Session 6 – The Evaluation Function

49. The session was chaired by Mr. Masahiro Igarashi (UNCTAD). The session was presented as an opportunity to put standardized practices and tools in place and discuss strengthening the evaluation function.

Oversight and Evaluation

50. Mr. Eddie Yee Woo Guo (OIOS), co-chair, presented the work of the Oversight and Evaluation Working Group. He began by thanking the group members, especially David Ryder Smith who had served as co-chair.

51. The Working Group presented a paper clarifying the role of evaluation in oversight in the UN System (including necessary criteria to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of evaluation in relation to other oversight functions). Specifically, the report attempted to review international definitions, norms and practices; explore the relationship between oversight and evaluation; identify best practices of evaluation in oversight; and identify minimum conditions required to ensure the effectiveness of evaluation both as both an oversight and a learning function.

52. The main findings from the work were that given the large scope of programmes there was less evaluation than expected; the demand and use of evaluation for internal oversight was not strong across the system and that the majority of UN system evaluation units are geared toward internal learning.

53. The conclusions to be made from these findings are that the governing bodies see evaluation as important for oversight but there is a potential disconnect between expectations of evaluation's contribution and actual practice of evaluation. Current practice also needs to be improved if proper adequate oversight is to be served. Working Group members also agreed that as long as credible and accurate evaluations are assured, where evaluation is located is an issue for consideration but less so than how it is located. The Working Group defined minimum conditions for locating evaluation and these are:

- Reporting and operational independence.
- Adequate resources and competencies.
- Transparency policy.

54. The Working Group identified the following issues for consideration:

- How can UNEG members strengthen the role and contribution of evaluation for oversight?
- Are minimum conditions sufficient?
- Centralization vs decentralization of evaluation units in an agency

55. Areas for further work identified by the Working Group included identifying existing best practices of evaluation and oversight and conducting a comparative assessment of the location of evaluation.

Session outcomes:

- UNEG should decide how and whether or not to continue the work on evaluation and oversight.

Results Based Management

56. Ms. Maya Bachner (WIPO) and Ms. Chandi Kadirgamar (UNCDF), Task Force co-chairs, presented the work of the RBM Task Force.

57. The Task Force conducted a survey of 26 organizations. The 21 responses identified six key issues including; promotion of a managing-for results culture; promotion of results for management purposes versus development results; harmonization of RBM within and among UN organizations; the role of evaluation in RBM; evaluation's role in assessing progress in RBM; and drawing UN system-wide lessons learned¹².

58. The Task Force also found that there are many perceptions of the interaction between RBM and evaluation which depend on the type of organization and the size of the evaluation function. It would be useful to provide some guidance where evaluators see that role to be situated for both internal and external purposes. There is also a call for a common methodology and UNEG needs to consider how to approach this and to take a stance.

59. The HLCM and HLCP have mandated a RBM workshop and UNEG members were formally invited to attend.

Session outcomes:

- The Results Based Management Task Force advised co-chairs to manage the Task Forces.
- Members should examine the best way to inform and educate Senior Managers on evaluation conclusions and how to use them for decision making.

¹² Full report “Results Based Management Summary of UNEG Task Force Discussion 16 February 2007” available on the UNEG website.

- UNEG should find a way to look at the issue and define a position of evaluation in the RBM system.
- UNEG needs to consider how to approach the call for a common methodology.

Quality Stamp Fact Sheets

60. The work of the Quality Stamp Task Force on the Fact Sheets was presented by Ms. Caroline Heider (WFP).

61. The Fact sheets were developed in 2005 and designed to compile basic data on evaluation offices that would be used to determine whether benchmarks could be established for the adequacy of resourcing of evaluation functions. A revision of the Fact Sheets was performed in 2006 due to a perception that responses to the Fact-Sheet were not of a level and quality that they could be analyzed and used easily. The 2005 and 2006 data sets did not arrive at conclusive indications of adequacy of resourcing; difference between evaluation offices were often explained by differences in mandates of organizations. The Task Force prepared an issues and options paper to provide feedback to members on the current status of the work. The Fact Sheet is now a feature on the website where members will eventually be able to complete the fact sheet online.

Session outcomes:

- Areas for further consideration on Quality Stamp Fact sheet include how to institutionalize the fact sheet; and consider how the assessments would be used and what the incentive would be for members to complete the fact sheets. The Fact-Sheet has been institutionalized on the UNEG website. The extent to which the Fact Sheet can fulfill its purpose depends on the extent to which UNEG Members keep the Fact Sheets updated. The EQE Task Force (successor of the Quality Stamp Task Force) will, if sufficient number of agencies have provided data, analyze the information and make a further attempt at defining benchmarks for resourcing.

Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation

62. Mr. Simon Lawry White (UNICEF) presented the draft UNEG Ethical Guidelines of Evaluation developed by the Quality Stamp Task Force.

63. The guidelines were developed starting with the GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines (2006) cross referenced with several other sources noted in the paper. If members agreed, the guidelines would be binding and UNEG members' staff would be obliged to follow both these guidelines, as well as their own organization's guidelines. Consultants would also be subject to the guidelines and required to sign a commitment to abide by them.

64. However the guidelines would most likely be adopted to the reality of each organization through an evaluation policy which states that the organization agrees to adhere to the ethical guidelines adopted by UNEG but taking into consideration organizational structure.

Session outcomes:

- The meeting agreed that a shorter Code of Conduct is required which all agencies would then adopt, with further consideration being given by each UNEG member to how the fuller guidelines should be applied. The Quality Stamp (later renamed Evaluation Quality Enhancement Task Force agreed to develop the Code of Conduct).
- Members were invited to send comments and suggestions on the Ethical Guidelines to the Quality Stamp Task Force who would then revise the document accordingly.

Peer Reviews

65. Mr. Rob D. van den Berg (GEF) presented a brief background to the Quality Stamp Task Forces work on Peer Reviews. The Peer Review was initiated through two pilot exercises with UNDP and UNICEF because of concern in the DAC of the effectiveness of UN organizations. Evaluation reports were not seen to be critical enough on what was happening on the ground which led to a sense of distrust of the evaluation function of the UN agencies. The initial review system was found to be burdensome and peer reviews were considered an alternative by both the multilaterals and UNEG as an instrument that could be developed together in to a professional peer review mechanism.

66. In June 2006 a joint Task Force of DAC and UNEG members was established to look at the framework and lessons learned from the two pilots. Members formulated a framework to be applied to organizations of any size¹³. The ultimate purpose of the peer review is organization specific and there is growing concern that the peer review does not appear to be helping senior management understand the nature of evaluation.

67. Members were invited to submit comments on the framework document, annexed in the document concerning the light peer review, which describes representation and purpose of the peer reviews.

68. WFP is presented their experiences on their current peer review which came after extensive interaction between management and the Board on the effectiveness and independence of the evaluation function. The joint framework prepared the work plan for the peer review and there is a five member panel who will be hiring consultants to conduct the work before the summer. Follow up will be conducted in September for more in depth probing. The report will be sent to the Executive Board, who Board will be informed throughout the process, in February 2008.

69. Mr. Finbar O'Brian highlighted to UNEG members that peer reviews within the DAC work because they are cyclical. Members know that issues need to be addressed between cycles so that they do not reappear the next time round.

Session outcomes:

- OIOS and UNCTAD volunteered to be peer reviewed.

¹³ The framework is being used for the peer review of the WFP evaluation office.

- UNEG will explore participating in the ad hoc peer reviews conducted by the DAC Network. Their peer reviews tend to be focused on specific issues.
- UNEG should work with the ECG on peer review.
- Any future Task Force should take into consideration the reference to peer reviews made in the High Level Panel on Coherence.

Session 7 – Professionalizing evaluation

70. The session was chaired by Ms. Caroline Heider (WFP). The session chair highlighted the discussions from the last couple of days about capacity development. During the discussions the question was raised about developing UNEG's own capacity as well as those of the partner countries.

Core competencies and job descriptions

71. Ms. Demetra Arapakos (OIOS), Deputy Chair of the Evaluation Capacity Development Task Force gave special thanks to Oscar Garcia, UNDP and Johannes Dobinger, UNIDO for their contribution to developing the frameworks of the job descriptions.

72. The Task Force achieved their first four deliverables. The competencies which establish standards for all UN evaluation staff and create boundaries for the profession within the UN were endorsed at the AGM 2007. They may need to be assessed in the future but in the meantime provide a benchmark to identify staff training needs and assess staff professional development.

73. The Task Force also developed the Competencies for Evaluation Heads which were completed in 2007.

74. The generic job descriptions, developed in early 2007, establish benchmarks and common frameworks for hiring evaluation staff. They are designed to facilitate consistency in evaluation staff qualifications and contribute to the professionalisation of evaluation. The job descriptions are presented in a results framework with regard to the specific responsibilities of the staff member.

75. The job descriptions will need to be tailored to individual organizations need. They could be a tool for ensuring that staff have the core competencies and seen as a framework for developing individual agency job announcements and a tool for planning office resource needs.

76. Both the job descriptions and core competencies are tools to promote and facilitate the quality, capacity and consistency of the professionalisation of the evaluation function in the UN system.

Session outcomes:

- Once completed the job descriptions will be submitted electronically to all members for endorsement.
- Reference to a candidate's knowledge of the mandate of the respective agency should be included in the job descriptions.

- Competencies required by a senior manager and a senior evaluator should also be clearly differentiated.

Evaluation needs assessment

77. Mr. Alaphia Wright (UNESCO) presented the Task Force's work on evaluation needs assessment, specifically training needs assessment in evaluation. There was a poor response to the Task Force's request for members evaluation needs. However, with the information that was available the Task Force found that:

- Agencies have not completed ECD needs assessment, and those completed have been on a very narrow spectrum.
- Agencies already employ qualified professionals.
- Evaluation capacity development is clearly wider than evaluation training.
- For training needs UNEG needs to look toward the competency profiles.

Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2007

78. Mr. Simon Lawry-White (UNICEF) presented the feedback from the Evaluation Practice Seminar held over the one and a half days prior to the UNEG AGM.

79. There were many lessons learned from the process including especially members to meet the commitments to contribute made in the Paris 2006 AGM. Overall the EPE Seminar was welcomed by members and it met its goal of being a practical exchange of experience whereby participants both learnt and challenged each other.

80. The next EPE would not necessarily need to follow the same format. In particular more time was needed for discussion. The suggestion was also made that the focus of the EPE should have a closer link to the work of the Task Forces. It was also suggested that other professional groups participate in the seminar although it was also said that inviting external participants would mean UNEG members would not feel able to speak as freely.

81. With regards to UNEG's work programme, the management response session highlighted the need for further work on best practices in management response and follow up to evaluations. There is also more work to be done on quality assurance for evaluation and on improving the development, recording and use of lessons to be extracted from evaluation. The methodology session raised the possibility of working on best practice on a selection of evaluations, strengthening the rigor of evaluation and evaluation from a human rights perspective.

Session outcomes:

- The meeting agreed that Evaluation Practice Exchange should continue, including accompanying the 2008 AGM.

UNEG Diploma Training Course, March 2007

82. The course was presented by Professor Aung Tun Thet of the UN Staff College and Mr. Jean Quesnel¹⁴ (UNICEF), Chair of the Evaluation Capacity Development Task Force. Professor Thet thanked the Task Force members for helping the College drive this work forward and to those agencies who sent participants.

83. The course needs to be kept simple so the training is effective and achieves the requirements set by UNEG. This first training course was the first product specifically linked at evaluation competency and is an initial step in developing a core evaluation curriculum. The goal for the course was to provide a comprehensive, theoretical and practical learning experience. The five day course was held at the residential facilities in Turin. Participants were chosen on a first come, first serve basis at a rate of 1600USD per participant.

84. There were session by session evaluations, the results of which were presented in the report presented to UNEG members for the AGM 2007. Overall the course was deemed a success and the training college are keen to continue working with UNEG in developing this course. The evaluation results provided the trainers with insight to the content of the course. Participants helped identify areas for revision which will be implemented by the next course.

85. It was suggested that the Heads of evaluations attend the training themselves to provide quality assurance or as resources, in particular when it comes to explaining how evaluation works in the UN system. Thought needs to be given on how to institutionalize this programme with a dedicated committee to oversee the training and would be responsive to training needs. Lessons also need to be learnt and integrated into the next training course in July 2007.

86. There was concern that changing the course facilitators from one course to the next will mean that there is a lack in consistency and presents a quality assurance issue.

87. Suggestions to reduce costs for participating agencies included making the course available online (to compliment not replace the on site training course) and that the course be held in Geneva or New York.

88. There is the scope to present the training in the other official UN languages with partners.

Session outcomes:

- The next UNEG Training Course will be held in July/ August 2007. The Task Force will distribute details to all UNEG members in advance.
- A group will be established to quality assure the Diploma Course.
- A paper on strengthening evaluation will be developed.

¹⁴ Mr. Quesnel participated via teleconference.

- The core syllabus of each module will be developed between April and September 2007, assessed by a quality assurance group and subsequently rolled out again in January 2008.
- Two or three key trainers should be identified and present at each training course.

UNEG website

89. As it is not meeting the needs of UNEG members, the Secretariat is in the process of redesigning the UNEG website. The current website was designed to allow members to upload documents and the end result is a mixed bag of random documents instead of a real value added knowledge platform.

90. The new website is being designed by the UNEG Secretariat with support from the UNDP IT analyst, Anish Pradhan and a website development company, Lomtec, based in Bratislava. The site is being designed to be more user friendly and interactive. However, until members are more familiar with its capacities, the content of the site will be fully managed by the UNEG Secretariat.

91. The website has been designed to improve collaboration among the membership as a whole and in particular to facilitate communications among UNEG Task Forces and Working Groups members. The site will provide easy access to background, working and reference documents.

92. As UNEG strengthens its work with partners and members of the wider evaluation community, the new site will be a resource for these groups to learn more about our work. This will be especially important given UNEG's current increasing trend at producing deliverables which can be shared.

Session outcomes:

- The Secretariat will look at ways to integrate a consultant's roster into the website and will upload member agencies evaluation policies.

Session 8 – Work Planning 2007/08

93. The session was chaired by Ms. Saraswathi Menon (UNEG Chair). The objective of the session was to identify UNEG's work areas and deliverables for the upcoming year and to establish the Task Forces to implement this work and produce the deliverables.

94. Mr. Nurul Alam (UNEG Executive Coordinator) presented a summary of the issues discussed during the previous two days of discussions.

Session outcomes:

- UNEG's work programme would focus on the same three substantive areas used to order the Agenda for the AGM namely: UN Reform and Evaluation, The Evaluation Function and Professionalising Evaluation
- See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Outcomes from the UNEG AGM Work Planning 2007/08 session

I. UN REFORM AND EVALUATION			
Work area	Deliverables	Modalities	Contact person and dates for action
One UN Evaluation system	Proposal to be finalized with the CEB Secretariat	Working Group. FAO, IFAD, JIU, OIOS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, WFP	Convener: Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair
One UN Pilot evaluation	Evaluation of the One UN Pilot programme	Management Group. FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNODC, WFP, WHO Steering Group. UNDESA, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNIFEM, UNFPA, Reference Group All UNEG Heads	Convener: Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair
Joint evaluation	Joint evaluation with the South African government	Current management group: UNDP, UNICEF, UNDESA Others who have indicated interest to participate: FAO, UNFPA, GEF, UNFPA, UNODC	Convener: Sukai Prom-Jackson, UNDP

II The Evaluation Function			
Work area	Deliverables	Modalities	Contact person and dates for action
Distinctiveness of the evaluation function and synergy with other functions	Seminar series – internal audit, RBM, performance assessment, quality management, strategic planning and learning Senior management briefing package	Task Force CTBTO, FAO, GEF, OIOS, OPCW, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNV, WIPO	Convener: Maya Bachner, WIPO
Improving the evaluation function	Function Fact sheets	Task Force FAO, GEF, ILO, OIOS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, WFP	Convener: Caroline Heider, WFP
	Self assessment and another round of self assessment and updating in 2008		
	Continue work on the Peer Review mechanism with partners		
Code of conduct and ethical guidelines	Published handbook	Task Force GEF, OPCW, UNCDF, UNDP, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, WFP	Convener: Simon Lawry-White, UNICEF
Harmonizing evaluation methodology	Guidelines (human rights and gender)	Task Force FAO, OHCHR, OIOS, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNV	Convener: Elena Marcelino, UNIFEM

III Professionalising Evaluation			
Evaluation capacity development	Finalizing the competencies and job descriptions	Task Force ILO, JIU, OPCW, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC	Convener: Demetra Arapakos, OIOS
	Training and accreditation Steering committee to be set up		
	Capacity development with partners (including partnership strategy) Strategy note to be developed		
	UNEG Diploma course concept note to be finalized		
EPE Seminar	Second EPE Seminar, UNEG AGM 2008, Nairobi	Task Force FAO, UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, WHO	Convener: Segbedzi Norgbey, UNEP
Website and experts database (quality control)	UNEG website as a reliable knowledge sharing platform including, amongst others, a consultant's database.	Task Force CTBTO, OIOS, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNEG Secretariat	Convener: Chandi Kadirgamar, UNDCF

Annex 1: Opening Statement

**Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
18 April 2007**

Madame Chair, Dear colleagues,

Let me first express my welcome to all of you, who have come from all parts of the United Nations system and other important international bodies. The United Nations Evaluation Group is one of the most active inter-agency groups, where specialists from all agencies work together intensively to improve the ways we service our clients – that is, the member States and their peoples. As we all work towards “One UN”, I believe such inter-agency collaboration represents the true spirit of reform, showing that we can work together for the benefit of all.

The importance of evaluation in the public service, more specifically in the current context of the United Nations, is evident. The rationale for strengthening the evaluation capacity of the United Nations is clearly stated in the report of the former Secretary-General Kofi Anan, “Investing in the United Nations.” He said, for the UN to function effectively and efficiently, there must be a right balance between the control by member States and the managerial freedom of the Secretariat. The intergovernmental oversight bodies should leave operational details to the managers, and focus on what results have been achieved, and how effectively and efficiently they have been achieved. By linking such performance information with resource allocation, member States would be able to provide direction and guidance at the right strategic level. For this to happen, however, member States need to have confidence in our transparency, and they need to have the information on which to base their decisions. Providing credible evaluation of programmatic performance is therefore essential.

The report of the High Level Panel on Coherence also underscored the importance of evaluation, and went a step further by proposing a concrete mechanism in which “One UN” could provide credible evaluation of our performance at the country level. Executive heads of the UN system agencies will meet at the CEB later this week to discuss, among other things, how to establish such a system-wide evaluation mechanism. From the discussion so far, I understand this would require not only a central evaluation mechanism, but also a commitment from each executive head of the system to enhance the evaluation capacity in his or her own organization. This evaluation group has been working to support this effort, and I encourage you to continue this work.

The United Nations’ ultimate objective is to pursue the well-being of all people of the World. Each entity of the United Nations system is tasked to undertake work in specific areas to achieve this. What really matters, then, is whether each of us is effectively contributing to this objective. Only by evaluating how we fare in making such contributions, can we know if we are moving in the right direction, and making the right management decisions.

Madame Chair, colleagues,

I encourage you to continue this important work that will make the United Nations a better organization, and I wish you all a successful meeting.

Annex 2: Opening Remarks

Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair

Good morning,

I would like to begin by thanking our hosts, the many Geneva based agencies for bringing us to the legendary site of the first major gathering of the predecessor of the modern UN and to this exquisite picture post card city by the lake. Both the past and natural beauty will combine to inspire and divert us and we can look forward to a productive and pleasant week together.

It is quite something to look around and to see what the UN Evaluation Group has become over the past few years. We are 43 member organizations, bringing together a wide range of United Nations mandates, ways of working and experience. The evaluation and oversight task force lists 56 ‘entities’ in the UN so we are close to representing all the contributions that the UN makes. Last year we welcomed the Regional Commissions as active members. This year we are glad that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has joined us.

Although our mandates and our work may be different, evaluation as a function runs like a red thread through all our organizations. We share a vision of the UN in the service of the peoples of the world and we share a purpose to make evaluation relevant and useful so that the UN is more effective in achieving that vision.

Looking back at the past year (at least for UNEG), I would like to think that at last we see a UNEG in action. We are beginning to move beyond introverted professional discussions. We are beginning to function in a way that the world can start to see what UNEG stands for and what our potential is. Let me highlight three areas where I see UNEG in action so far and in the future.

First, we have defined our professional parameters. We have our Norms and Standards, we adopted our Principles for Working Together last year and the last ‘I’s and ‘T’ should be dotted and crossed later this morning. We have explored the boundaries of the evaluation function in relation to oversight, in relation to results based management, in relation to knowledge generation. We are conducting more systematic self assessment and peer reviews. We are defining competencies and developing capacity modules. In defining UNEG and the evaluation function we have earned recognition. So much so that from the national -- the Chinese evaluation system -- to the bilateral -- the DAC network’s quality standards and peer reviews -- UNEG’s professional contribution is recognized.

Where do we go from here? The definition of the function and its professional make-up is only the first step towards improved practice. There is a long way for all of us to go. The practice and function of evaluation across the UN system is still uneven and unreliable. In this AGM I hope we set ourselves concrete and effective tasks to convert aspirations and principles into reality. To do this we have to tease out the most intractable issues and find ways to work jointly to address them.

Second, we are beginning to engage more seriously with our national partners. The country level task force has embarked on a most challenging joint evaluation with the Government of South Africa, looking at the UN in totality. This is a slow process but an important one because it goes to the heart of

evaluation contributing to making the UN more effective in the service of the peoples of the world. Some of our agencies have worked with professional associations in developing regions. There are huge benefits of mutual learning from both these strands of work.

Where do we go from here? If working with national partners is a priority, we need to move away from ad hoc initiatives but really think through together with our partners what needs to be done. I hope that we try to define in this AGM, innovative but at the same time systematic ways in which we can move the agenda of evaluation closer to the people who hold us all accountable.

Third, and finally, we have proactively used the report of the High Level Panel on Coherence as a launching pad to take a bird's eye view of evaluation in the UN. So far much of what UNEG has done has been biased towards a worm's eye view – necessary but incomplete. When our lens was more comprehensive we were able to identify gaps and propose a way forward to propose a UN wide evaluation system. We will have an opportunity to discuss this further this afternoon. But the measure of our success so far has been the encouraging response from the CEB's HLCP and HLCM, as well as the request that is bubbling up from them to substantively lead the evaluation of the One UN Pilots.

Where do we go from here? We have to commit to practice what we have preached – develop and agree to an evaluation policy for the UN, align our methodologies, contribute to system wide evaluation. We have to organize ourselves to carry out the One UN Pilot evaluative exercise. It is in the AGM where we are all present that we can thrash out the implications of working together in a new way – system wide.

We can be proud of what we have done. We have all demonstrated leadership in moving UNEG to action. But we will need to demonstrate even greater leadership if we are to go even further in strengthening the function and practice of evaluation, in working with the partners who matter, and working together for the whole UN system.

Thank you very much.

Annex 3: Evaluation of One UN Pilots

1. The HLCP recommendation that the UN Evaluation Group provide substantive guidance to the evaluation of the One UN Pilots was discussed at the UNEG Annual General Meeting on 18 April 2007 in Geneva. There was consensus that this is an important initiative that should ideally be carried out by the proposed UN wide independent evaluation mechanism. Given its absence, UNEG stands ready to support the evaluation.

2. UNEG's proposed course of action presented below recognizes the need for i) the independence and credibility of the evaluation; ii) evaluation to feed into decision-making processes; and iii) national authorities in each country to be full partners. It further outlines the process towards a full evaluation of results and impact which can only be carried out after some years.

3. Before an evaluation of the One UN Pilot exercise can be conducted, a clear statement of objectives for the One UN initiative at the overall and country level is required. The objectives of the volunteer countries for the One UN pilots need also to be clarified to assess whether or not their expectations are being or have been met. Individual pilots will need to be evaluated against both the objectives set for the One UN pilot as a whole and the country specific objectives.

4. UNEG proposes to carry out a study of the evaluability¹ in each pilot country as soon as the initiative is designed. The results of these studies could be used by management to revise their baseline and performance indicators, against which progress can be assessed during and after implementation.

5. To facilitate inter-agency and inter-governmental decision making, UNEG would advise i) in developing a framework for the pilot country government and UN country team to carry out a self-assessment of progress during and at the end of the pilot; and ii) on the quality of these self-assessments. UNEG would prepare a synthesis to support agency and CEB decision making.

6. It is clear that a full-fledged evaluation of process and of results can only be carried out after several years of implementation. The evaluability studies and self assessment will be building blocks for subsequent evaluation. If established by then, the UN wide evaluation mechanism could assume responsibility for the full evaluation. UNEG recognizes the need for management to use interim assessment exercises to support decision-making before full evaluation results become available, hence the approach proposed above.

7. To ensure both efficiency and full participation, UNEG has discussed establishing the following management arrangements:

- a. A small management group comprising evaluators from Ex Com agencies, specialized agencies, and non-resident agencies selected by UNEG to shoulder the core responsibilities;

¹ Evaluability meaning to what extent an initiative can be meaningfully evaluated and what can be done to improve the value of future evaluations

- b. UNEG's member agencies as a reference group to review methodology and products to support the management group. Special provision would be made for technical reviews, such as from a human rights and gender perspective.
 - c. Dedicated professional capacity to manage the evaluation to support the management group.
8. Dedicated resources will also need to be committed to the management of the exercise.

Geneva

18 April, 2007

Annex 4: Elections for Position of UNEG Chair

Held during the UNEG AGM 2007, 18-20 April 2007
Geneva, Switzerland

Elections for the position of UNEG Chair were held at the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2007, held from 18-20 April 2007 at the UN offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

In accordance with the UNEG Principles of Working Together:

- An independent office chaired the voting session. As such, the voting process was chaired by Mr. Maarij Qazi, Office of the Director, Conference Services Division, UNOG. The election itself was the last session on 18th April 2007.
- UNEG members nominated candidates for the position of UNEG Chair.

Ms Silvia Alamo (CTBTO) nominated Ms Saraswathi Menon (UNDP). This nomination was seconded by John Markie (FAO), Eddie Yee Woo Guo (OIOS) and Backson Sibanda (UNODC).

No other candidates were nominated.

Ms Saraswathi Menon accepted the nomination and, in accordance with the UNEG Principles of Working Together, agreed to serve as UNEG Chair for a period of two years from April 2007 – March 2009.

Mr Maarij Qazi
Special Assistant/ Administrative Officer
Office of the Director
Conference Services Division
UNOG

Date