

Annual
General
Meeting
2010



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2010

Dates: 26- 28 May 2010
Location: [United Nations Office at Vienna](#), Austria
Host agencies: [CTBTO](#), [IAEA](#), [UNIDO](#) and [UNODC](#)

Final report of the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2010.

Session 1: Opening

1. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Annual General Meeting 2010 (AGM 2010) was held at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria from 26-28 May 2010¹. It was hosted by CTBTO, IAEA, UNIDO and UNODC.
2. Mr Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), delivered the opening speech and began by welcoming members to Vienna for the AGM 2010. He presented an overview of the work conducted by CTBTO and confirmed that the key role for evaluation in the organisation is to fulfill Article 14 of the test-ban Treaty which provides for the need for monitoring, assessing and reporting on the overall performance of the verification system. He highlighted the importance that he has placed on the role of evaluation in his organisation since he joined in 2005 and how CTBT has drawn on UNEG work, in particular the UNEG Norms and Standards. He congratulated UNEG on its professional work aimed at empowering and strengthening the evaluation function across the UN system and concluded by declaring the UNEG AGM2010 officially open.
3. Ms Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair, began by thanking the host agencies for welcoming members to Vienna but regretted that due to the unforeseeable rescheduling of the AGM that not all colleagues were able to attend². She welcomed those who were participating in the AGM for the first time, as well as colleagues from the DAC Evaluation Network and Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) with whom she expressed a wish to foster stronger links.
4. The AGM was last held in Vienna in 2002 and Ms. Menon reflected on the changes the group has undergone since then, in particular its transformation from the Inter Agency Working Group on Evaluation (IAWG) to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). This transformation saw UNEG establishing itself as a credible and useful professional network of evaluators in the UN which has since produced the UNEG Norms and Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct, Core Competencies and Job Descriptions for Evaluators in the UN system. She highlighted important lessons to be learnt from the past and present, including the loss of the simplicity of the earlier UNEG meetings and UNEG's current focus on process rather than looking beyond the UN, Ms. Menon concluded by asking UNEG members to reflect upon UNEG's role and where can UNEG make the greatest contribution.
5. Ms Inga Britt Ahlenuis, Under-Secretary-General for United Nations Internal Oversight Services, had intended to attend the AGM but due to the dates was unavailable to participate. She therefore pre-recorded her speech and this was played to UNEG members.

¹ The meeting had originally been scheduled to be held from 19-23 April 2010 but was postponed due to the disruption in travel caused by the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland.

² Ibid.

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Draft Agenda of the AGM 2010 was approved.

Session 2: UN Reform and Evaluation

7. The Session was chaired by Segbedzi Norgbey (UNEP) and focused on UNEG's contribution to the country level evaluations of the Delivering as One (DaO) UN pilot countries and the work of the Country Level Evaluation Task Force 2009/2010. Ms. Saraswathi Menon (UNEG Chair) provided an update on the discussions on system-wide evaluations and Ms. Caroline Heider (UNEG vice-Chair) an update on UNEG's collaboration with ALNAP and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation on "Evaluating the Haiti Response"³.

DaO Working Group

8. Finbar O'Brien and Deepak Thapa (DaO Working Group co-Chairs) gave a brief status update on the work of the DaO Working Group. The DaO country led evaluations are in progress and the framework required of UNEG in support of the evaluations is in place, including a quality assurance panel which has provided comments on most of the inception reports and some of the draft evaluation reports⁴. He highlighted the need for UNEG to manage expectations of different stakeholders and the reputational risk to UNEG posed by the quality of some of the evaluations, even though UNEG's only role in the process is to provide advice and set standards rather than enforce them. There have also been considerable time pressures, in particular due to the need for the country reports to be ready in time for the meeting to be held in Hanoi from 14-16 June 2010 which will focus on lessons from country-led evaluations and the way forward.

9. The UNEG Chair will be participating in the Hanoi meeting and it was agreed that the position to be taken on behalf of UNEG is that whilst UNEG has supported quality assurance processes, including developing Terms of References and reviewing the evaluations, UNEG does not have any responsibility for the quality of the final evaluations as that is the responsibility of the national Evaluation Management Groups.

10. In addition to the country led evaluations, there has been a GA request to the Secretary General to conduct an independent evaluation of DaO as member states wanted an independent assessment before the results of DAO were incorporated into UN reform. It is envisaged that this work be completed by October 2011 for discussions under the QCPR 2012. UNEG was requested by the Deputy Secretary General to provide advice on a way forward. UNEG proposed two possible options to be explored. The first was for the SG to ask JIU to conduct the evaluation. The second was for the SG to establish an ad hoc Evaluation Management Group (EMG) consisting of country nominated professionals with relevant evaluation experience responsible for developing terms of reference, identifying the consultants

³ [Haiti Learning and Accountability Portal](#)

⁴ At time of reporting, draft reports already received from Albania, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam.

for the evaluation, establishing a quality assurance system and in general managing the evaluation. In either case, UNEG clearly stated the need for the evaluation to follow the UNEG Norms⁵ and Standards⁶ for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG N&S) and discussions are currently focused on who should provide the administrative and technical support to the EMG. Both OIOS and JIU have been considered with the third option, DESA, currently being discussed and the modalities being explored. UNEG has expressed the need for the support to be independent and report directly to the EMG. The issue has not been settled and the political negotiations continue.

11. The UNEG Chair and the JIU Chair have been asked to participate in the EMG of the independent evaluation as ex-officio members. UNEG's participation could help to draw the attention of the EMG to UNEG Norms and standards.

Decisions taken/ next steps

- The UNEG Chair will represent UNEG at the Hanoi Conference where she will highlight that, whilst supporting the quality assurance process, UNEG is not responsible for the overall quality of the evaluations.
- If asked, the UNEG chair will participate in the EMG of the DaO independent evaluation.
- The current DaO Working Group will continue to support the country level evaluation process and provide quality assurance feedback to the remaining draft reports. The TF will automatically disband when the work is complete.

Country Level Evaluation Task Force

12. The work of the Country Level Evaluation (CLE) Task Force (TF) was presented by the TF co-Chairs, Oscar Garcia (UNDP) and Tullia Aiazzi (FAO). They began by thanking the members of the TF for their contributions and work over the year. At the AGM 2009, the TF were given four work areas and the co-Chairs presented an update on these work areas and suggestions for the work programme 2010/2011.

13. Firstly, the TF were asked to provide support to the country level evaluation of the DaO pilot countries. The TF met this task by drafting the template Terms of Reference⁷ for the evaluations and by presenting these at the Kigali Inter-governmental meeting held in October 2009. After this meeting, the DaO Working Group was created to provide the quality assurance function and assistance to pilot countries and the CLE TF was relieved of this part of its mandate. The two CLE TF co-Chairs became members of the DAO WG allowing continuity and exchange of information between the two TFs.

⁵ See [UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System](#), UNEG/FN/Norms(2005).

⁶ See [UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System](#), UNEG/FN/Standards(2005).

⁷ [DaO Framework TOR for the CLE of the DAO Programme Country Pilots](#), UNEG/CLE(09-10)1 (internal document only).

14. The second work area looked at by the TF was United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) monitoring and evaluation⁸. Initial plans were to work on “engagement with UNDAF M&E, including a stocktaking of current practices on M&E at country level and response on how to strengthen UNDG guidelines for UNDAF evaluation. An important output envisaged was strengthening the UNDG guidelines for UNDAF evaluation: this turned out to be un-timely, since the latest substantive revision of the UNDAF guidelines had already been completed in February 2009. Thus, the sub-group was mostly involved in meeting requests for support submitted to UNEG by DOCO. These included revisions of the simplified version of the UNDAF guidelines in October 2009, introducing text more consistent with UNEG N&S⁹. A request in April to revise the draft UNDG RBM Handbook could not be met due to the short notice given and the perceived need by the TF to revise the document in depth. Informally, the sub-group inquired with DOCO whether they foresee a possible involvement of UNEG in relevant areas of work on M&E in the future. While it was indicated that they had no immediate and clear plans, they recognized that there is a gap and a need to work on the area of UNDAF evaluations. For the work programme year 2010/2011 the TF proposed conducting an assessment of UNDAF’s compliance with the UNEG Norms and Standards and examining the extent to which results of the evaluation is fed into the following UNDAF cycle.

15. The third work area was Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD). The TF collected information, analyzed and mapped the dynamics of demand for ECD in developing countries and an overview of UN experiences in national level evaluation capacity development and the work of other evaluation networks (DAC and ECG) on the supply side. A working paper on national ECD, including an initial proposal of strategic roles for UN agencies and UNEG was presented at the AGM¹⁰. For the work programme 2010/2011, the TF proposed, based on the existing working paper on national ECD, to develop a conceptual framework for national evaluation capacities development, including strategic roles for UNEG. Further, it proposed developing a user-friendly and short guide on "strengthening national evaluation capacities" and facilitating an interactive exchange among TF members and act as a coordination forum for agencies that volunteer in joint initiatives to strengthen national evaluation capacities.

16. Finally, the TF prepared and presented a paper on developing a database for country level evaluations within the UNEG website¹¹. The database would be a knowledge sharing tool for UNEG members allowing them to upload their country level evaluation reports with the expectation that this would allow greater coordination on planned evaluations. The TF recommended using the already existing IE database as a joint interface, as this seems to be the most cost effective option and to establish a smaller working group to finalise specifications to be implemented by the UNEG website developer, in close coordination with the UNEG Secretariat. Requests were made for expanding the planned database to include relevant cases by non-UNEG members.

⁸ For more information: [UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation](#).

⁹ Op. cit 5 and 6.

¹⁰ [Possible roles for UNEG in National Evaluation Capacity Development](#) (ECD), UNEG/AGM2010/2a (internal document only).

¹¹ [Proposal for a Country Level Evaluation Database](#), UNEG/AGM2010/2b (internal document only).

17. The TF were thanked for the important work they have conducted over the last year. With regards ensuring UNDAF's compliance with the UNEG N&S¹², members felt that this was beyond UNEG's capacity and that therefore efforts should focus on giving guidance and knowledge sharing. Members were also interested by the idea of establishing joint country level evaluations.

Decisions taken

- UNEG should focus on giving guidance and sharing knowledge rather than ensuring UNDAF compliance and providing capacity development assistance
- Areas for the work programme 2010/2011 identified by the Task Force 2009/2010 to be discussed during AGM Session 5 on work planning.

System wide evaluation

18. Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair, provided the background and update on the on-going discussions concerning system-wide evaluation in the UN.

19. In its report to the Secretariat General in November 2006, the High Level Panel on Coherence recommended that a UN system-wide independent evaluation mechanism be established. In 2007, UNEG was asked by the Chairs of the High Level Committee on Planning (HLCP) and High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) to prepare a proposal to address this recommendation. The UNEG proposal, which has been discussed and reviewed a number of times since 2007, essentially proposed the establishment of a small unit that would conduct system wide evaluation, to be placed under the aegis of the CEB and which would work in collaboration with the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and evaluation units of individual UN agencies.

20. In 2009, the GA developed a resolution asking the Secretary General to inform them of arrangements for a system-wide independent evaluation mechanism. The CEB Secretariat was therefore asked to prepare a proposal, in consultation with UNEG, JIU and OIOS. UNEG Heads commented on this proposal in December 2009. The revised proposal should have been discussed by UNEG at the AGM 2010 scheduled in April, but due to the change in dates written comments were again requested. A revised proposal was presented at an informal meeting organised by the GA co-facilitators on the discussions on system-wide coherence held on 6th May 2010. No conclusion was reached during the meeting and the Chair asked member states to provide language for the resolution.

21. Ms. Menon highlighted that during the meeting a number of delegations had quoted directly from the internal comments of individual UNEG members. Several had indicated that they would not take a position until UNEG's position had been clarified.

22. On 25th May, a further meeting on the overall discussions of system-wide coherence was held in New York. Delegations were asked to consult amongst themselves and come back with language for a resolution but clearly there is no agreement.

¹² Op. cit 5 and 6.

23. Ms. Menon indicated that UNEG, as a professional network, needs to define boundaries of what the group can do and contribute and how UNEG can push for system wide evaluation without being the mechanism to do such evaluations. She also shared the experience of the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG)¹³ which is currently conducting joint evaluations and presents an area of collaboration that UNEG may want to consider.

24. Discussions focused on how UNEG could address system-wide issues through its own work programme. This included the issue of joint evaluations and what UNEG should and could do to promote these types of evaluation. It was suggested that UNEG develop standards and approaches for joint evaluations for all sectors, with OCHA agreeing that this would be a useful tool given their own experience which shows a lack of standards. On further contributions to the discussions on system-wide evaluation, members highlighted that UNEG should stay away from political discussions but that UNEG could eventually provide technical input by clarifying questions on, for example, what is meant by system-wide evaluation.

Decisions taken

- Due to the political implications, UNEG should avoid getting into proposing the architecture for a system wide evaluation mechanism but could define the scope of things that need to be addressed (when asked).
- Under the Session 5 on Work Planning, UNEG should look its work as a whole to see how system-wide evaluation is promoted through, for example, joint evaluations and development of the UNEG N&S etc.

Humanitarian Assistance: Building a coherent approach to evaluating the Haiti Earthquake Response

25. Ms. Caroline Heider (UNEG vice-Chair) updated members on UNEG's involvement with the work currently being conducted with ALNAP and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation on the joint evaluation of the Haiti earthquake response. She began by welcoming this as an opportunity for UNEG to look outside its current development focus and to look at issues relating to humanitarian assistance. It is also an opportunity to look at system-wide evaluation in the humanitarian sector, which is even wider than the discussions under the previous agenda item as it involves many partners including the bilateral, NGOs, the UN and other stakeholders.

26. Ms. Heider provided the background to the joint work which began during discussions in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation meeting which discussed the lessons from the Tsunami

¹³ The Evaluation Cooperation Group is dedicated to harmonizing evaluation work among multilateral development banks. For more information on their work, see the [ECG website](#).

Evaluation Coalition¹⁴ (TEC) and how these can be used to look at the disaster in Haiti to avoid mistakes that were previously made. In particular, how to ensure that Haiti will not receive the “avalanche of evaluations” as a result of the earthquake.

27. In May 2010, the DAC Evaluation Network, UNEG and ALNAP hosted a joint meeting in London which brought together the key players involved in on-going and planned evaluation efforts. The meeting was attended by representatives of over fifty international NGOs, donors, UN agencies, the Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement and humanitarian networks. The first day of the meeting established a shared understanding of the context in Haiti, whilst the second focused on evaluating the response, and in particular, the need for a more strategic approach to collaboration in the ongoing efforts. From the practitioners side there was a great demand for evaluation, both for learning and accountability (including to those affected by the earthquake and mutual accountability between partners).

28. With regards future collaboration it was agreed that there should be a higher value added for all involved in terms of learning and accountability, sharing information and to lessen the burden of the many evaluations expected. It was also agreed that there was a need to stay focused on the objective of the evaluation initiatives, which led to some discussion on establishing a common framework for these evaluations.

29. To date, ALNAP have been providing the Secretariat function for this initiative. It has been suggested that a Task Force be established with all three networks represented although the details are not yet finalized and more information will follow. The work will build on the principles of Good Humanitarian donorship and joint evaluation standards which already exist. The advisor to the Haitian government, who attended the meeting, will see explore how the government wants to be involved and to move forward. There was also a discussion about creating an evaluation support office which would have a clearing house function, based in Haiti, and the evaluation missions would work through that office to share information and explore joint opportunities.

30. It was agreed that participation in such humanitarian intervention should be a subject matter of particular interest to UNEG given the UN mission and discussions focused on how UNEG could continue to collaborate in this effort. It was agreed that this area of work related much to the previous discussions on joint evaluations and that through this work, a certain work element would relate directly to humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping.

Decisions taken

- Members were invited to share upcoming work plans on Haiti and potential interests in any joint initiatives.
- Further discussion of UNEG engagement in this effort should be taken up during the work planning session.

¹⁴ The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) was set up as an independent learning and accountability initiative in the humanitarian sector. It was established in February 2005 in the wake of the December 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunamis. For further information see the [ALNAP website](#).

Session 3: The Evaluation Function

31. The Session was chaired by Silvia Alamo (CTBTO) and focused on the work of the four TFs: Evaluation of the Evaluation Function, Evaluation Quality Standards, Human Rights and Gender Equality and Impact Evaluation. Due to the nature of the work, a joint discussion was held on the work of the Evaluation of Evaluation Function and Evaluation Quality Standards Task Forces.

Evaluation of the Evaluation Function

32. Eddie Yee Woo Guo (Task Force co-Chair) presented the overall work of the TF which looked at how evaluators submit themselves to evaluations. The TF started with an ambitious goal to pull together “all that can be said about evaluation of the evaluation function”, but became less ambitious over time. Three deliverables were agreed upon by the TF members:

- Establishing evaluation performance criteria – this deliverable was later passed on to Quality Standards TF;
- Review of self assessments carried out by the various UN evaluation functions; and
- Systematize lessons learned from peer reviews carried out by UNEG.

33. Ram Babu Nepal (OPCW) presented the paper on Self Assessment (SA) of the Evaluation Function¹⁵ which particularly looked at the experiences of UNDP, FAO, UNIDO, IFAD, IOIOS and UNESCO. The paper focuses on the definition of SA, as well as objectives, scope and limitations to SA and makes the case that SAs can be useful inputs to external reviews of evaluation functions (independent and peer reviews). It established that SAs have been used to assess both specific evaluation assignments and the evaluation function as a whole, and describes the most common methodologies. Finally, the paper makes recommendations on how to improve the SA processes and reports.

34. Regarding peer reviews (PR), the TF has systematized lessons, based on discussions undertaken through an electronic forum. Some of these lessons include:

- Different agencies have different primary purposes to request a PR – the purposes are central in determining the methodology and stakeholders of the process;
- Considering that several PRs have taken place so far, UNEG has a clear set of lessons and tools, which can be used to define a more standardized approach to conducting PRs;
- There is a need to consider other areas of evaluation beyond development intervention (e.g. humanitarian assistance). Any PR mechanism or guidelines should also serve these contexts;
- The composition and independence of the panels conducting PRs are essential to guarantee a high-quality process.

¹⁵ [Self Assessment of the Evaluation Function](#), UNEG/AGM2010/3a/I (internal document only).

Evaluation Quality Standards

35. The work of the Evaluation Quality Standards was presented by Rachel Bedouin, TF co-Chair. As agreed in the 2009 AGM, the TF worked on four deliverables over the year:

- Good practice guidelines to the follow-up to evaluations¹⁶
- Quality checklists for evaluation reports¹⁷
- Quality checklists for evaluation TORs and inception reports¹⁸ and
- Performance indicators for the evaluation function.

36. The good practice guidelines have been discussed quite extensively over the past three years. Papers were presented at the AGM 2007 and 2009 EPE, when it was agreed to refine the documents to become a set of guidelines. A small working group developed a synthesis of the two documents, adding and focusing on UNEG-specific issues. Some of the elements in the guidance include:

- Emphasis on increased ownership and dialogue throughout the evaluation;
- Definition of roles, responsibilities and guidelines for the preparation of management responses (MR), as well as disclosure policies;
- Role of evaluation units, which don't have a direct responsibility for MRs, but can provide support by assuring good examples and guidance on how to prepare them;
- Follow-up on status of MRs;

37. The TF proposed that agencies adapt the guidelines to their own context and include concrete actions in their evaluation plans.

38. The performance indicators paper is a more conceptual one, and still requires some discussion on terminology, definitions, etc. The TF has been exploring the issue of evaluation performance measurement and use of indicators since 2008. A survey has shown that there are no standards for measuring performance of evaluation functions: there are proxy indicators, indirect measurements (e.g. does the evaluation function comply with standards?), but not a direct assessment of the performance of the evaluation function (effects on the organization and programming). In that context, the paper proposes a harmonized approach and describes possible pathways and theories of change on the results that can be sought and achieved by evaluation functions. The TF proposed to the AGM to continue working on the document, expanding and fine-tuning its content.

¹⁶ [UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow up to Evaluations](#), UNEG/G(2010)3.

¹⁷ [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports](#), UNEG/G(2010)2.

¹⁸ [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports](#), UNEG/G(2010)1.

39. The last two products of the TF were the checklists for assessing the quality of evaluation TORs and reports, which can be used as stand-alone instruments and adapted flexibly by agencies. Both checklists are based on the UNEG N&S ¹⁹ and have taken into consideration existing instruments (including those developed outside UNEG), areas of overlap and gaps.

40. During the discussions, it was agreed that the work of both TFs touched upon issues essential part of UNEG's mandate – making sure that evaluation functions continue to have quality and relevance. Combined, the outputs produced by the two TFs can be put together in a toolbox of methods and guidance that can support analyses of how evaluation works within the UN system. This is particularly important as organizations move towards RBM. It is important that UNEG members utilize instruments that have been developed before (e.g. the self assessment tool and fact sheets, available to UNEG members on the UNEG website, and meta-evaluations).

41. In addition, a clearer connection between the SA and PR needs to be established, and any guidelines for PR need to consider UNEG specific needs and demands (original framework was very DAC-oriented) and more specific tools to assess, for example, credibility and utility. There are also concerns on whether the PR framework is adequate to evaluation functions that work in other contexts, such as humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping.

42. The PR is a particularly good strategy to strengthen the engagement of internal stakeholders with the evaluation function, and to raise awareness to the importance of evaluation. From experience, some essential elements for the success of PRs included good quality reports, high credibility of peers, openness to change by the evaluation units, management and board and commitment to improve. Finally, each agency that decides to go through a PR will need to deal with challenges related to including it in its work programme and bearing the costs for the process.

43. Nevertheless, PR processes would not preclude boards from asking for independent reviews, possibly PR might not be seen as independent. Under UNEG's umbrella, guidance should be developed on how to utilize and/or combine the various tools, processes and mechanisms for providing an evaluation of the evaluation function without causing a very heavy burden on organizations.

44. A few questions were put on the table for further discussion:

- What should these two TFs do for the next term? Focus on substantive discussion of areas and how to further use tools and mechanisms proposed by the TFs?
- What could be UNEG's role to promote the tools developed?
- What other approaches or tools could be used to ensure that real exchange of experience takes place during the PR process? What is the right balance between the learning and accountability facts of a PR?
- How to market the PR and avoid resistance from management on the process?
- Does the fact that UNEG members peer-review each other jeopardize the independence of the process?

¹⁹ Op. cit. 5 and 6.

45. On the UNEG N&S, there are good reasons to start a review process (a refinement, rather than major revamping) as some areas are vague and can be better defined. It is important to start discussing how to go about that, and what should be the scope and extent of the review. There were also suggestions that, during the revision of the N&S, a requirement should be included that evaluation units undertake SAs regularly (i.e. every few years).

Decisions taken

- The Checklists for Evaluation TOR and Inception Reports were adopted as UNEG guidance documents.
- More work needs to be done on key performance indicators for assessing evaluation function and the Guidance for follow-up to evaluations requires further consultation – TF to decide how to move on further consultations with management and governing bodies
- UNEG needs to develop a coherent framework for looking at continued effectiveness of evaluation units and evaluation policies that links the various approaches, and addresses the frequency of assessment under cost benefit considerations.
- The PR framework should be a UNEG framework and address the DAC evaluation criteria, reflect the UNEG N&S and consider whether other normative dimensions should be taken into account, such as humanitarian assistance, environment, peace and security. This framework should be submitted to discussion and approval by the next AGM. Issues to be addressed include the credibility of the process, inclusion of PRs in the UNEG work programme, funding, criteria and rules of engagement for panel members.
- Engagement with DAC Evaluation Network and ECG should continue.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

46. The presentation on the work of the TF was given by the TF co-Chairs Romain Sirois (OHCHR) and Belen Sanz (UNIFEM). The objective of the presentation was to i) introduce the handbook and piloting strategy; ii) seek agreement on the use of the handbook as a piloting draft; and iii) seek agreement on the work programme for next year.

47. The TF co-Chairs provided a summary of the work conducted over the last year which has culminated with the current Human Rights and Gender Equality (HRGE) handbook, which is a short, concise manual building on the theoretical content presented in the guidance document. The presentation also included a summary of the handbook contents, the piloting strategy and proposals for the ways forward.

48. UNEG members welcomed the work of the TF which addresses the existing gap in methodologies to integrate HRGE into evaluations. In this context, every improvement to the material produced by the TF is essential. Although the draft handbook and piloting strategy were considered quite solid and with practical ideas, bringing normative and operational issues together, the exercise conducted by the TF during the EPE was very valid as a further opportunity for UNEG members to contribute to the

discussion and products. Overall, members felt the TF should address the comments made and incorporate them to the extent possible during the piloting stage.

49. The piloting stage was also discussed, and some UNEG members expressed interest in being engaged in the pilot. For example, UNCDF would like to use the handbook as a tool for planning future evaluations of a new programme, i.e. in the facilitation of evaluability. The piloting agenda will still be open for the next two weeks, and agencies interested in participating were invited to contact the TF co-Chairs. The TF clarified that the idea of the piloting process is to have as wide diversity as possible in the selection of agencies, evaluation types (project, programme, policy, joint evaluations) and themes (including evaluations of projects/programmes that do not focus explicitly on HR/GE, but that may nonetheless have an impact on those). It was also agreed that the handbook can be shared as draft outside the UN (e.g. DAC and NGOs), who can use it and provide feedback – this will be incorporated into the pilot as non-core evaluations. However, the TF needs to be very careful in the selection of external organizations to receive it, making sure it is not further disseminated as the material is not yet official.

Decisions taken

- The TF needs to discuss how to incorporate the feedback from EPE into the handbook and piloting strategy;
- Finalize list of evaluations to be included in the pilot by 11 June – agencies which have not signed up can still volunteer until that date;
- The piloting process should begin immediately;
- A revised version of the handbook and guidance document is to be presented at the AGM 2011.

Impact Evaluation

50. Margareta de Goys and Tullia Aiazzi, TF co-Chairs, presented the work of the Impact Evaluation (IE) TF. They were joined by David Todd, previous TF co-Chair presently working as a consultant. The TF co-Chairs presented an overview of the work of the TF including:

- Preparation of a concept note in IE;
- Liaison with NONIE, through the participation in selected events;
- Monitoring and management of an IE database;
- Experience exchange through the EPE.

51. The TF co-Chairs also highlighted some of the challenges and successes the TF faced over the year. Challenges included an unbalanced level of engagement in the TF work among UNEG members and the gap left by NONIE, whilst successes included good communications with other TFs (HRGE, CLE) and a fruitful collaboration through EPE session (feedback for guidance document).

52. In the interviews with UN evaluation units, the TF has been able to ascertain that there is a big interest among UNEG members in IE, in particular because DAC has been pushing agencies in this direction. In addition, the UN has a responsibility to assess progress against the MDGs. However, there is also a need for guidance and support in the area.

53. The survey conducted by the TF included 28 agencies, and provides a good idea of what UNEG members think is important regarding IE. Overall, UNEG agencies are concerned with questions such as “What is the role of IE”? “When should we do it”? “How we should do it?” “What type of questions can be answered”? But there are significant challenges regarding definition and identification of impact and methods for its assessment, particularly considering the diversity of UNEG members, institutional challenges, and specific issues related to the HR/gender dimensions of evaluations, and to evaluation in humanitarian operations. Other challenges include limited resources and unclear demand, as well as the complex management of IE.

54. The TF proposed that UNEG prepare a guidance document on IE which should include guidance on areas such as the role of IE, rights-based approaches, evaluating impact of normative and institutional development support, etc. In addition, the TF members also proposed continuing activities such as exploring joint impact evaluations, increasing awareness of IE, enhancing knowledge sharing on IE through the database and improving liaison with other TFs.

55. The work of the TF was recognized as very important, systematic and necessary for the work of the UN. It was also recognized that there is a need for specific guidance to the UN context. In that sense, the AGM participants agreed that it is important to continue sharing experience through the database and through the TF.

56. Participants also endorsed the preparation of a guidance document. It was noted that, in order for the guidance document to be useful, it is important to agree on some concepts, such as the definition of impact, which is used differently depending on the agency. One potential challenge is to cater for different contexts, without becoming too broad and thus not useful. This balance needs to be carefully kept. The guidance also needs to take into account existing experiences (e.g. ALNAP, NONIE, 3IE), and try to be more specific to the UN areas of work, instead of reinventing the wheel. For the UN, more qualitative and theory-based approaches are more useful than large experimental and quasi-experimental studies that don't necessarily apply to the context of UN interventions.

57. In principle, impact assessment is an areas in which many UNEG organizations aim to become progressively involved. A proper M&E system with linkages to RBM, placing organizations in a better position to evaluate impact and analyze attribution, is one important step in the process. Considering the linkages between monitoring and evaluation, the guidance document should also shed some light on what progress can be considered an impact (e.g. changing human lives, making a positive difference, etc.). Definitions such as these will help identify impact along the vast continuum of UN agencies' experience. As part of its survey, the TF already did part of this job, looking at the definitions adopted by the different agencies and the particular adjustments that have been made.

58. Another important point raised was that managers may still be resistant to IE, since it thoroughly scrutinizes development interventions. In this context, how to advocate for IE becomes an important part of the learning process. One suggestion that was to develop guidance materials, each tackling one aspect

of IE, including different options and tools under which circumstances they can be useful etc. This approach, as opposed to a more prescriptive one, can make a difference in facilitating buy-in.

59. It was considered appropriate to work both on guidance and on joint evaluations in the area. But the TF needs to be clear about how ambitious it wants to be – getting into joint impact evaluations is a complex process to manage, but will have the advantage of feeding into the guidance by learning by doing. Therefore, it is useful to have the two processes in parallel, but the selection of the appropriate process to engage in will be key.

Decisions taken

- Work on guidance materials should be finalized and presented at the AGM2011 and two priorities were set at the AGM. The draft should take into account the comments provided and the differences in definitions used by UNEG agencies. A dissemination strategy should also be prepared.
- The TF should continue to exchange experience through the IE database on the UNEG website and should explore opportunities for joint impact evaluations on a country level and in relation to a specific MDG.

Session 4: Professionalising Evaluation

60. The session was chaired by Caroline Heider (WFP) who indicated that the objectives of the session were to look at the work of the Training Task Force, to discuss the outcomes of the Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2010 and to think about the bigger framework of professionalizing evaluation and its implications for UNEG.

Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2010

61. The UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2010²⁰ (EPE 2010) was held on 25th May 2010. The EPE is an opportunity for UNEG members to exchange information and share lessons learned. Issues on the agenda for the EPE 2010 included: evaluation approaches and methods, integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation in the UN, evaluation policy and use, evaluation capacity development and impact evaluation. A report on the EPE 2010 is being prepared by the TF co-Chairs, Shravanti Reddy and Krishna Belbase.

62. The TF co-Chairs presented an overview of the work by the TF over the course of the year. They highlighted challenges the TF faced including ensuring quality of presentations through a peer review process and the time restraints imposed by condensing the agenda from two days into one due to the change in dates²¹. The agenda for the EPE2010 focused very much on members sharing their lessons

²⁰ Presentations given at the UNEG EPE2010 are available to UNEG members on the UNEG website.

²¹ See footnote 1.

learned and the TF designed the agenda to ensure as much discussion time as possible. Comments from participants received during EPE wrap up session were positive and there were a number of suggestions on ways to improve the event including linking to other conferences, having fewer presentations and more discussions and opening the event to a wider audience²², although it was suggested that this could lead to vague discussions.

63. AGM participants congratulated the TF for the work and the success of the event which members found to be a very interesting learning experience. Members agreed that the event has great potential for mutual learning but that the next organizing TF needs to think about how to strengthen the event. Additional suggestions made included holding the EPE at a different time to the AGM and using new technologies (e.g. webinars) to have continuous learning exchanges over the course of the year. The TF co-Chairs agreed that they would reflect upon these suggestions in the EPE2010 report.

Decisions taken

- The EPE should be more inclusive in terms of participants and more focused in terms of topics.
- Based on the report of the EPE2010, the EPE 2011 TF should agree on basic principles for the EPE and innovate on timing, locations and technologies to broaden participation/learning opportunities.

Training

64. The work of the Training Task Force 2009/2010 was presented by Sukai Prom-Jackson, TF co-Chair. She began by outlining the agreed work plan as identified at the UNEG AGM 2009 which included supporting the negotiations between UNEG and UNSSC, updating and packaging the content of the Introductory Course, establishing an external, independent quality assurance system for the Introductory Course and conducting a needs assessment. In November 2009, the TF submit a revised work programme which included development of an e-training course and focused on identifying partners to deliver the programme. The TF had also established certain guiding principles with the strategy for UNEG training, including tying training requirements to the UNEG Core Competencies, using what evaluation training exists and giving consideration to both transaction costs and UNEG's capacity to provide training, as well as its comparative advantage and niche in the training market.

65. Whilst it was agreed that training and evaluation capacity development is an important area of work for UNEG, in particular given its role in strengthening evaluation in the UN, it was recognized that UNEG's ability to provide a training course was limited both by its human and financial resource capacity and pedagogical experience. The idea of an e-learning course was welcomed but again concerns about cost and maintenance were raised and it was agreed that development of such a course was currently beyond UNEG's capacity.

²² Currently the EPE is open to those in the central evaluation office, but also those working in evaluation in UNEG agencies.

66. The comparative advantage of a UNEG training course to other more well established courses was also extensively discussed. Members agreed that the idea of partnering with other institutions was a more feasible long term option but that the materials that the Training TF have should be preserved and made available to UNEG members via the website. They will not be made public as they have not been quality assured.

Decisions taken

- There seemed to be no agreement on the role of UNEG on training but that the TF has to take into account the conflicting interests, available resources and different opinions on comparative advantage and formulate a proposal for the path ahead.
- Training materials that have been developed will be finalized, posted on the UNEG website for UNEG members and will include a disclaimer to say that they were never quality assured.

Session 5: Work Planning 2010/2011

67. The session was chaired by Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair, and focused on developing UNEG's work plan and modalities of working for the forthcoming year (2010/11) in light of discussions held over the previous two days. The session began with the report of the UNEG Executive Coordinator, Mr. Juha Uitto. The report of the UNEG Executive Coordinator was previously given on the first day of the AGM. However, it was felt that there were implications in the report, in particular the financial report, that were relevant to the work planning discussions.

Report of the UNEG Executive Coordinator

68. Mr. Uitto began by thanking those members who had left UNEG since the last AGM2009 for their contributions and by welcoming those who had joined. He mentioned in particular, Mr. Nurul Alam who retired from UNDP Evaluation Office and consequently as UNEG Executive Coordinator in July 2009. Over the last year, UNEG has received requests for membership from UNDSS and UNOG and as per the UNEG Principles of Working Together, these applications were initially reviewed by the UNEG Chair, vice-Chair and Executive Coordinator and applicants were given temporary membership until full ratification at the UNEG AGM 2010. DPI had also applied for membership in 2008, but this was not discussed at the AGM 2009. Therefore, all three membership applications were being presented for discussion and approval.

69. As agreed at the AGM2009, the Distinctiveness of the Evaluation Function²³ paper was finalized by the TF during the course of the year and made available on the UNEG website as a reference paper, (available to UNEG members only). It had also been agreed at the 2009 AGM, that a small TF led by the UNEG Secretariat, would develop a branding look for UNEG materials. The TF hired a consultant to

²³ The Distinctiveness of the Evaluation Function, UNEG/REF(2010)1/internal (internal document only)

develop the “UNEG look” and the work was completed in September 2009. All UNEG documents were subsequently reformatted to this new look and republished on the UNEG website.

70. In November 2009, the Secretariat developed a paper on UNEG Draft Working Practices. It was developed as an internal working document to clarify the post-AGM follow-up, the role and responsibilities of the TF co-Chairs and the process for requesting funds from the UNEG budget. The paper was circulated to UNEG Heads for comments but none were received. The paper was revised in light of the feedback from the survey (see below) and the administrative and budgetary reports of the TFs in the UNEG Executive Coordinator’s report.

71. In February 2010, the Secretariat requested feedback on members’ experiences as TF members and suggestions for improving the functioning and working practices of the TF. Forty one members responded to the survey. Overall, it was felt that the TF deliverables and work programmes were well defined but some common concerns included TF size, unrealistic timeframes and/ or work plans, poor participation by some members and uneven burden sharing. The lack of membership continuity in the TFs also meant delays in the work of the TF due to the need to get new TF members up to speed on previous developments. Some useful suggestions for improvement were made including having smaller, more focused TFs, developing more realistic work plans/ deliverables and identifying work area priorities earlier in the year.

Financial report

72. During the FY2009, which ran from January – December, the Secretariat received voluntary contributions totaling USD 31,950 and Mr. Uitto thanked members who provided voluntary contributions. He mentioned the UNICEF Evaluation Office who provided direct funding to the UNEG Country Level Evaluation and Evaluation Quality Standard TFs in order for them to complete their work programmes.

73. Three TFs submitted requests to the Secretariat for financial contributions for the work programme 2009/2010. These financial requests were distributed to UNEG Heads in November for approval. The CLE TF made an initial request of USD18,500 to hire a consultant to develop a concept paper on evaluation capacity development. As previously mentioned, these costs were eventually met by UNICEF. The HRGE TF submitted a request for funds with two options. One option was to cover the costs of a workshop scheduled for February 2010, the second option covered the costs of the workshop, publication and translation of the guidance document. The Secretariat approved funds to cover option one but proposed that option 2 be put forward for discussion at the AGM. Although the funds were allocated, they were not dispersed during the FY2009. The Impact Evaluation TF also submitted a request for financial support from the UNEG funds to cover the costs of hiring a consultant to develop a paper on impact evaluation. The Secretariat allocated a contribution of USD10,000 to the TF with WFP and UNIDO providing the remaining funds to cover the contract. Total expenditure from the UNEG budget for FY2009 was USD51, 542.

74. The FY2010 began in January and will run until December. A total of USD61,800 in contributions have been received since January 2010. Contributions from UNIDO and GEF were received after the UNEG Executive Secretary Financial report was published and were therefore not included in the Executive Coordinators written report for FY2009, but will be indicated in the report FY2010.

Remaining funds carried over from FY2009 and voluntary contributions for FY2010 means that the balance of the UNEG fund currently stands at USD106,566.

75. Prior to the AGM2010, the 2009/2010 TFs were asked to identify potential areas of work and any potential funding requirements for this work, which could then be discussed whilst defining the 2010/2011 Work Programme.

76. At the request of UNEG members, the UNEG Secretariat has been developing consultant roster which would become an integral tool of the UNEG website. The roster is close to finalization but requires extensive testing and members were asked to volunteer with the final development phase. Some questions were raised over the utility of the consultant roster (in particular the incentive to add names), the referral system, and the assessment form. With regards the utility, the roster will only be a useful tool should members actively contribute and nominate consultants. The Secretariat will encourage members to do so but recognizes that members are under no obligation.

77. It was decided to use a system of UNEG members referring consultants, as opposed to inviting consultants, to ensure some element of quality control. The option of having a panel to clear applications had been considered in previous work years but it had been agreed that this required a lot more maintenance and would probably not be sustainable in the long run.

Decisions taken

- The Secretariat would include a paragraph on the role and responsibilities of the TF members in the UNEG Working Practices document. It would then be considered approved and circulated to UNEG members.
- The establishment of a TF to work with the UNEG Secretariat to finalise the consultant roster would be discussed in the work planning and modalities session.

Work planning and modalities 2010/2011

78. Ms. Menon began by summarizing the outcomes of the discussions held during previous sessions, in particular, the identifiable areas of work for the Work Programme year 2010/11. Once identified and agreed upon, the TF's were created and the work attributed to each (see Decisions Taken and Table 1 below).

79. Members were invited to indicate their participation in the TFs and conveners for the first TF meetings were identified. They were asked to hold the first TF meeting within a month of the AGM so that the Coordination Committee for 2010/11 could be established. It was reiterated that TF co-Chairs should be nominated on a personal and not an organizational basis.

80. UNESCO offered to host the UNEG EPE and AGM 2011 at their Headquarters in Paris.

Decisions taken

- The Delivering as One, Evaluation of the Evaluation Function, Human Rights and Gender Equality and Impact Evaluation Task Forces will all continue for the work year 2010/2011.
- The Harmonisation of Evaluation (HETF) and Evaluation Capacity Development Task Forces (ECD TF) were established.
- The Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar Task Force was renamed the Evaluation Practice Exchange Organising Committee (EPE OC). It was agreed that the first meetings of the ECD TF and EPE OC would be held jointly to agree on areas of cross fertilization.
- Two short term Task Forces were established to work with the UNEG Secretariat on the UNEG Consultants Roster and the UNEG Country Level Evaluation database.
- The application for membership of DPI was approved. The application for membership by UNOG/ MERS was rejected as it was understood that they are not the primary evaluation unit in UNOG. The application for membership of DSS was deferred until the AGM2011, on the basis that their evaluation policy is still pending approval.
- UNEG members accepted UNESCO's offer to host the UNEG EPE and AGM 2011 (exact dates to be confirmed).

Table 1: UNEG Provisional Work Programme 2010/2011²⁴

Task Force	Task Force convener and members (as indicated at the AGM2010)	Deliverables and issues identified at the AGM 2010
UN Reform and Evaluation		
Delivering as One Task Force	Convener: Finbar O'Brien (UNICEF) Members: Continued membership from WG 2009/2010 (UNEG Chair, FAO, IFAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP, WHO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued quality assurance and commenting on the DAO Country Level Evaluations
Harmonisation of Evaluation Task Force	Convener: Bob Moore (FAO) Members: FAO, UNIFEM, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and advise on guidance materials on UNDAF evaluation and on joint programme evaluation. Strategies for promoting joint evaluations.
The Evaluation Function		
Evaluation of the Evaluation Function Task Force	Convener: Rob D. van den Berg (GEF) Members: FAO, UNEP, UNIDO, UNDP, CTBTO, OPCW, OIOS, GEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework for harmonising continuing assessments of the evaluation function through self assessments, peer reviews and external reviews. Tools: KPI, review of evaluation policies, follow up to evaluation, fact sheets and self assessment forms. <p>Advice: address mechanism for Peer Review, continue to use joint DAC TF.</p>
Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force	Convener: Romain Sirois (OHCHR) Members: Continued membership from TF 2009/2010 (FAO, IFAD, OHCHR, OIOS, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise handbook and guidance and conduct piloting Hold workshop in February 2011 Develop dissemination strategy To be presented at AGM 2011 <p>Advice: Consider how to get external comments and piloting</p>

²⁴ As defined at the UNEG AGM 2010, but provisional pending full discussions at the first UNEG Task Force meeting.

Impact Evaluation Task Force	<p>Convener: Margareta de Goys (UNIDO)</p> <p>Members: Continued membership from TF 2009/2010 (FAO, GEF, IAEA, OFAD, ILO, OCHA, OIOS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, WFP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidance materials on IE • Explore joint evaluations • Provide advice on timing of impact evaluations • Participate in NONIE/ 3iE/ ALNAP and feedback to UNEG • Develop dissemination strategy <p>Advice: Fill gaps, not duplicate</p>
Professionalising Evaluation		
Evaluation Capacity Development Task Force	<p>Convener: Oscar Garcia (UNDP)</p> <p>Members: UNICEF, OPCW, UNDP, UNIFEM, OIOS, OHCHR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for national evaluation capacity development (bringing together experiences and practices of agencies). <p>Advice: Facilitate programme work of organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, finalise and make available existing training materials (internally) <p>Advice: Caveat on quality assurance</p>
Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) Organising Committee	<p>Convener: Eddie Yee Woo Guo (OIOS)</p> <p>Members: OIOS, UNICEF, UNDP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the principles of the next EPE, conduct the EPE 2011 and for each EPE TF to prepare a learning handover note. <p>Advice: Delivery modalities discussed at AGM to be taken into consideration, use previously developed principles for EPE. Encourage cross fertilization of membership.</p>
NOTE: The first meetings of the Evaluation Capacity Task Force and the EPE Organising Committee will be held together to agree on areas of cross fertilization		
Others:		
UNEG Consultants Roster	<p>Convener: UNEG Secretariat</p> <p>Members: FAO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNCDF, UNDP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise UNEG Consultants roster <p>Advice: Consider value added</p>
UNEG Country Level Evaluation database	<p>Convener: UNEG Secretariat</p> <p>Members: UN-Habitat, FAO, UNDP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Level Evaluation database. <p>Advice: Link with ECG and DAC.</p>
Refinement of the UNEG N&S	UNEG Chair to make proposals to UNEG Heads	Caveat: Every Task Force to consider implications for N&S through their work programmes

Annex 1: Opening remarks by Ambassador Tibor Tòth

Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

Ms. Saraswathi Menon and Ms Caroline Heider, UNEG Heads, Colleagues and Friends,

I am Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization and, on behalf of the Vienna-based UN agencies, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2010 Annual General Meeting of UNEG.

For the benefit of those of you who are not so familiar with the CTBTO, let me take this opportunity to present to you a brief overview of the work of the Preparatory Commission. The CTBT prohibits nuclear test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and provides for a global verification regime to be operational at entry into force of the Treaty with the aim of monitoring and verifying compliance with this norm. Our mandate as Preparatory Commission is the build this verification regime and to promote entry into force of the Treaty.

As of today, 180 countries have signed the CTBT, and 148 states have also ratified it. Still nine countries listed in the Annex II of the CTBT need to ratify for it to enter into force.

The CTBT will only enter into force if States, in particular the remaining Annex II States, see it as being fundamental to their national interest. I am convinced that the Treaty has a key role to play in today's security environment. The CTBT's contribution goes beyond establishing the norm against nuclear test explosions or any other nuclear explosions: it is a catalyst for nuclear disarmament and a strong instrument for non-proliferation. A CTBT in place will be an essential element for a process in which deeper arms reductions are being discussed and pursued by nuclear weapons States, for moving towards multilateral disarmament involving all the nuclear armed states and could serve as a regional confidence and security building measure for example in the Middle East and in Asia.

Article 14 of the Treaty provides for the need for monitoring, assessing and reporting on the overall performance of the verification system. In the CTBTO, Evaluation has a key role in preparing the grounds for fulfilling this article, i.e. in defining the framework of objectives, criteria and mechanisms for assessing the performance of the various areas of development and provisional operation the verification system. The mechanisms include a web-based platform that allows senior management and States Signatories a real-time view of the performance of the system. In the evaluation jargon, this platform would be called a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, a fundamental cornerstone for evaluation.

Since I joined office in 2005, I have fostered the adoption of a professional project management approach, embedding quality management and evaluation at the project level. Altogether, we are constructing a system that should provide us the basis for both project and system performance assessment and evaluation.

In our evaluation endeavours, the UNEG Norms and standards for evaluation, developed and adopted by this Group in 2005, have provided fundamental guidance since, regardless the difference in the activities

of our organizations, evaluation processes are to be inclusive, involving stakeholders and transparent approaches and fostering evaluation capacity building in member countries. The UNEG framework also provided the CTBTO with the opportunity of an evaluation training course for programme managers and evaluators in cooperation with the United Nations System Staff College.

Therefore, I want to congratulate UNEG for your highly professional work, under the capable leadership of the Co-Chairs, aiming at empowering and strengthening the evaluation function across the UN system and for UNEG's growing recognition throughout the UN system during a time of UN reform and global economic crisis when donors are increasingly demanding results and accountability.

Over the last two days, the 2010 Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar has taken place for the fourth time in UNEG's history. This event counts with growing participation demonstrating that it 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.

I am quite impressed by the breadth and depth of the topics in the agenda for this annual meeting and the work developed in 2009 by the task forces. In particular, topics such as evaluation of the evaluation function, quality standards for evaluation and professionalizing evaluation caught my interest. In the same way as we view evaluation as fundamental for accountability and organizational learning in the CTBTO, we are to conduct a peer review of our evaluation function in 2011 to assist us in our pursuing effectiveness, efficiency and continual improvement of our evaluation function. We will need and would be grateful for UNEG's assistance in this exercise.

I wish you a successful and productive meeting and declare the UNEG 2009 Annual General Meeting Officially open.

Thank you.

Annex 2: Speech by Ms. Saraswathi Menon, UNEG Chair

Mr. Tibor Toth, CTBTO Executive Secretary, Dear Colleagues,

We are meeting here in this beautiful city of Vienna for the second time in 10 years. Let me begin by thanking our hosts, our evaluation colleagues from CTBTO, IAEA, UNIDO and UNODC who have made it possible for us to return. Thank you very much for your hospitality and the smooth preparations in getting us together. Let me also thank the Secretariat for their exemplary work. The ash cloud from the volcano did not make it easy for the organizers of the meeting and unfortunately not all of us who wanted to be here could make it but it is good to see so many UNEG members present. I would like to take the opportunity to welcome colleagues who are attending the UNEG meeting for the first time. I would also like to thank colleagues from DAC and ECG and look forward to even stronger cooperation with them.

Looking back at Vienna in 2002 we see a group with a different purpose, different membership and a different way of working together. This group was then called the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation (IAWG). This group had been set up in the early 1980s essentially to work in tandem with the way in which the UN worked on development programmes. UNDP was the central funding agency and specialized and other agencies executed programmes funded programmes from their own and other resources and brought their technical knowledge to the service of developing countries. The IAWG was the forum where the joint evaluation practice of these UN agencies was crafted. The concerns of the IAWG through the 80s and early 90s were closely related to the working links among agencies and evaluation was intended, at that time, to support the UN's development work.

Eddie Guo and Segbedzi Norgbey were here in Vienna in 2002 and their reflections will be richer than mine and we look forward to hearing their reflections. To me it would appear that by the late 90s and by the time we met in Vienna in 2002, the goal posts had shifted a bit and the IAWG was catching up with professional developments in the world of evaluation. The agenda of that meeting included evaluation and development effectiveness: the Monterrey Consensus, tracking MDGs; independence and transparency of evaluation; country-level impact assessments; partnerships in M&E; M&E Framework for the UN Strategic System Plan on HIV/AIDS; and evaluating Global Public Goods. There was clearly an attempt to engage with the world beyond the UN. And yet, the evaluation of the IAWG that had been commissioned and was tabled at the 2002 Vienna meeting mentioned as a specific draw-back that contact was restricted to annual meetings which were largely information sharing events.

It was partly in response to this evaluation that the group discussed in Vienna possible ways to rebrand itself and early in 2003 renamed itself the UN Evaluation Group. Over a period of several years UNEG tried to establish itself as a credible and useful professional network of evaluators in the UN. We know the results: Norms, Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct, competencies, job descriptions and so on. We have become more inclusive. We have a dynamic and thought provoking Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar that almost outshines the AGM itself. We are recognized in General Assembly resolutions such as those on the TCPR and system wide coherence, not always the way we would want to be. We are requested to get involved in evaluations by the CEB as in the DAO evaluability study and national governments, such as South Africa with whom we did the joint evaluation on the contribution of the UN system to South Africa. We have a strong website, discussion forum, and classification system for documents that enables all of us to access past debates. And most importantly we have clear principles for how we work together.

So as a professional organization we have come of age. We have done a lot and can be proud. And yet many of us feel that we are doing too much and not enough in depth. An AGM is an opportunity for us to change collectively for the better. I have been talking about the earlier meeting in Vienna at some length because my own feeling is that we need to look both at our current experience and further back if we want to move forward. I will highlight two lessons from the past and two from the present.

The first lesson that I would take from the IAWG is that there was a simple practicality to those meetings that we may have lost. The IAWG tried to address the daily concerns of our partners in operations. In a sense the IAWG was firmly embedded in the UN. We need to restore that link and continue to raise it beyond the focus of development alone. We need to understand what it is that challenges the UN system today and bring the full strength of evaluation to help address those issues. As UNEG are we able to respond when government and people want evaluation to determine whether the UN is making a difference? Are we together able to answer questions like the following? Are the normative frameworks of the UN effectively translated into national aspirations? Is the humanitarian system working better as disasters and conflicts increase apace? Has development contributed to people's wellbeing? As UNEG are we able to develop methodologies that actually help answer the larger questions that citizens ask of the UN?

The second lesson from the past is that we must stop discussing processes and look beyond the UN. Let me take just one example of moving our frame of reference. We tend to discuss evaluation capacity as though it is something that we can promote and that technical rigour is created through training that we provide. I would say we need to understand national capacity in evaluation from the perspective of national ownership, vision, governance and public accountability rather than seeing it as part of the way we do development cooperation and support countries. Similarly, we need to relate to larger global issues if evaluation is to keep the UN relevant. In Vienna ten years ago global public goods have dropped off our agenda since the last meeting in Vienna. We need to understand how the world is changing through the evolution of national aspirations and partnerships and practice and of new forms of cooperation among countries. We must stay informed of these transformations if we are to stay relevant.

The first lesson I take from our current experience was brought home to me in our discussions with the session chairs in preparation for this AGM. All of them identified the same central issue – what is UNEG's role and where can UNEG make the greatest contribution -- whether the subject was function, professionalization or UN reform. We have been most successful when a large number of organisations, representing different streams of work in the UN, participated in an effort. We have been most successful when we set aside our individual organization's preoccupations and focused on how best evaluation can serve the UN and public accountability. We have been most successful when we really zeroed in on a result – the Norms and Standards, the job descriptions and so on. I hope we can develop some clear criteria during this AGM for our work so that both the spread of engagement and the depth of focus will yield results of greater value not just for us but also for others.

The second lesson from our current experience is that we have come of age as a professional network but not fully as a professional community. The instruments we have in place, the discussion group, the website, are all useful tools for interaction and of course, we should use them more. But is there something that sets us apart as evaluators because we are from the UN? We have norms and standards for evaluation but, equally important, how are we different as evaluators given the values and norms of the UN itself.

Today we are 43 members and 2 observers in UNEG with new members applying every year. We are a growing group and I do believe, nothing is beyond us if we put our collective mind to it. Let us use the occasion of the AGM to stop and reflect on what works and where we need to put our energy. We have a rich agenda for the next three days but we have an even richer agenda for the future. Let us keep that longer-term agenda in mind as we work together in Vienna and beyond.

Thank you very much.

Annex 3: Speech by Mrs. Inga-Britt Ahlenius, Under-Secretary-General for United Nations Internal Oversight Services

Madam Chair, Distinguished Guests, Members and Colleagues of the UN Evaluation Group, Fellow Evaluators,

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address the UNEG. As some of you may be aware, I have been trying to attend the UNEG AGM since I started my term in 2005, but circumstances kept preventing me. And this year, I thought I would be doing this in New York, but again, the CMP and the resulting lack of facilities in the Secretariat prevented the New York based agencies from hosting this event. Nevertheless, I was planning to travel to Vienna in April – that is, until a volcano beneath the Eyjafjallajökull glacier that had lain dormant for almost 200 years, decided to awaken from its long slumber.

Although I am not able to be there with you in person due to other commitments, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you, just before the end of my term as Under-Secretary-General for Oversight in the UN, which includes evaluation.

The topic of this session is UN Reform and Evaluation. I was going to speak about UN Reform in general, but as all of you are well aware, discussion of UN Reform evokes mixed emotions, some are of the view that good progress is underway, while others seriously doubt whether there is such a thing as UN Reform - but I would rather speak directly about our challenges as the Evaluators of the United Nations.

On the face of it, we have a simple task – to help our Organization to understand what works and what doesn't work, and why. But in the reality of the complex system within which we function, it is extremely challenging. So I want to applaud you for having, in 2005, established the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations. This is a very important achievement and an important step to establish evaluation as a profession thereby increasing its legitimacy as a function and increase respect for its reports. I understand that many of you have already benefited from having such a reference, not just to support the technical aspects of your work, but also to clarify and to advocate for important principles that underpin our function. Two of these are the principles of Independence, and of Transparency.

Let me speak first about Independence.

I am aware that some of you are facing challenges to the independence of your work; management in some cases would like to continue to maintain control over the ambit of your work. They want good news, not bad news. So when you have bad news, you learn to tell the bad news in clever ways. Let me tell you a little story.

There is the old story of the Lion King who calls all his subjects to his rather smelly cave and asks them to tell him how his room smells. Nobody dares to do anything, until the dog steps up, sniffs the room and tells the King honestly that it smells. The King devours the dog for his insolence. The monkey then decides to be smarter and tells the King the room smells like roses. The King devours the monkey for his dishonesty and sycophancy. Lastly, with all else in the room trembling with fear, the sly fox steps up and

tells the King that he has had a cold for the past few days and cannot smell. The King rewards the fox by making him Prime Minister of his Kingdom.

Now, regardless of the moral of this story – we in this room are NOT to be sly foxes. We are mandated to be dogs! So the question is – how do we survive as dogs when the King asks you if his room smells?

I don't have one answer for you, but I am sure many of you in this room have survival stories and strategies that can be shared. Over the past years, the notion of operational independence for the evaluation function has become accepted as the norm. Thanks to Governing Bodies that are more enlightened than the Lion, we dogs can now breathe and smell safely, protected by Governing Bodies who demand objective, credible evaluation information. The General Assembly, in its resolution of 48/218B has ensured the independence of my own office – OIOS. But yet the challenges remain – management will continue to try to limit that independence, either through control of our hiring discretion, or our budgets. I believe OIOS is in a rather favourable situation but some of you may even have management that try to tell you what you should not evaluate or what you should not find. To those of you who are facing hard challenges to your operational independence, and to your professional integrity as evaluators, I would like to remind you of a quote by Dag Hammarskjöld which I now and then have reason to repeat. You will find it engraved in the pavement of Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza at 47th Street and First Avenue –

“Never for the sake of peace and quiet, deny your own experience or convictions”.

Because if you, in your position as the United Nations' evaluators do not “tell it as it is”, what you believe to be correct, then it is unlikely that anybody else in the UN will. I urge you – do not deny your convictions as evaluators!

I would like to move now to a topic that I believe is of great interest to several of you. And this is with regard to the proposal for a system-wide evaluation mechanism. I realize that this has been, and will continue to be, a matter for the deliberation by the General Assembly; and that the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the UNEG as well as the Joint Inspection Unit have some thoughts on the matter. Now while some may perceive that OIOS may have an important stake in this discussion, I think we actually have quite an objective perspective on the matter.

Let me preface my comment on the proposal for a new system-wide evaluation mechanism with some remarks on how I perceive UN reform in this respect.

In my opinion, a lot of what is touted as reform is often merely the establishment of common sense good management practices that should have been there in the first place. Of course there are real and important reform agendas to be advanced in the UN, such as Security Council reform. I am of the view that the fragmented nature of UN system governance could do with some sort of rationalization in order to move the Organization more effectively towards coherent and cohesive action. So when it comes to the penchant of the Organization to solve problems via the creation of new bodies, I say – enough! If there is a body already in existence mandated to do system-wide assessments, then let the General Assembly and the UN as a system think about what it will take to help that body carry out its functions fully and effectively, rather than creating another body that will result in greater confusion about mandates, and that ultimately may develop the same alleged ailments that afflict the first. And twenty-years later our successors in this room find themselves debating the feasibility of a third system-wide body to add to an

expanding oversight universe. Reform, or change, is not always about creating new things; it is as much about fixing old things, if they need to be fixed, or perhaps just strengthened.

Now, let me move on to the question of Transparency.

I have personally always been convinced that transparency is something very positive. In fact, transparency is the DNA of oversight including evaluation, whether evaluation is primarily oversight or not. We have already seen how the lack of transparency has tremendous costs. Only to mention the massive yet simple fraud cases of Enron and Worldcom, which involved the hiding of debt, moving to the more complex meltdown of the subprime mortgage market and then the current global economic crisis. It is all in no small part due to lack of adequate, transparent information for all to make decisions. Some of you may be asking yourself - What has this got to do with the UN? What has this got to do with US evaluators? We are not financial auditors. Well, I think that while auditors may have a responsibility as to financial accountability, evaluators have a responsibility as to performance accountability of the Organization. And in this regard, it is our job to be instrumental in letting the people's of the world, know how well the UN is working, or not working. So, not only are we to tell the King that his den smells bad, it is our job to tell all in his Kingdom that it is so. What would be the purpose? Wouldn't it be sufficient to tell the King if the King then cleans the den and all is roses? The problem is that we can never be assured that all Kings will respond correctly, and clean the den, rather than to devour the truth speaking dog. And it is because we can never be sure, it is better to put into practice, a system, and to develop a culture, of truth-telling and transparency, than to hope and pray fervently for a benevolent King each time.

UN Governing Bodies and Programme Managers have to become modern governors and managers, used to openness and transparency and who are comfortable with discussing failures as much as success stories. And evaluators have a critical role to play in helping to frame and inform that discussion. When you look at our Charter, and even more specifically at our mandates for evaluation, it is quite clearly stated – our role in evaluation is to

“Enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives”.

Towards this end, there is now General Assembly's resolution 59/272, the Transparency Resolution, which decided that all OIOS' reports, once finalized, shall be made available to Member States upon request. This is a very significant step towards transparency, because in practice it may put all our reports in the public domain; however, it does not go far enough. In this regard, the UNEG Norms and Standards actually go further than resolution 59/272. UNEG Norm 10.2 states that - "Evaluation Terms of Reference and reports should be available to major stakeholders and be public documents". For this, I commend you all for having the courage to have included it. Nevertheless, I know that quite a few of you here are having struggles in ensuring transparency of your reports. Programme managers loath the notion of their 'dirty laundry being hung in public'. For those Funds and Programmes that rely on voluntary funds, this is a particularly conflicted task. Why would an evaluator whose career and bread-basket relies on an Organization's survival report on its poor performance? In that sense the concept of Transparency is closely linked to that of Independence. You have to ask yourself – why would you want to work for an Organization that is not completely honest to its funders about its work? How different would our United Nations be from Enron or Worldcom if it turns out that all the billions poured into poverty reduction or

climate change or peacebuilding is in fact ineffectual and wasteful? Transparency doesn't directly make the United Nations more effective, but does create the conditions that force us to be more effective.

Therefore, never for the sake of peace and quiet deny your own experience or convictions.

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