



وزارة التخطيط والمتابعة والإصلاح الإداري
Ministry of Planning, Monitoring
and Administrative Reform



**LEAVING NO
ONE BEHIND:
EVALUATION
for 2030**

2019 National Evaluation
Capacities Conference

OPENING WELCOME ADDRESS NEC 2019

DR INDRAN A NAIDOO, DIRECTOR, INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION OFFICE AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE UNITED
NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP

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Opening address by the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office, United Nations Development Program (New York), Mr. Indran Naidoo, at the National Evaluation Conference held in Hurghada, Egypt, 22 October 2019

Your Excellencies,

Ms. Hala Helmy El Saeed, Minister of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform

Deputy Ministers and senior Government officials of other countries;

Ms. Randa Aboul-Hosn, Resident Representative from the UNDP Egypt

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this conference; in beautiful Hurghada. Please allow me to indicate my most sincere thanks and appreciation to our partners, Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and our UNDP Regional Bureau colleagues; whose generosity and professionalism has been imperative to bringing this conference together. My sincere thanks to the Egyptian Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform who gave us incredible support and have been a great organizing partner. I have to also give special thanks to the Government of Denmark, and Independent Evaluation Group of World Bank for their financial support for participants bursaries.

This is the sixth in a series of global conferences on National Evaluation Capacity jointly organized by the governments of the host countries and the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, its regional bureaux and professional association partners. Previous conferences since 2009 have been held biannually in Morocco, South Africa, Brazil, Thailand and Turkey.

The NEC ship has now circled the globe once in the past decade, and in its second voyage returns to the Arab States on the shores of the Red Sea, this time needing new sets of skills to navigate

the changing landscape of development and social and political needs during the SDG era . It is now 4 years into Agenda 2030, the feedback received thus far at the High-Level Political forums of the UN and the Voluntary National Reviews is that at current rate of progress meeting Agenda 2030, in its breadth and depth necessary for no one to be left behind, is elusive.

This NEC 6 has been crafted to address this urgency, the 21 pre-conference training sessions, with over 270 participants from all over the globe with a high Egyptian contingent, have been customized to equip delegates with practical skills for the task, to enable government-to-government knowledge exchange. Also various informal exchanges and socials provide an opportunity to talk candidly about the real politics of doing national evaluation in the SDG era.

Well over 500 people are here this week; with representatives of 117 nations and governments. These are impressive numbers that show our joint commitment to eradication poverty, fighting inequality, protection of the planet and ensuring prosperity for all. As we know 193 countries united in 2015 to adopt those 17 Sustainable Development Goals, for a better world by 2030.

As Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, UN mentioned in her video opening, the implementation of the SDGs can be accelerated globally through evaluation, a powerful tool that improves public accountability.

Evaluation is a contributing factor in setting country-level SDGs through evaluability assessments and other tools and techniques. National governments will lead and shape their own evaluation needs and approach to this universal agenda, with both traditional development cooperation and 'South-South' collaboration partners.

Evaluation is a technical and professional dimension to good governance and public management; no matter region or culture. Evaluation must also be seen for what it is, a rigorous function requiring structural and other independence dimensions to guarantee access to beneficiaries, to be the forger of honest conversations. As important is the carrying of the messages back to decision-makers and governance authorities, only possible if the function is protected and independent in policy. An independent evaluation function is vital for the authentic conversations necessary to meet Agenda 2030.

I am happy to share with you that UNDP walks the talk. We are proud to share that UNDP has supported the formation of an Independent Evaluation Office which shows organisation's commitment to the principles of evaluation, accountability to its partners, and keenness to learn from its programme successes and limitations. As the largest evaluation office in the UN system, we engage and take a lead in evaluation and development discussions.

In an era of anxiety and the power of the media optic, and with the immense data we are constantly faced with, the question of whose truth matters; which voice counts, can we stay true to the values and principles of the profession? Whose trust should we get, and does and can evaluation make a difference? The deliberation of the conference this week, while engaging in some of these crucial questions should promote the culture of evidence-based development processes and practices.

NEC series has now touched 165 countries, much of the globe and has made an important contribution to advancing a key United Nations value, that of transparency and accountability, good governance, giving voice to the marginalized, helping advance equity and address discrimination in all its forms, in essence trying to create a better world through constructive dialogue. This, as we all know, has not been easy and remains work in progress. Each of us within the UN system as we are all members of the august body, have a particularly important role to play as evaluators, seasoned in the experience we get from sharing in events like NEC and the other networks, committed to the key evaluation principles of independence, credibility and utility, and being open to learning from the science of research and the wisdom of the evaluation elders.

National evaluation capacities are increasingly critical to countries' overall ability to capture and demonstrate SDG results. This week, we revisit the critical question of criteria, or perspective, in a session that revisits the Istanbul 2017 event on evaluation criteria. We take a more reflective view and take

stock of a set of criteria that largely informed the lenses used by evaluators for decades. In the 26 sessions that follow this week, we get country perspectives from the government rich cohort of participants, professionals who irrespective of their title, work in an oversight and accountability cluster.

NEC has always been about country to country sharing with the IEO of UNDP using its convening power to facilitate the learning. I am sure that the deliberations this week will enable mutual knowledge sharing and networking and reinforce the principles of national development evaluations.

On behalf of the IEO team and colleagues here and back in New York, I wish you productive and stimulating conference deliberations.