

**Statement to the UNDP Executive Board Session by the IEO Director Indran A. Naidoo
Annual Report on Evaluation 2015**

Mr. President and distinguished members of the Board and colleagues, I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report on Evaluation for 2015. The official Executive Board report – DP/2016/13 – is complemented by a more detailed and comprehensive version, both of which are available on-line and in hard-copy. This report details the activities and plans of the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP’s decentralized evaluation activities and the evaluation activities of UNCDF and UNV.

2015 was a landmark year for the United Nations with the adoption of the **Sustainable Development Goals or Agenda 2030**. It was also a major year for the evaluation community at large with the celebration of the **Year of Evaluation or EvalYear**.

The Year of Evaluation was marked with a series of 92 Global events, following recognition by the United Nations General Assembly with its resolution 69/237 on strengthening evaluation capacities at the country level. For IEO and UNDP the most significant event was the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities in Bangkok last October, for which the IEO was co-convenor, with the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). The conference brought together government representatives and other participants from more than 100 countries, with a total of 450 participants, engaging in substantive discussions and training with major evaluation institutions of the bilateral and multilateral agencies. I am pleased to also let you know that the event provided an opportunity for partnership between IEO and UNDP; with the Associate Administrator and more than 60 non-IEO UNDP staff in attendance. The conference, by far was the largest of those marking the EvalYear, which culminated with the Bangkok Declaration on Principles for National Evaluation Capacity Development for the SDGs.

Thematic evaluations play a critical role in answering the “so-what” question of UNDP, and in 2015, several flagship UNDP initiatives were assessed. The processes used were participative, and the IEO was able to draw on a rich body of independent country level and other evaluations and assessments to provide evaluative perspectives. The IEO report on UNDP’s contribution to the national achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was received by this Board, and had a particular salience given the preparation for the SDGs adoption. Our evaluation of the Human Development Reports of UNDP and their contribution to public policy at the global and regional levels was important as UNDP prepares for a new strategic focus. The ongoing work of UNDP in the area of gender was assessed, for the second time, looking at gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The environment remains a key area of UNDP programming, as does human security. In this area the organization’s contribution to mine action was assessed. In our commitment to conducting evaluative work jointly, and promoting collaboration I am pleased to report that we successfully completed two joint evaluations with Independent Evaluation Office at the Global Environmental Facility. These included the *Small Grants Programmes* and the, *UNDP-GEF support to protected areas and protected area systems*. These assessments found that UNDP produced benefits at the community level and resulted in visible development results across the globe. The clear recommendations made by these evaluations and customized to both organizations were accepted.

As in prior years, in 2015 IEO continued its practice of evaluating UNDP activities at the country-level through its **Assessment of Development Results** or ADRs. The ADRs generate much interest at the country level, in particular because they review evidence of results as viewed from the perspectives of partner

governments, stakeholders, donors and citizens. The briefing and debriefing processes that accompany a more robust ADR methodology has indicated in most instances a high appreciation for UNDP work. As the stock of ADR accumulates they are increasingly becoming building blocks for thematic evaluations as well. The high attention given to ADRs by the countries themselves reflects a growing appetite for quality programming, transparency, accountability and evidence based decision-making. UNDP is the only development organization that conducts and presents its country level evaluations in such a transparent manner. In 2015 we completed 8 such assessments which included Albania, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mauritania, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe and Viet Nam. IEO is currently involved in assessing UNDP results in 6 countries namely Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Pakistan. Before the end of the year we anticipate identifying, in consultation with the Administration, a further cohort of ADR priority countries.

Having turned to **IEO's plans for 2016 and beyond**, the IEO foresees presenting **4 major thematic evaluations for Executive Board scrutiny in 2016 and 2017**. These will examine UNDP contribution to

- (1) Support to anti-corruption and transparency, accountability and integrity measures;
- (2) Institutional effectiveness of the UNDP strategic plan
- (3) Disabilities-Inclusive development, and
- (4) Evaluations of the Strategic Plan and global and regional programmes.

The IEO continues its roles as the host of the United Nations Evaluation Group or UNEG, comprising 46 member agencies, funds, programmes and special entities; IEO holding the Vice-Chairmanship, Executive Coordinator role and UNEG Secretariat. The report also highlights the contribution of the **Evaluation Advisory Panel, now** in its third year. The advice of this panel has been invaluable in improving the strategy and credibility of evaluations. In the new evaluation policy this panel will contribute its expertise across UNDP, providing the organization with knowledge, understanding and strategic thinking.

In terms of IEO's **budget and human resource situation**, the budget of the IEO in 2015 represented approximately 0.17 per cent of UNDP's combined core and non-core resources. The office continued to have high levels of expenditure performance, with some 99.8 per cent of allocations utilized. We recognize the continued interest of this Board to see improvement in the decentralized evaluations, and steps are underway to address this critical area of the evaluation function through strategies that UNDP management and IEO have proposed to the Board informally.

Lastly, I would like to update that the revised Evaluation Policy was presented at the informal session last week. It addresses the independence, credibility and utility aspect, and seeks to improve the evaluation function within the organization. This was jointly agreed upon and is a significantly improved evaluation policy, for your consideration at the 2nd Regular session of the Board in September this year. Finally, I would like to thank the Administrator and management for their cooperation and the Board for its ongoing support.

Distinguished delegates and colleagues, this concludes my remarks on the annual report on evaluation.