

## **Statement to the Board, IEO Director Indran A. Naidoo Revised**

### **Evaluation Policy of UNDP**

Distinguished members of the Board and colleagues,

Before discussing key aspects of the new UNDP evaluation policy, I want to take this opportunity to thank you Mr. President for your excellent leadership this year, and offer my deep appreciation for your active engagement in bringing this policy process to completion.

As custodian of the UNDP evaluation policy, the Executive Board periodically requests review and facilitates revisions to the policy. Most recently, in 2013 the Executive Board asked that the policy be reviewed and in January 2014 you received the results of an independent review. The document that is being tabled at this session for adoption has been crafted through a series of iterations over the past two years, and I believe addresses key evaluation principles and issues of concern to the Board. It aligns to international best evaluation practice and sets new standards for the function across the organization.

The revised policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) and UNDP management. The policy is founded on the premise that Independent evaluation plays a particular and crucial role in informing the decision-making at UNDP and by this Board. However, the Policy also covers the conduct of evaluations carried out under commission of UNDP programme and policy units, and by UN Volunteers and the UN Capital Development Fund. The Policy caters to the multiple levels and kinds of evaluation needed by UNDP, enabling both independent and decentralized, accountability-based and learning-oriented, which all lead towards the common goal of buttressing UNDP's effectiveness as a global development partner. The policy sets out specific expectations on procedures; stipulates that evaluation needs to be properly resourced, quality assured, independently assessed and should receive management responses.

The policy has benefitted from reference to and adherence to the norms and standards of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), the professional network of evaluation heads of 44 UN agencies, which was adopted this April in Geneva at its annual general meeting. It also responds to the recommendations of the UN Joint Inspection Unit in 2015 on how UN agencies should strengthen their evaluation systems.

Also, the new policy better positions UNDP to respond to calls from UN Member States to strengthen national evaluation capacities, as per GA resolution 69/237; which is especially timely as nations move to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

Notably, for the first time the UNDP has established financial benchmarks for evaluation through this policy. 1% of core and non-core resources are to be set aside for the evaluation function, within which 0.2% is for the work of the Independent Evaluation Office.

Crucially, the policy marks a significant shift for UNDP in terms of governance, and harmonizes the UNDP oversight functions under one umbrella, the newly established and expanded Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC); comprising arrangements for the Offices of Audit and Investigations (OAI), Ethics (EO) and IEO.

At the same time, the IEO Director reports directly to and is accountable to the Board, to whom it presents its reports and its costed programme of work. This policy reinforces IEO operational independence, with HR and administrative powers delegated to the Director, within UNDP rules and procedures. All evaluation reports produced by the IEO, as well as their terms of reference, are made publically available, as are their management responses, which are included in each evaluation report. Reports are finalized and released by the Director without external pressure. These provisions clearly establish the operational independence of the unit, and supports its credibility which is needed as it engages with stakeholder across the globe.

To further entrench independence, and in line with international practice and JIU recommendations, the policy provides for a single non-renewable term for the IEO director, thus greatly reducing the complications that can arise through renewal procedures. In addition, the director appointment is subject to consultation with the Board, as well as with advice from the AEAC. The AEAC can also recommend dismissal, based on its mandate to appraise the work of the IEO Director.

The IEO manages an Evaluation Resource Centre, where all UNDP evaluations are accessible to the public. It has a specific role in capacity building and supporting UNDP in improving the credibility of its decentralized evaluations, through both support and assessment.

As we move forward after adoption of this new policy, the IEO, on its part, is committed to servicing the Board with an expanded range and quality of reporting. We have begun planning our work in reference to future sessions of the Board. In the next Annual Report from IEO, which will be presented for your consideration at the June session next year, we will propose a schedule of work for the next medium-term evaluation plan, covering the next UNDP Strategic Plan. Speaking to expectations expressed by the Board, we will also initiate a series of periodic reports that address systemic aspects of the independent evaluation function. These include: a synthesis of thematic and regional-level findings from country-level evaluations; more extensive assessment of decentralized evaluation quality; contributions to national evaluation capacities; and analyses of the implementation of recommendations from prior independent evaluations.

Distinguished members of the Board, UNDP has produced a clear, concise, and ambitious policy that we urge you to support. It optimizes the role of evaluation at UNDP, and will help to strengthen UNDP programming and service delivery as a result. Adoption of the revised Evaluation Policy will be important for evaluation at UNDP and clearly demonstrate the commitment of its Governing Body, i.e. the Executive Board and UNDP management to the use of evaluation as one of the pillars of organizational learning and accountability. I thank all parties concerned for their inputs.

Thank you for your attention and engagement on this important issue.