



7 February 2006

Dear Mr. Dabelstein,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December enclosing the final report on the performance of UNDP's central evaluation function. We are encouraged by the conclusion that the Evaluation Office (EO) performs at an acceptable level of independence and produces evaluations that are credible, valid and useful for learning and strategy formation in UNDP.

The report provides significant insights for advancing the development of the evaluation function and culture within UNDP. It highlights some of the key strengths of the evaluation function in UNDP and, I am pleased to note, endorses the basic thrust and principal dimensions of UNDP's draft evaluation policy. It also offers a number of interrelated suggestions to firmly secure the independence of the evaluation function, to enhance the accountability and related performance assessment functions, for more systematic stakeholder engagement, and for a proactive and targeted communication of evaluation results. We are grateful for these suggestions. We have studied them and we present the following response for moving forward in upgrading the quality and excellence of the evaluation function.

The assessment highlights the need to formalize the existing impartial and independent status of the Evaluation Office. In this regard, UNDP would have no objection to the suggestion for a direct reporting line from the Director of Evaluation to the Executive Board provided the necessary systems for its effective implementation are put in place by the Board. The evaluation plan and budget will continue to be approved by the Board. We welcome your suggestion that future submissions provide a clear link between the evaluation plan and staffing and budget requirements. You have suggested that the policy explicitly state that the EO is accountable for the quality of the evaluation reports it issues, that it has the final word on the contents and that the reports should include dissenting views. We agree with this suggestion.

We appreciate your endorsement of the draft evaluation policy recommendations for enhancing the quality and capacity for decentralized evaluations, which are managed by country offices through built-in allocations in operational budgets and specialized support in regional centres and country offices, which we consider particularly important. Your endorsement of current steps for quality assurance of decentralized evaluation is welcome, and your suggestions for quality control will be integrated in the new policy.

Mr. Niels Dabelstein
Head, Evaluation Department
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Copenhagen



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Your report underlines the importance of evaluating specific intended results of UNDP programmes to enhance the accountability focus of evaluation. We agree that this type of evaluation is dependent on the development of an effective results-based management system. We endorse your suggestions for greater attention to intended results in EO's work. EO is currently reviewing the ADR, the Annual Report on Evaluation, and the Development Effectiveness Report through this lens, in order to make the necessary adjustments in the draft policy and in their products.

The report suggests that management responses be provided to all evaluations, and not just those conducted by EO, which is the current practice. We accept this as good practice in the development of an evaluation culture and will include this in the policy.

We appreciate your endorsement of the emphasis in the draft policy for enhancing national ownership and evaluation capacity. EO is reviewing its current practices in the engagement of governments in the planning and in the use of evaluations in order to further clarify EO's role in supporting partner country capacity and leadership role in evaluation.

We are in complete agreement with you on the importance of an upgraded communication, dissemination, and outreach strategy. The policy already includes the requirement that all evaluations be accessible to the public.

UNDP is pleased to have partnered with DAC in this pilot peer assessment of the evaluation system of a multilateral agency. We trust that the methodology that has been developed and the lessons learnt in the process will benefit the UN system, DAC and the evaluation community as a whole.

Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Derviş'.

Kemal Derviş