THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) – INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT AND M&E EFFORTS OVERVIEW
Translating Intention into Practice

The adoption of the SDGs with their breadth of issues for attention and desire to be inclusive is laudable, but its implementation shall be complex and challenging.

Adoption and launch has consensus at the level of intention and joins nations at this level.
Implementation realities shall surface once the following is detailed:

• The setting up in practice of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) of the UN Statistical Commission necessitates capacity be evened out/built across countries before a common indicator language is adopted.

• With many partners there shall be contestation on indicators – especially as “horizontal agencies and interest groups” are brought in.
There remains unequal power relations between the partners as capacity to engage varies and it is unlikely that the process shall be uncontested – the advantage depending on how stakeholders are organized shall be more accessible indicator language, which does not answer the translating question – converting into metrics and agreeing upon performance benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation or review purposes.

The good news is that this has reinvigorated the debate on what constitutes development.
Factors Affecting the Planning Process

- Cost of engaging the spectrum of stakeholders as envisaged
- Process may still get captured and remain technical
- Disillusionment sets in by think-tanks and advocacy groups as they lack resources to engage
- Difficulty to sustain engagement
- Evaluation community not homogenous and intention and ability to support the indigenization (localizing) of SDGs may result in motivation petering out
Factors affecting the planning process

- No real precedent for such a project, at scale, with the right vertical and horizontal engagement
- Baselines are a problem; and the lack of adequate census date, poor statistical capacity and quality means it will be difficult to establish start and progress points
- Statistics still in the domain of government, and reliability remains a problem
- The development of statistical capacity will take place alongside indicator development - challenge
Who communicates?

Whilst at the rhetoric level there is agreement it must be done, little talk about the “how” – not established protocols and freedom of expression channels not in place to air disagreement on subject.

Civil society uneven in much the same way as the EvalPartners and other partners.

Will the process get captured by the powerful with access to media?

Is the media able to provide a credible process narrative?
What remains under discussion is the funding model, and the talk about national ownership and reporting whilst idealistic has not noted the cost of expanding the development lens (what gets chosen as a priority remains unclear).

How much of ODA shall be used – and is there space for more funds?
Moving to measuring

Measuring, even review, is a politically sensitive and contested process

How will benchmarks and milestones be arrived at and how will the question of aggregation – moving from local to regional, national be reconciled given that the question of inter and intraregional social and economic differential persist?
IEO’s Evaluation of the Role of UNDP in Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

This evaluation:

• Assessed the roles played and results achieved by UNDP in support of the achievement of the MDGs,
• Identified factors which affected the contribution and performance of UNDP and identified strengths and weaknesses, in past performance as well as threats and opportunities for future engagement in this area
• Acted as a key lesson for UNDPs engagement around finalizing MDGs and preparing for SDGs and the recommendations were committed to
IEO’s Evaluation of the Role of UNDP in Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

WHAT DID WE EVALUATE?

The following ‘roles’ or aspects of UNDP work are covered by this evaluation:

1. MDG ‘CHAMPION’: (Millennium Campaign and other advocacy and influencing efforts);

2. MDG ‘SCOREKEEPER’: country and regional MDG REPORTS, the ‘MDG Monitor’ website and support to the MDG Gap Task Force;

3. Technical assistance and policy support to develop and scale up Goal-based development strategies and PLANS at the national, subnational and sector levels, including the MAF;

4. UNDP mechanisms to prioritize the MDGs (trust funds, regional initiatives, implementation and monitoring and other INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS, including the joint Republic of Korea-UNDP MDG Trust Fund);

5. Relevant country PROGRAMMES and PROJECTS in support of efforts to monitor and achieve the full set of MDGs.
IEO’s Evaluation of the Role of UNDP in Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- Country case studies
- National development strategy review
- ADRR meta-synthesis
- Number of UNDP country programmes examined in substantial depth
- Number of UNDP country programmes (total)
- Percentage of all UNDP programmes covered by this evaluation

- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Asia-Pacific
- Africa
- Europe and the CIS
- Arab States
IEO’s Evaluation of the Role of UNDP in Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

OUR CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall, the MDGs were a good idea.

2. UNDP supported the MDGs right from the start with an impressive set of tools.

3. UNDP could and should have collaborated more with other UN agencies.

4. UNDP often supported MDG planning without adequately considering means of implementation.

5. UNDP is well positioned for the POST 2015 AGENDA but needs to redefine its role in the more crowded environment.

6. Win proper resources, aligning national development strategies with the Goals can contribute to their achievement even in the poorest countries.
UNDP’s Accorded Role and Responsibility for SDGs

- For MDG implementation, UNDP partnered with national authorities to produce over 500 MDG country reports for score keeping.

- UN Secretary-General has agreed that UNDP should now play the same role with national reporting on the SDGs within the framework of the Global Partnership on Sustainable Development Data.
UNDP’s Accorded Role and Responsibility for SDGs

- All 17 Sustainable Development Goals are connected to UNDP’s Strategic Plan focus areas: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience.

- UNDP’s focus in the future is on:
  - **Goal 1:** No poverty
  - **Goal 10:** Reduced inequalities
  - **Goal 16:** Peace, justice and strong institutions
As chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), UNDP will be rolling out a package of tools and services to support governments as they localize, review and evaluate their progress against the SDG agenda.

‘MAPS’ Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support is meant to:

- Support governments to reflect the new global agenda in national development plans and policies.
- Support countries to accelerate progress on SDG targets.
- Make UN’s policy expertise on sustainable development and governance available at all stages of implementation.
The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a unique interagency professional network in the UN system that aims to advance the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the UN system’s work by promoting and strengthening evaluation. UNEG brings together units responsible for evaluation in the UN system, including UN departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and affiliated organizations. It currently has 45 such members and three observers.

UNEG’s mission is to:
- Promote the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function and evaluation across the UN system;
- Advocate for the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability;
- Support the evaluation community in the UN system and beyond.
UNEG Norms and Standards
UNEG Code of Conduct

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Conflict of Interest
- Honesty and Integrity
- Competence
- Accountability
- Obligations to Participants
- Confidentiality
- Avoidance of Harm
- Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability
- Transparency
- Omissions and Wrongdoing
UNEG’s Role in Providing Technical Support – The Evaluability Question

UNEG shall provide professional expertise to agencies so that:

• The evaluability challenges, opportunities and issues are properly considered in the Agenda 2030
• Support the on-going indicator development work
• Advise on instruments and methods that are appropriate for various contexts, so that the evaluability assessment are credible
• Equip members and their agencies with the requisite expertise on the subject to help build support for evaluation at various levels, so that there are well crafted evaluation strategies, plans and approaches and
• There are harmonized approaches to mitigate against the potential risks of fragmented and non-coherent approaches which undermine the credibility of the evaluation effort
Building National Evaluation Capacity

Road map for National Evaluation Capacity Development

Sustainable Development

MDG 2000-2015

Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030 (SDG)

National Capacities Developed to Evaluate Sustainable Human Development

Blending of Evaluation Principles with Development Practice to help change people’s lives

Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020

Implemented by

UNDP
UNDP CoS
UNDP BPPS
IDEAS
IPDET
CLEAR
EvalPartners
Donors

To Evaluate

Development partners

Conference Partners

2015

NEC 2015

26-30 October 2015, Bangkok Thailand
4th International Conference for National Evaluation Capacities 2015

UNDP
Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

IDEAS
Innovative Development Evaluation

VOPES
Voluntary Partnerships for Effective Development

Governments

Independent Evaluation Office
NEC Journey

- Independent Evaluation Office

- NEC Journey

- 55 participants from 30 countries
- 80 participants from 20 countries
- 160 participants from 70 countries
- Expected: > 200 participants from > 80 countries

2016-2030 SDG Agenda
2016-2020 Global Evaluation Agenda

- EvalYear events
- Global evaluation Agenda consultations
- NEC Thailand
- NEPAL EvalYear Forum

18 commitments
EvalYear declared
Consultative format
Live broadcast
Social media
EvalPartners+ CLEAR
COP consultations
Challenges and solutions

- Continuity
- Follow up of commitments
- COP/one pagers/evaluation policy map
- Follow up events
  - Rio NEC data for evaluation
  - EES
  - Parliamentarian Forum
  - IPEN
  - AFREA
  - RELAC
- Global Evaluation Agenda
- online consultations
- EvalYear endorsed by GA
NEC IV Bangkok Conference Launches Collective Approach to Responding to SDGs Imperatives

- Largest evaluation event globally by government and country participation – broke all records - 100 countries, 450 participants
- Civil society, academia and research community held historic discussion on what SDGs means in practice from a results perspective
- First time collaboration between all three international evaluation networks – UNEG, ECG and OECD/DAC and IDEAS
NEC IV Bangkok Conference Launches Collective Approach to Responding to SDGs Imperatives

Critical dialogue was held on how to build national evaluation capacities to tackle the challenge of monitoring and evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals.
Seeks to capture an emerging body of shared understanding on lessons and priorities for evaluation practice in the era of the SDGs to help guide joint action in future support of national evaluation capacity

- ‘SDG’s intentions for follow-up and review processes are specifically guided by objectives that evaluation function directly responds to (inter alia):

  ✓ identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors
  ✓ support the identification of solutions and best practices and promote coordination and effectiveness of the international development system
  ✓ be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people
  ✓ build on existing platforms and processes
  ✓ be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data
  ✓ require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programs’
In moving forward in support of national evaluation capacity, the declaration recognizes the following types of efforts and initiatives as among options that warrant consideration:

- Conduct of country-level ‘SDG evaluation needs’ reviews and diagnostic studies
- Evaluability assessments pertaining to individual country or sector SDG goals and targets
- Fostering of evaluation as component of national governance and public sector management reform
- Establishing national evaluation legal frameworks - legislation and policies
- Developing clear national and local sub-national level mechanism for independent evaluation of progress against the SDGs
Assigning resources (a percentage of the initiatives’ costs) for the conduct of evaluations when realigning national plans with the SDGs and when designing/approving projects/programs/policies

Strengthening national and local data systems to monitor SDG progress

Establishing frameworks of formal competencies and professional evaluation standards

Establishing evaluation training programs within academic and public sector professional training institutions

Creating opportunities for local, young and emerging evaluators

Developing systems to promote transparent follow-up of evaluations recommendation

Support national, regional and global evaluation professional organizations

Support international forums of exchange between users and producers of evaluation, via the right of access to information, including regional workshops and web-based platforms for knowledge management’
How Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities and Bangkok Declaration can help this broader agenda

- Taking a large definition of Evaluation: information and knowledge to design, monitor and evaluate policies and programs
- Considering that information and knowledge on Evaluation should be taken to all levels of government, because everyone plays a role on program improvement
- Helping to build an inventory of documents on well succeeded public policies and programs around the world
- Helping to build capabilities to produced statistical data and national registers around the world
What NEC tries to do

Blend principles and practices, create forums and pathways for action and activity

The 4th NEC was a step of progress in that is sought to directly address how evaluation can help development – previous ones were principle based (independence, credibility and utility) or best practice

It took a broad church approach, UNEG, OECD/DAC and ECG – but is it enough?

Probably not, intention without adequate follow up and support – despite UN commitment funds makes it difficult to advance the agenda at scale and with quality

Political commitment is not enough to address the high variation in administrative/government capacity required to absorb and advance SDGs
Challenges

Aren’t ‘17 goals and 169 targets’ in fact 169 goals?

Indicators process is being driven by national statistical offices: Can data be delivered vs. what makes sense for development?

For the moment, the SDGs are a set of options from which countries are able to pick-and-choose; no countries have yet declared their priorities.

Likewise, for the moment there are no causal propositions attached to the SDGs; countries have not declared their priorities - donors have not pledged their funding.
Challenges

The SDG ‘follow-up and review’ process represents a separate flank (from goals & targets themselves) of opportunity for evaluation function.

Value-added of evaluation function will be dependent on refinement of independence perspective.

Weighing ‘big’ and innumerable other monitoring data streams to parse causal influences in increasingly complex substantive arena will increasing depend upon credible value-judgment that transcends scientific method.

Whilst it is patently obvious that the SDGs need evaluability, the question is: Are evaluators wanted to that task?
Thank you

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