

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few reflections with you today, wearing both my hat as Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP and as Chair of UNEG – or the United Nations Evaluation Group - which is a professional network of evaluators from 50 UN entities that sets standards and strengthens capacity to enhance the quality and use of evaluation.

The UNEG recently adopted a new strategy that will guide us all the way to 2032. And the work doesn't stop there - we continue coming together to create and update our guidance notes and key documents which are the things that help keep us aligned, support collaboration, and give our community some common ground to work from.

For over 50 years, evaluation has played a vital role in ensuring that the work of the United Nations remains accountable and effective. What began as a way to track aid spending has evolved into a powerful tool for learning - helping us see what's working, where it's working, and who it's actually helping.

Today, evaluation is embedded in the United Nations. It brings evidence into the conversation between agencies and Member States—and that matters. Because when we ground dialogue in facts and learning, we start to build the kind of trust that's absolutely essential if we're going to move forward together and reach our shared goals.

Like all fields, evaluation is adapting to the growing complexity and scale of the world's challenges – challenges that, I am sure you agree, demand urgent responses, yet often come without clear solutions.

What we recognize in our evaluation community is that no single actor or institution holds all the knowledge, legitimacy, or reach required to tackle these challenges alone. And, paradoxically, the more information we have, the harder it becomes to make sense of it – raising the risk of what we sometimes call “analysis paralysis.”

We are all looking at Artificial Intelligence as part of the solution. And, with its capacity to process and generate insights quickly, it most certainly has a role to play. But the challenge is not only technical. And, while we need to keep our eyes on the future, we shouldn't lose sight of what the past has taught us.

So, let me briefly share three lessons that are guiding our most recent efforts across the UN evaluation community.

First: Sound decisions depend on good data. In some contexts, we have an abundance of it; in others- particularly when it comes to marginalized communities – data is scarce. **That's why the production of bespoke, context-specific evaluations remains crucial.** They offer detailed evidence and bring voices to decision-making tables that might otherwise be left out.

Second: Evaluation is not just something that “international organizations should do”, but it's a cornerstone of good governance everywhere - and especially at the national level, which is where evidence must be generated, owned, and used if we want to achieve the greatest impact. **That's why the**

UN evaluation community keeps investing in national evaluation capacity

at every level: individual, organizational, and institutional. And we do this by creating connections between countries and bringing together technical expertise with lived experience.

Third: we must make evaluative knowledge “personal”. This means aligning our work with the needs of national governments and tailoring our outputs to be useful, and used. In recent months, we have modernized the **UNEG portal which houses a database of over 20,000 UN evaluations** – and where we will be using AI to make this database easier to navigate and future ready. And on a broader scale, through the **Global SDG Synthesis Coalition** – co-founded my office and UNICEF, with the participation of numerous partners including the UN System-Wide Evaluation Office and OIOS – we are building a more connected and responsive evidence ecosystem across the multilateral system. One that is aligning an AI enabled evidence architecture to respond to the evidence needs and demands of you – the people who need real time access to the best evidence possible on key issues for SDG acceleration. We are doing this because we recognize that evidence only matters if it can get it to the right people, at the right place, at the right time.

Excellencies, colleagues,

This work isn't something any of us do alone. It is something we can achieve together – by continuing to re-imagine and invest in learning, evidence and collective systems.

I look forward to the conversation ahead.

Thank you.