

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT UN EVALUATION GROUP HIGH-LEVEL EVENT:
“BRIDGE TO A BETTER WORLD:
EVALUATION AT THE SERVICE OF THE POST-2015 AGENDA”
New York, 9 March 2015**

Your Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Mr. Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation,
Ms. Nancy MacPherson, Managing Director for Evaluation at Rockefeller Foundation,
Mr. Miguel Székely, Director of the Center for Education and Social Studies in Mexico,
Ms. Deborah Rugg, Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group,
Mr. Marco Segone, incoming chair of UNEG,
Distinguished evaluation experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you. I thank the Ford Foundation for hosting. I thank all of you for your dedication to the unsung but indispensable function of evaluation.

Two years ago, at a gathering similar to this one, I stressed the importance of strengthening evaluation.

Since then I have been pleased to see that not only the United Nations Evaluation Group but also Member States and evaluators from around the world, have risen to the challenge.

As Secretary-General, one of my main roles is to continuously improve the United Nations in order to deliver for the people we serve. That means knowing whether we are achieving what we set out to do, and if not, how to do better.

Evaluation is thus critical for promoting accountability and for understanding what we are doing right and what we may be getting wrong.

As Member States shape a new sustainable development agenda for the post-2015 period, evaluation will only grow in importance.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before focusing on the historic year ahead, let me mention three ways in which our evaluation work appears to be on the right track.

First, starting with UN Secretariat departments and offices, there is good news in this year's biennial report on evaluation.

Ms. Rugg will tell us more. Let me just say that we are seeing fewer red lights and far more green lights on the OIOS scorecard. I commend the managers and staff responsible for these gains, which have been made within existing resources. I look forward to the day when we see nothing but green.

Second, moving on to the wider UN System, two independent system-wide pilot evaluations are under way, focusing on operational activities for development and funded voluntarily by Member States.

I want to express my appreciation to Ireland and Switzerland for supporting this effort. I also thank the Joint Inspection Unit, OCHA, UNICEF, DESA, OIOS, UNEG and others for their help in ensuring that the Independent System Wide Evaluations become a reality.

Third -- and most important -- is the country level. Last year, Member States adopted the first-ever, stand-alone resolution on evaluation that invited the UN development system to further strengthen capacity-building in this area.

Building national evaluation capacities empowers countries to be in the driver's seat from the making of policy to the monitoring of results. This is the best path toward positive change in the lives of the people we all serve.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very encouraged by the Member States' support for rigorous evaluation. I also welcome the designation of 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation -- the same year in which the United Nations marks its 70th anniversary and will take momentous decisions about our future prosperity, safety and well-being.

Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda.

Thanks to an internal review by OIOS, as well as external assessment by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, we know that we did not adequately ensure sufficient monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals. We must not make the same mistake with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Evaluation is not easy. Nor is it popular. But it is essential. The current constrained budgetary climate makes it more important than ever.

All of us share a responsibility to strengthen this important function.

I look forward to working with all of you to strengthen evaluation capacity so that it can play its rightful role in building lives of dignity for all.

I thank today's panelists for their participation. We will hear several perspectives on this vital work: from a Member State, from my Special Adviser on the post-2015 development agenda, from the philanthropic world and from an oversight body.

Thank you all for your leadership and support.