UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP (UNEG)

Annual Report of the Secretariat
April 2005 – March 2006

I. Background

The UNEG secretariat was set up in 1986 to support the Chairperson of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on evaluation. From its inception the secretariat function was carried out by the Deputy Director of Evaluation Office of UNDP (EO). Throughout the 80's and 90's, UNEG's activity was confined to convening annual meetings with its members to deliberate on important issues of evaluation. IAWG operated more as an informal group of the heads of evaluation offices without any concrete deliverables.

In 2000, Pierre Spitz and AMA Muhith were commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the functioning of IAWG and to suggest some way forward. Over a three month period, the evaluators visited and consulted over twenty-five UN Agencies in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, Paris and Washington. The findings indicated that almost all UN agencies felt that IAWG provided a useful platform to discuss and agree on emerging evaluation issues. The smaller agencies found it particularly useful. The findings also indicated that in view of various reforms within the UN system and the introduction of many systemic issues of harmonization and coordination, almost all members advocated that there was a need to continue with IAWG as a forum to bring systemic evaluation issues for discussion, to adopt shared views and to develop common standards. The evaluation recommended a more proactive functioning of IAWG, with specific deliverables on agreed systemic evaluation issues that could be used by the UN system in their evaluation work. The recommendations also included setting more structured interaction mechanisms among members, introducing annual work planning, establishing task groups to move agenda forward, setting up websites and having city-based groups of agencies to informally meet more regularly.

At the Geneva meeting in 2001, the evaluation findings were discussed and a decision was taken to create four Task Forces (TF) to produce some tangible outputs for use by the evaluation professionals. The TFs and the agencies leading each TF were as follows: Norms &Standard (UNICEF), Capacity Development (World Bank), Knowledge Management (UNDP) and UNDAF (UNFPA). The decision was also taken to create a separate website to facilitate communication. To strengthen the UNEG secretariat function voluntary contributions were requested. Subsequently in early 2003 the name of IAWG was changed to UNEG. To facilitate participation of all evaluation professionals and not just the heads of the offices, a discussion network, the UN Evaluation Forum was launched by UNEG.

The UNEG meetings in Bonn in 2004 and in Rome 2005 were real turning points as they generated substantial energy to produce concrete and useful deliverables and TFs were set up with focused terms of reference.

II. Main Activities (April 2005-March 2006)

This annual report of the UNEG secretariat captures activities carried out under the different initiatives of UNEG since the last annual meeting in Rome. It also elaborates recurrent activities specifically carried out under the UNEG secretariat. Since the Bonn meeting in 2004, the various TFs initiated their substantive activities requiring periodic discussions among the task Force members as well as interaction with the Chair and UNEG board. Also at the initiative of the Chair, a UNEG Board was constituted for the first time after the Rome 2005 meeting to broaden decision making and to manage exchange of experience among task forces. The regular periodic meetings of the UNEG Board increased the coordination function of the Chair requiring increased UNEG secretariat backstopping and support. Overall this has been a busy year. Separate presentations by the Task Forces at the subsequent sessions will elaborate the breadth and depth of their current initiatives as well as their status and outcomes.

The highlights of main activities are captured below under different headings.

A. Annual Meeting 2005

The Annual Meeting was held in Rome on 27-29 April and hosted by FAO, WFP and IFAD. Seventy-six participants from thirty UN agencies and five institutional partners attended. Agenda items included the discussion and acceptance of the UNEG Norms and Standards; evaluation policies of different agencies; the evaluation of humanitarian assistance (with contributions from DANIDA and ALNAP); Real Time Evaluation and the evaluation of multilateral organizations.

The following are the salient agreements/outputs of the meeting:
- The most significant output was the endorsement of the UNEG Norms and Standards which was a real milestone as the first concrete product produced by UNEG towards harmonization.
- A Constitution/Ways of Working document was to be prepared by the UNEG secretariat on the governance and *modus operandi* of UNEG taking into account experience of other similar groups/networks. A working group was established. The practical implications of professionalizing the UNEG secretariat was also to be investigated.
- Four Task Forces were set up on Evaluation Capacity Development, Quality Stamp, Country Level Evaluations, Results Based Management and Evaluation.
- UNDP would continue to chair UNEG and provide the UNEG secretariat. The co-chairs of the TFs and UNESCO in its role as host of the 2006 AGM would be Board members.

B. Task Force Activities

1. Task Force on Evaluation Capacity Development

At the Bonn meeting in 2004, a TF was established to examine the issues concerning evaluation capacity development (ECD). The TF is co chaired by UNODC, UNESCO and UNICEF. It was recognized that some UNEG member

organizations did not yet have strong evaluation functions; hence there was a need to develop capacities of individuals and the evaluation units. Following the discussion on the initial position paper on ECD at the annual meeting in 2005, the TF was requested to prepare the following outputs: a comprehensive strategy paper for ECD drawing inputs from members, UN evaluators competency profile, and curriculum to be used as a basis for providing training and certification for evaluators within the UN.

The following lessons emerged from the task force:
a) A small core group of proactive members could drive the process more effectively. The core group with strong commitment could function better through more face-to-face meetings (if possible) during the critical preparatory period. Somehow the electronic means seemed to draw less enthusiasm.
b) The change of task force composition from time to time negatively impacted the work as issues get continuously re-visited and consequently active members tend to lose interest. The whole process loses momentum when outputs are straddle over a long time period.
c) Financial resources for consultancy would be an essential ingredient to facilitate the speed of attainment of outputs.

This task force was also to prepare a competency profile of evaluators within the UN system and a consequent core training programme for evaluators with the aim of promoting professionalism and thereby credibility among UN evaluators. *An Analysis of Evaluation Competencies based on official job descriptions* was prepared by a consultant, and endorsed by the TF. Also endorsed was a methodological approach paper prepared by UNICEF for the identification of key competency criteria.

2. Task Force on 'Quality Stamp'

The TF on 'Quality Stamp' (TFQS) is co-chaired by UNIDO and WFP and is composed of 16 members (UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNCDF, UNICEF, UNFIP, UNIDO, OIOS, GEF, FAO, ILO, UNCDF, IOM, IFAD, UNODC, WFP).

Accordingly the TF agreed upon four main tasks:
- to prepare a checklist on quality issues based on the N&S;
- to use the checklist for a self-assessment survey among all UNEG members;
- to prepare a report on the results of this survey;
- to report to the UNEG annual meeting 2006 on the results of the survey and on progress made by UNEG members in implementing the N&S.

Tasks one and two were carried out by UNIDO who drafted and finalized the checklist taking into account a large number of comments from the TFQS members. The survey in September and October 2005 produced responses from 23 out of 36 UNEG members. On this basis WFP prepared a detailed report with the assistance of an external consultant. In parallel, a more quantitative survey on issues of evaluation staff and expenditures was carried out and complemented the qualitative findings of the self-assessment by some initial

benchmarks on the availability and use of evaluation resources throughout the UN system.

3. Task Force on country-level evaluations

Responding to challenges related to UN Reform at global and country levels, this TF was set up to promote and facilitate collaboration on joint country-level evaluations among UNEG member organizations. Co-chaired by FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UN-DESA and UNOCHA, nine agencies are currently members of this task force. The TF held a number of meetings.

In the reporting period the scope and feasibility of country-level evaluations has been assessed. An issues and options paper was completed in December 2005 by an external senior consultant. The paper clarified a number of issues related to country-level evaluations. Possible programme countries in which joint evaluations can be conducted in 2006 were identified on the basis of the following considerations: a) building on an expression of active interest for a country-led evaluation (Republic of South Africa); b) selecting a Least Developed Country / transition scenario from relief to development.

4. Task Force on Evaluation and RBM

At its Annual Meeting in 2005, UNEG created a TF on Evaluation and Results-Based Management. The main purpose of the TF is to generate a body of knowledge for UNEG concerning the present role of evaluation in RBM both within the UN system but also within the bilateral donor community and multilateral development banks, in order to identify best practice model(s) and future challenges for the role of evaluation in RBM.

With WIPO and OIOS as co-chairs, the task force comprises of 23 members (OIOS, WIPO, CTBTO, DESA, FAO, IFAD, IOM, ITC, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFIP, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNIFEM, WHO, and WMO).

After having decided on the Terms of Reference for its work, the Task Force started preparations for a survey to ascertain the role evaluation plays in RBM in various international organizations. To that end, a web-based questionnaire was developed with active participation of all Task Force members. The web-based survey went live on March 2, 2006.

It was realized that the concept of "managing-for-results" has further evolved lately. UN organizations are still mostly referring to RBM, but the multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and a number of civil society organizations are increasingly referring to managing for development results (MfDR). It was therefore decided that a two-phased approach would be more appropriate, with the launch of the survey among UN organizations constituting the first phase. The second phase would include RBM and evaluation practices in other international organizations.

The results of the survey will be presented to the UNEG Annual Meeting in Paris, as "work in progress".

5. Working group on drafting of Principles for Working Together (Constitution)

As agreed at the Rome meeting, a working group began preparatory work for a 'UNEG Constitution'. The UNEG secretariat commissioned a consultant to prepare an issues paper based on analysis of the constitutions and working arrangements of other evaluation associations and groups, including professional associations and inter-agency groups. The 'issues and options paper' was circulated among the members of the working group for comments. A senior UNDP staff member from outside EO was assigned full time during the months of December 2005, and January 2006 to consult all members of the working group and UNEG Board to produce a draft 'constitution'. The first draft with all possible options on various elements was circulated to the working group and the Board in January for comments. Substantial comments were received from various members of the working group. Subsequently at a Board meeting it was decided to organize a face-to face meeting with members of the working group and the Board to discuss the draft.

The meeting was held on 20 February 2006. A revised draft was prepared and a drafting group was constituted to carry the process forward. The revised draft served to focus the discussion on a number of issues. These were clarified through the ensuing dialogues via e mails and telephone conferencing. The interactive process produced a draft that will be presented to the meeting in Paris for review, discussion and approval. The title was changed from 'constitution' to 'Principles for Working Together'.

C. Board Meetings

Four virtual Board meetings were held in September and December 2005 and in January and March 2006. A further Board meeting is scheduled for 26th March in Paris just before the AGM.

During these meetings the TFs provided other Board members with updates on their work and decisions that were taken as next steps. The minutes of these meetings were circulated by the UNEG secretariat to all members of UNEG to keep them updated on developments.

D. Knowledge Networking

1. UNEvalForum

The UN Evaluation Forum is a knowledge network serving the evaluation units of UN inter-agencies on monitoring and evaluation related issues. Created in March 2003 based on a UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) meeting, the network of is composed of queries, discussions, expert referrals and consultancy opportunities, as well as resource postings of note. This Forum disseminates good practices and lessons learned on measuring, monitoring and evaluation to

participating members of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG). More specifically, the UN Evaluation Forum aims to:
a) Provide a "space" to raise and discuss issues on monitoring and evaluation policy and practices;
b) Exchange experiences and knowledge among involved agencies; and
c) Distill lessons learned and best practices while sharing methodologies.

The UN Eval Forum has experienced a recent growth in terms of its level of engagement from its community members. Although the core of the network's activities is driven by a small percentage of the near 200 membership, the network's functional use has expanded from that of mainly expert referrals to more query-based content. It continues to be a valuable platform for sharing capacity building resources, key monitoring and evaluation guidelines and toolkits, and latest publications, as well as for upcoming conferences, training and workshops.

Given the professional membership of the forum, its composition being Heads of UN agencies, M&E Unit Directors and Focal Points, the nature of the demand for services have thus far been functional with ad hoc management of the network. As the network moves forward, the potential for value-added exchanges is high in conjunction with UNEG formalization. Also, its growing collaboration with the EO's Evaluation Network (EvalNet), enhances the learning and sharing capabilities of both communities.

The current facilitator for the UNEVAL system is a professional is Ms. Yookyung Kwon. She is a professional network facilitator for UNDP Evalnet. Her task involves managing the UNEVAL discussion forum as well as the content of the website. She works very closely with the EO IT Analyst, who provides her with the additional technical support

2. UN Evaluation Group website

The UN Evaluation Group website was established in late 2001. The group name was IAWG at that time. Since the www.iawg.org was already in use by some other agency, we decided to select www.uneval.org as the web address for the group. This site had web based discussion forum, document repository, directory of members etc. It was built with lots of dynamic features in order to enable UNEG secretariat to manage is without the help of any webmaster.

Later on in 2003 the group name was changed to UNEG from IAWG. At the same time the group decided to establish an online discussion forum, which would be open to all evaluators within the UNEG member agencies. We did the first of update of the of the UNEG web site at this time. Basically, the website was divided into two sections; the front page of the website was named UNEVAL Forum and under this page a sub site for UNEG members was established. The UNEG section of the website was kept initially password protected, but at the request of members this was changed. The UNEVAL Forum page was designed more for the use of forum members. In this round of update, we purchased Lyris list-serve for hosting the online discussions. The

Lyris was the most popular software available at that time for hosting online moderated discussions.

We now have three email lists within the UNEVAL Lyris System:
a) uneval-forum@list.uneval.org: this is the address of the UNEVAL Forum. This forum is open to join to all UN Agency staff members. Only member of the forum can contribute to discussions. All the messages sent to the forum are moderated by the forum facilitator.
b) uneg-heads@list.uneval.org: this email group consists only of UNEG member agency heads. This is a closed group and only group members can contribute. Messages are not moderated here.
c) uneg-fp@list.uneval.org: this email group consists of all UNEG member agency focal points. This is a closed group and only group members can contribute. Messages are not moderated here.

Recently there has been increased interest within UNEG members to have a more interactive website, with more features for collaboration. There have also been some changes in the group structure within the UNEG as well. The current website is not flexible enough to accommodate all these changes and demands; hence there is a need to update.

The process will start with gathering comprehensive user requirements from the UNEG members before proceeding with the enhancement of the website. Possible areas for improvement will include an updated look and feel of the website to increase user friendliness, an enhanced calendar tool, a database of evaluation, a separate section for each task force to share and collaborate, an enhanced document repository and a member directory.

The cost for upgrading the website is about $6,000. The current recurring expense per year for web hosting and Lyris support is $4,500. We paid $500 for domain registration for until 2009.

E. Professionalization of the UNEG secretariat

To date the UNEG secretariat has been located in the UNDP Evaluation Office. It has functioned as the custodian of UNEG's institutional memory, record keeping and communication flow. Over the past couple of years (2004-06) when UNEG has been very active, the volume of traffic and work has increased significantly. Throughout this period (2004-2006), UNDP has supported the UNEG secretariat functions by providing a part-time network facilitator, part-time professional IT support and part time services of a professional staff member/consultant at the P4 level. These costs were born by UNDP. A part time programme assistant was financed by UNEG.

As a result of the decision at the AGM in April 2005 to look into establishing a professional post within the UNEG secretariat, a ToR was drawn up and approved by the UNEG Board (attached). The post has been classified by UNOPS at an L3 level and necessary funds were made available from UNDP by the Chair. Recruitment has been postponed pending the final approval of the "Principles for Working Together" at the AGM in March 2006.

III. Financial Status of UNEG secretariat

UNEG Members contribute to the activities of the TFs both financially and in kind. These contributions have not been recorded. The trend of voluntary contributions to the UNEG secretariat is encouraging, but certainly not adequate to cover costs of all inputs required for the UNEG secretariat. The annexes provide a clear picture of the build-up of the resources and expenses year by year (the balances do not reflect encumbrance of 2006 costs so far which is close to $30,000). Much of the professional inputs of the UNEG secretariat are provided in kind from UNDP and hence do not show up as financial costs. The following part-time services are provided by UNDP/EO professionals at no cost to UNEG in the reporting period:

Oversight of the secretariat:	Deputy Director of EO (at D1 level)
IT professional service for Website management:	IT Specialist of EO (at P3 level)
Network facilitator for UNEF:	Evalnet Facilitator of EO (at P2 level)
Financial management:	Operations Specialist of EO (at P3 level)

The initial consultancy for the consultant on constitution ($ 6000) and 75% of the costs of the UNEG secretariat consultant ($27,000) to support organization of the Paris meeting is being born by UNDP.

The implication of additional professionalization of the UNEG secretariat is that the host of the UNEG secretariat will have to bear the lion's share of the cost on a sustained basis.

IV. Annexes

Annex I: Terms of Reference for UNEG Specialist Post

Post Profile
UN Evaluation Group

Job title: Programme Specialist UNEG
Post Level:
Bureau/Section: Evaluation Office, New York
Duration: Initially one year
Focal Point: flora.jimenez@undp.org

Under the overall guidance of the Chairperson and direct supervision of the Secretary of UNEG, the Programme Specialist for UNEG is expected to perform the following principal tasks:

PRINCIPAL FUNCTIONS
The Evaluation Office of UNDP chairs and provides the Secretariat function of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), whose members are drawn from the Evaluation units of UN agencies. The Programme Specialist is expected to support UNEG by:

- Supporting the implementation of the activities planned by UNEG as a whole and the respective Task Forces.

- Coordinate with the chairs and members of the UNEG Task Forces on the elaboration, implementation and dissemination of their annual workplans.

- Provide support services to the Chair and Secretary of UNEG.

- Coordinate the organization of UNEG Board meetings and the preparation of follow-up reports.

- Draft the annual technical and financial report of the UNEG Secretariat.

- Coordinate the UNEG Annual Meetings in consultation with the host agency(s), the Chair and Secretary of UNEG, including, among other things: drafting the Agenda, identifying materials for consultation and distribution, coordinating with participants and host agencies; and drafting the Annual Meeting report.

- Maintain the UNEG budget and monitor and ensure expenditures are within the budget.

- Support the strengthening of the professional function of the UNEG Secretariat. This will include, among other things, consultations with members and other relevant functionaries and professionals; undertaking research on the activities and functions performed by other professional networks and associations; drafting and submitting funding proposals; etc.

- Ensure the periodical dissemination and exchange of information relevant to the work of Task Forces: books, events, articles, links to webpages. For doing this the Evaluation Specialist should create and update a database of evaluation resources.

- Maintain, update and create (when appropriate) databases and directories with information of UNEG members, task forces, document repositories, among others.

- Substantively improve the UNEG webpage. This will include relevant tools such as: databases, internal sites for task forces, calendars of events, calendar of evaluations, document repositories, links to relevant webpages, announcements, advertisements, etc.

- Act as the facilitator of the United Nations Evaluation Forum (UNEVALFORUM) promoting communication and dialogue among members on issues related to evaluation policies, knowledge and practices. Organize and/or moderate e-discussions; and periodically propose ways to enhance UNEVALFORUM.

- Identify opportunities for collaboration and synergy by keeping abreast of other networks including DAC, ECG, and the Evaluation Associations.

- Any other duties are required.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:
- Advanced university degree (Masters Level) in social sciences or a related field.
- At least three years professional work experience in evaluation, especially but not exclusively in capacity building and networking activities.
- Strong analytical and drafting skills.
- Strong background in international development.
- Ability to work with a team in a multi-cultural environment.
- Full working knowledge of English with knowledge of Arabic, Chinese, French and/or Russian an advantage.
- Competency in IT skills, in particular webpage maintenance and design.

Annex II: Financial Contributions by Year

Year	FAO	UNEP	WFP	IFAD	IOM	UNDP	UNFPA	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNODC	WIPO	TOTAL	Disbursement	Balance
2001/2002	8,000			5,000	5,000	15,000	5,000	10,000	10,000			58,000		
2003		10,000	20,000			15,000						45,000	54,412.00	
2004						15,000		10,000			3,000	28,000	35,109.11	
2005		10,000				15,000			10,000	5,000		40,000	37,761.41	
2006		10,000				15,000		10,000	20,000	5,000	3,000	63,000	3,656.29	
Total	8,000	30,000	20,000	5,000	5,000	75,000	5,000	30,000	40,000	10,000	6,000	234,000	130,938.81	103,061.

Note:
- Disbursement figures for 2004 and 2005 are taken from ATLAS (CDR of 2004 & 2005)
- Figures on contribution of UN agencies in 2004, 2005 and 2006 are taken from ATLAS project detailed expenditure report

2003 Expenditures	
Description	Disbursement
Evalnet and UNFORUM web discussion facilitator	2,990
Programme/Admin. Assistants	32,730
Consultant to manage discussion and preparation of UNEG annual meeting	10,000
Web-hosting fee and renewal	8,692
Total	**54,412**

2004 Expenditures		
Description	Disbursement	Total Disbursement
Activity 1. Staff Cost		
63500. Insurance and Security Costs	791	791
71100. ALD Employee Costs	28,810	28,810
71300. Local Consultants	2,530	2,530

Activity 2. Other Activities		
72100. Contractual Services-Companies	1,081	1,081
72400. Communication & Audio Visual Equipment	170	170
72800. Information Technology Equipment	35	35
74500. Miscellaneous Expenses	1,692	1,692
Total	**35,109**	**35,109**

2005 Expenditures		
Description	Disbursement	Total disbursement
Activity 1. Staff Cost		
63500. Contribution to Security	825	825
65100. Payroll Mgnt cost recovery ATLAS	193	193
71100. ALD Employee Costs	30,808	30,808
72100. Service Company - trade and business service	1,081	1,081
72400. Courier charges	139	139
71300. Local consultant- Short term	-2,300	-2,300
74100. Management and reporting services	-5,000	-5,000
Activity 2. Other Activities		
71600. Travel - other	2,749	2,749
72500. Publications	8,798	8,798
74200. Translation costs	480	480
76135. Realized gain	-10	-10
Total	**37,763**	**37,763**