Responsive evaluation systems:
Beijing Action Plan for 2030

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As representatives from national and subnational governments, the United Nations, multilateral development banks, civil society and academia from 106 countries, we have come together in the Yanqing district of Beijing in October 2024 to restate our firm belief in the value of evaluation for sound and credible decision-making.

Responsive governments need responsive evaluations.

Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires urgent, evidence-based action. Strong national evaluation systems are necessary to successfully implement the work needed to resolve the complex issues outlined in the United Nations Pact for the Future and the global commitment to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Strengthening Voluntary National Reviews through Country-led Evaluation.

The development landscape is changing. Transparency, accountability, and the efficient use of limited financial resources are more important now than ever. Fiscal constraints and global economic challenges require investment in scalable solutions, and evaluations can guide the appropriate allocation of resources to increase the effectiveness of development programmes and enhance learning.

All evaluation and evidence actors must come together to share knowledge, collaborate, and support the enhanced use of evaluation and evidence to inform comprehensive responses to the interconnected and interdependent environmental, social, health and economic crises the world is facing today.

The complexity of our world requires integrated but context-specific solutions.

Although global interconnectedness has fuelled inspiring progress and innovation, it has also led to the misconception that the complexity of challenges—such as poverty, inequality and climate change—makes them insurmountable. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced understanding of how they intersect and influence one another. Evaluating these connections can lead to more informed and effective policy responses, enabling us to address complex global challenges with a holistic, well- informed approach.

Understanding both local and global development challenges—and how to drive effective change—is essential to addressing today's complex issues.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) deadline is fast approaching, and there is a critical need to understand progress and inform policies that provide focus for the remaining years leading to 2030, to understand results-driven actions that benefit the greatest number of people and inform post-2030 interventions.

Evaluation is an important tool to improve national governance capacity and realize modernization. The knowledge and information gained from evaluation evidence can contribute to social

justice and equity and support the global effort to leave no one behind. Climate change, particularly, underscores the need for comprehensive and knowledgeable responses that will help to protect our world now and for the next generations.

Reliable data from methodologically rigorous evaluations are essential for countering the growing fragmentation of information that undermines our understanding of truth. Credible data foster a more accurate and shared understanding, which is vital for informed decision-making and efficient policy development.

There is strength in the diversity of information to support well-rounded and relevant solutions.

The participation of people with diverse perspectives can lead to innovations to address persistent development problems. Including marginalized voices in evaluation evidence ensures that policies and programmes highlight and understand the needs of a wider society, fostering collective progress by uplifting those most in need. The inclusion of young evaluators brings fresh perspectives and can also drive innovation, playing a role in advancing evaluation practices and fostering cross-cultural, intergenerational learning.

Innovation, technology and digitalization in methods and approaches to evaluation are important in tackling shared challenges. As methodologies for data collection and analysis evolve, technology becomes a powerful tool to facilitate learning and quickly deliver credible information to those who need it.

Evaluation evidence is a Public Good, and knowledge derived from evaluation is valuable for both national and global contexts.

There is a shared responsibility to collaborate and share information to reduce fragmentation and broaden our collective knowledge and impact. By working together, we can create a more cohesive and comprehensive body of knowledge that benefits all.

We reaffirm the commitment to partnership and collaboration among stakeholders.

Effective and relevant evidence generation requires collaboration between evaluators, academia, research, and leading thinkers and decision makers to understand and inform information needs. Coordination and collaboration across government institutions can support the achievement of more comprehensive solutions to complex problems.

*We, the participants of the 2024 National Evaluation Capacities Conference— held in Beijing on the theme of Responsive Evaluation—will work towards the **following actions** to further our efforts in realizing the Turin Agenda agreed in the 2022 National Evaluation Capacities Conference and in supporting the global drive to achieve the SDGs by 2030.*

ACTION 1

"Embed country-led evaluation into public policy development and public sector management at strategic formal points of the programming and policy cycle, and where opportunity allows, in advisory and decision-making processes."

- Align national budget planning with evaluation recommendations and in accordance with evidence-based priorities.

- Position evaluation as a key accountability mechanism within government structures, ensuring oversight and aligning public spending with desired results.

- Ensure evaluation tools, guidelines and policies developed to support this integration are aligned with SDG targets and indicators.

- Integrate context and diverse perspectives that include women, marginalized populations and young people in evaluation processes, from planning to response, to inform and ensure the representation of women, youth, and marginalized and indigenous groups.

ACTION 2

"Support a culture of learning and practice that acknowledges evaluation's dual role of learning and accountability."

- Ensure evaluation plans and designs are aligned with the information needs of stakeholders.

- Engage in capacity-building activities that empower intended users and decision makers throughout the evaluation process to create and use robust and relevant evaluation evidence.

- Disseminate findings, encouraging peer learning across sectors and countries.

- Ensure the buy-in of political leadership and integration of evaluation within the regular public policy process.

- Facilitate formal and informal exchanges between commissioners and users of evaluation evidence at all levels of government.

ACTION 3

"Share best practices and lessons to strengthen knowledge-sharing and capacity-building at global, regional and local levels."

- Systematize the generation, application and exchange of insights from evaluation and other forms of evidence about how to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, across governments.

- Leverage syntheses of evaluations and other forms of evidence that promote learning from others around the world and an understanding of how these learnings vary by groups and contexts.

- Ensure equal access to evaluation evidence and tools to support evidence production at country and regional levels.

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Use new and emerging technologies and capacities and build upon indigenous knowledge and expertise in the best interests of people."

- Facilitate greater efficiencies in and effectiveness of evaluations by using artificial intelligence, while balancing the ethical and legal imperatives to safeguard equity, data privacy and inclusivity for all.

- Promote equitable access to artificial intelligence technology to avoid deepening the Digital Divide.

- Ensure the use of a people-centred and facts-based approach that embodies the values of equity, openness, responsibility, data security and country ownership.

- Involve young evaluators in systems-strengthening efforts through targeted skills development, mentorship, and their integration into the production and use of country-led evaluations.

ACTION 5

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Integrate climate, environmental and resilience-building strategies into evaluation to deepen insights into resilience, sustainability and human–nature interconnections."

- Strengthen adaptation in evaluation systems for timely crisis responses.

- Incorporate inclusiveness and sustainability considerations across economic, social and environmental issues into evaluation evidence in all of its forms.