Towards National Evaluation Systems & Evaluation of the SDGs: Dialogue between parliamentarians & the evaluation community

FRIDAY 15th March 2019

A Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation and UNICEF’s Evaluation Office Event

Chair:
• Ada Ocampo, Senior Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Evaluation Office/GPFE Secretariat

Panelists:
• Natalia Nikitenko, Steering committee Member of the GPFE
• Olfa Cherif, Steering committee Member of the GPFE, Tunisia
• Evelyn Naomi Mpagi, Vice President – APNODE, Uganda
• Hanson Kobena, Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV), AfDB

Discussant:
• Pekka Haavisto, Member of Parliament, Finland

Purpose
The proposed panel is to bring parliamentarians and evaluation community to one table to generate a dialogue on strengthening national evaluation policies and systems for achieving Agenda 2030 and commitments of EvalColombo2018. The outcome of the panel will be shared with GPFE member parliamentarians, Flagship programme countries and evaluation community around the world.

Background
Recent growing interest in evaluation as a tool in development became paramount with the adoption of the SDGs crafted through the largest consultation process ever documented by the United Nations. “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” in September 2015 and their focus on country-led evaluation in line with identified priorities for SDG targets that are most relevant to the national and local context have emphasized the need for countries to strengthen their data collection, analysis and review processes. This was reinforced when the UN General Assembly passed Declaration A/RES/69/237, "Evaluation Capacity Building for the Achievement of Development Results at Country Level http://www.unevaluation.org/mediacenter/newscenter/newsdetail/105.

Evaluation can highlight what has worked and help showcase the achievement of governments at sub-national, national and international levels. Successes established through credible evidence from timely, high-quality evaluations, become hallmarks of
successful governance. They demonstrate the competence and commitment of those at the helm of development, including parliamentarians. Evaluation therefore, is in the best interest of the people and the governments that serve them.

The promotion of evaluation culture is being catalyzed through the engagement of parliamentarians in the context of SDGs. Far seeing champions who recognize that parliamentarians can make a difference in directing development processes by demanding and using evaluation have laid the foundation for a vibrant movement. The GPFE is a collaborative movement of parliamentarians, committed to improving policy outcomes and social accountability. Its goal is to create enabling environments for nationally owned, transparent, systematic and standardized evaluation processes. Through capacity building, knowledge sharing and advocacy, GPFE supports and empowers parliamentarians to deliver evidence-based policy that helps achieve good governance, sustainable development and social equity. The GPFE facilitates dialogue between those with evaluative knowledge and expertise and the legislators who have the ability to transform them to action for people.

In most countries parliamentarians fulfill crucial roles in governance holding governments to account, establishing trusting relationship between state and people, allocating budgets establishing legislation and enabling environment. At large, parliamentarians and parliaments can form demand for evaluation and enable the environment for its supply. National evaluation policies and systems play an important role in this regard.

In this vein, the GPFE together with several partners organized EvalColombo2018 held from 17-19 September in Colombo, Sri Lanka where the Colombo Declaration signed at the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Colombo Declaration outlines commitments towards strengthening evaluation culture. EvalColombo2018 brought parliamentarians, government evaluation champions, development partners and evaluation community leaders together to explore joint efforts. Similarly EvalPartners Flagship program 1 works on national evaluation policies and systems in selected countries by bringing all stakeholders together. The dialogue between parliamentarians and the evaluation community should continue to make SDGs a reality.

**Methodology:** Talks how followed by Q&A

**Proposed questions that panelists are expected to answer:**

- What role can parliamentarians and parliaments play in strengthening national evaluation capacity?
- Have national evaluation policies helped to strengthen the evaluation practice including decision making? Are there examples/good practices?
- What are concrete steps parliamentarians could take to create a demand for evaluation of the SDGs?
• What are the major challenges that countries face in building national evaluation capacity; and how can parliamentarians and evaluation community work together to overcome challenges?