INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON THE THEME:

"INSTITUTIONALIZING THE EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES"

*Rabat, 5-6 October 2015*

Concept Note
Introduction

The year 2015 was proclaimed International Year of Evaluation at the third international conference on national evaluation capacity, held in Sao Paulo from September 29th to October 2nd, 2013. The celebration of this global event will therefore coincide with the final evaluation of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Following the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the Monterrey Conference on Financing for International Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, the proclamation of 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation is unquestionably an assessment of dedication because of its essential role in promoting good governance. The International Year of Evaluation also comes at a crucial phase of the post-2015 development agenda; it is indeed the debates initiated by the international community on development to decide on the objectives, indicators and targets post-2015. Thus, this is also an opportunity to increase efforts in the high-level advocacy in favor of a primary role of evaluation in the next development agenda.

The evaluation is a means of reinforcing accountability mechanisms, guaranteeing the achievement of human development objectives and of the achievement of human rights. In a context of financial and economic crisis and diminishing resources, the evaluation of public policies and public spending, based on human rights, is essential for the measure of equal and effective access for all individuals to public services and systematic monitoring of the progressing achievement of human rights, as universally recognized in the international normative framework. It therefore promotes alternative choices in the human development policy in favor of redressing the gaps and greater effectiveness and efficiency of available resources.

In Morocco, evaluation is not a new practice. Since the 1980s, several programs have been implemented to integrate evaluation in the administration, especially the National Training Program on Analysis and Project Management (PNAP), whose objective was to strengthen knowledge and contribute to enhancing capacities of national administrative officers on analysis, monitoring and evaluation of public investment projects.
Nevertheless, in practice, little progress has been made in the evaluation of public policies and programs either due to a lack of expertise or the absence of demand for evaluation. In this way, strategies and programs succeed one another without being evaluated and their performance and impact on the target populations are not measured.

The recent establishment of structures for evaluation confirms that Morocco is aware of the importance of this practice. Except that, in the absence of strategic positioning to valorize their recommendations and incorporate them in the decision-making process, the evaluations made by these structures often remain unanswered and not followed.

The absence of a legal basis for the organization and practice of evaluation, as well as the lack of information, programs and project data, are all factors that have limited the institutionalization of evaluation.

The progress achieved by Morocco in decentralization and deconcentration and their implications for implementation of development programs and projects will offer, to the different actors at different levels and scales decision-making, more responsibility and autonomy, and therefore higher demand in terms of territorial evaluation.

However, following the example of other countries, the 2011 Constitution has the merit of having laid the legal foundation that should enable the promotion of the institutionalization of evaluation. Indeed, Article 13 of the Constitution states that “the authorities are working to create consultative bodies to involve different social actors in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies.”

Taking advantage of the impetus encouraged by the Constitution, it is essential to raise awareness of its importance and its stakes in promoting good governance, particularly transparency and accountability.

From this perspective, strengthening the legal and regulatory framework, coordination mechanisms and tools necessary for the evaluation of public policies is proven to be necessary and urgent. Such an approach should be based on a rigorous analysis of supply and demand in the assessment of public policies at the national level. It also requires the capitalization of lessons learned and best practices for institutionalizing the evaluation of public policies in other countries.
Given its mandate and rich experience, the National Observatory of Human Development (ONDH) could play a key role in monitoring and coordinating the promotion of the institutionalization of policy evaluation and development cooperation in this domain.

Since its inception, the Observatory has conducted several works of evaluation and has developed a significant expertise in this area. Several meetings and conferences were organized to sensitize policy makers on the importance of evaluating and sharing results of the work conducted in this area.

As part of the celebration of the International Year of Evaluation, an international conference will be held on 5-6 October 2015, by ONDH in partnership with United Nations in Morocco, the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy of Mexico (CONEVAL) and the Centre of Social Research and Studies of Tunisia (CRES).

This event will be an opportunity to highlight the multiple evaluation issues and implications, and to share experiences with experts and practitioners from the South, especially those who have made considerable progress and advancement in this area.

1. Objectives of the Conference

The overall objective of this conference is to promote the institutionalization of evaluation of public policies for achieving the human development goals and the achievement of human rights, and to raise the awareness of policy makers, civil societies and the private sector on the strategic role of evaluation in the promotion of good governance.

The conference also aims to initiate discussions and exchanges on the progress of the evaluation process, clarify concepts, reassure the stakeholders to sharpen the focus, and to rationalize resources and expenses for more efficient management of human development programs and projects.

The specific objectives of the conference are:

1. Promote the exchange of good practices in terms of evaluation among specialized structures;
2. Establish an assessment of the institutionalization of evaluation in the countries of the South;
3. Sensitize policy makers, elected officials and civil society organizations on the value of institutionalizing the evaluation of public policies;
4. Enhance knowledge and attitudes of participants for the evaluation of public policies, programs and development projects.

2. Expected Outcomes of the Conference

The primary expected results are:

1. The clarification of the advances, challenges, issues and perspectives of the institutionalization of evaluation in certain countries of the South;
2. A consensus on the creation of an international forum for the promotion of South-South cooperation in evaluation;
3. The adoption of the broad outline of a roadmap for the promotion of institutionalization and evaluation of public policy in Morocco and in the countries of the South.

3. Axes of the Conference

Four main themes are proposed, namely:

Axis 1: Theoretical, methodological and professional advances in terms of evaluation at the international level

- Theoretical, methodological and professional advances at the international level; International cooperation on evaluation;
- Integrating human rights and gender equality in public policy evaluations for inclusive and sustainable human development.

Axis 2: Appraisal of the institutionalization of public policy evaluation

This axis essentially concerns the exchange of experiences of institutionalized approaches; lessons learned, best practices, etc.

- Legal and regulatory framework (repository);
- How to evolve from texts to implementation;
- Cases of good practice in countries from the South (countries that have established monitoring and evaluation systems);
Successful experiences in the world in institutionalizing the evaluation of public policies: lessons learned (successes and failures), institutionalization issues and challenges of operationalization;

Reflection on the evaluation of public policies and the Post-2015 Agenda.

**Axis 3: Country experiences in the evaluation of policies, programs and projects**

- Presentation of successful experiences of institutional structures responsible for the evaluation of public policies in developing countries (MENA, Africa, Latin America, South Asia);
- National monitoring and evaluation systems of public action in pioneer countries: practices, international trends, good practices.

**Axis 4: Citizen Participation in the evaluation**

- Presentation of country experiences and good practices;
- Challenges and evaluation issues;
- Promote the demand for evaluation: role of political authorities and civil society.

**4. Organization and Coordination of the Conference**

The organization and coordination of the conference will be provided by the National Observatory of Human Development, in partnership with the United Nations in Morocco and other partner organizations.