

27 February  
—  
1 March 2020

Dead Sea,  
Jordan

### Panel Chair

Kassem el Saddik  
Vice-chair, EVALSDGs

### Panelists

Mutasim Al Kilani  
Head of the Sustainable  
Development  
Department, Jordan

Felix Rezog  
Strategy, Evaluation and  
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Deputy Secretary  
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# 8th EvalMENA Conference: *Evaluation for Sustainability and Change* – UNICEF, EVALSDGs and GPFE Interventions –

[EvalMENA](#) – the Evaluators Network of the Middle East and North Africa region – successfully held its 8<sup>th</sup> Conference from 27 February to 1 March 2020 in Dead Sea, Jordan. Focusing on “Evaluation for Sustainability and Change”, the conference was organized in partnership with [UNICEF](#), [WFP](#), [FAO](#), and [3ie](#) among others, and attracted the participation of 150 representatives from MENA countries and other regions. [UNICEF](#) in partnership with [EVALSDGs](#) and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation ([GPFE](#)) organized two panels at the conference.



## *Panel on “Making the case for country-led evaluations of the SDGs: building on MENA country experiences (a multi-stakeholder perspective)”*

The panel was jointly organized by EVALSDGs and UNICEF to highlight the importance of country-led evaluations in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Multi-stakeholders including the government, development partners, civil society and the evaluation community highlighted the challenges as well as the way forward to strengthen country-led evaluations in the region. The key points highlighted were:

- Evaluation plays a critical role going beyond measurement of targets and indicators to assess how well SDG initiatives are engaging all stakeholders, and how benefits are spread amongst stakeholders. If decision-makers invest in and pay attention to evaluation findings, there is potential to enable success for inclusive and equitable SDGs.
- It is evident that Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports submitted so far, still lack evaluative evidence when reporting the progress on SDGs. VNRs mainly contain hard data; thus, they do not thoroughly explain what changes are happening in the countries. Evaluation is the function that could help respond to the reasons behind the numbers.
- A number of countries are already beginning to plan for SDG-related evaluations. Finland and Nigeria are the first two countries to conduct country-led evaluations of the SDGs. Both countries will be presenting VNRs in 2020.
- MENA countries need more capacity in strengthening country-led evaluations to inform decision makers on Sustainable Development.
- The youth, gender and equity perspective brought up by the panelists added great value to the dialogue as it highlighted the need for national governments to ensure inclusive, equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations.

## Panel on "Follow up to Colombo Declaration and EvalColombo2018 – Progress towards regional commitments"

Jointly organized by GPFE and UNICEF, this panel focused on the progress on the [Colombo Declaration on Evaluation](#). The Colombo Declaration on Evaluation was signed at the Parliament of Sri Lanka in the context of [EvalColombo2018](#). Following the Declaration, the Parliament of Sri Lanka implemented a comprehensive programme to institutionalize evaluation, including establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee on Evaluation, drafting the National Evaluation Bill, and strengthening the Parliament Research Unit. The report of the Committee was presented to the Parliament on 20 February outlining their recommendations for evaluation capacity development including the proposed National Evaluation Bill and establishment of an Independent Commission on Evaluation. The progress of the Sri Lanka Parliament was showcased at the beginning of the panel for other countries to learn from it. The panel highlighted the following:

- Parliamentarians need evaluative evidence for informed decision making. As they are the key decision makers in resource allocation and development priorities, parliamentarians can advocate for country-led evaluations to generate evidence for Sustainable Development.
- As follow up to the Declaration, the Ghana parliament is planning to establish a "Parliamentarians Forum on Evaluation" and advocate for a National Evaluation Policy.
- MENA countries need further capacity to advocate for National Evaluation Policies and Systems for better national enabling environments for evaluation.
- As it was the case in previous meetings, panelists concluded that VOPEs, development partners, academia and the governments should work together with parliamentarians to promote use of evaluative evidence for decision making and for creating the demand for country-led evaluations of the SDGs.

### Panel Chair

**Asela Kalugampitiya**  
Secretariat, GPFE/Consultant,  
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### Panelists

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Deputy-Minister Western  
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**Abu Holi**  
Member of Parliament,  
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**Belal Qasem**  
Vice President Parliamentary  
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**Dawas Dawas**  
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