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## **CO-CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF THE ODA EVALUATION WORKSHOP IN KL, MALAYSIA**

The 7th ODA Evaluation Workshop was organized jointly by the Governments of Malaysia and Japan in Kuala Lumpur on 28 and 29 November, 2007.

The plenary session of the Workshop was opened with the two remarks by two co-chairs, Dato' Dr. Ali Hamsa of Economic Planning Unit of the GOM and Professor Ryokichi Hirono of Seikei University, Tokyo. Mr. Oda, Deputy Director-General of International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a welcome speech, thanking the GOM for co-organising the Workshop and for a warm hospitality extended to all the participants in the Workshop.

The first presentation was made by representatives of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) of Malaysia on their evaluation of the Japanese ODA to Malaysia during the last few decades, singling out several important projects covering various areas of the country's concern. There were several questions and remarks made on the presentation. There was a general consensus on the usefulness of the Japanese assistance in Malaysia, particularly with respect to human capital formation and institution building, though with a few hiccups in the implementation of some of those projects. It was emphasized that those lessons learnt from the evaluation of the Japanese assistance in Malaysia have already been applied to the formulation and implementation of national and local development projects and programmes in the country.

The second presentation was made by Danida on the on-going progress and evaluation of the Paris Declaration, delving into some of the important dimensions of project and programme evaluation to further improve aid effectiveness. Attention was drawn to a series of events leading up to the Ghana HLF in 2008 and up to the 2012 meeting to finalise the on-going evaluation involving management and reference groups. The Danida presentation was followed by OECD/DAC presentation on the DAC Quality Standards. Questions and remarks were mainly on the need for allowing some variation among partner countries in evaluation, while recognizing the importance of universal standards of evaluation methodologies and procedures.

The Workshop had two breakout sessions on the first day afternoon, WG A focusing on the Institutional Evaluation Capacity Development and WG B on Human Resources Development for Enhanced Evaluation Capacity. In WG A there were three country presentation on their respective experiences, Vietnam, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In WG B presentation was given

by JICA, ADB and Nepal. The main points of two WG presentation and the discussion that followed were as follows.

WGA highlighted the critical importance of a) the strong political commitment at the top to evaluation, b) the balance between learning and accountability functions of evaluation, c) the engagement of policy makers in different stages and levels of evaluation process, d) improvement of the quality of evaluation and e) the promotion of regional network of evaluation dedicated to ECD in partner countries as well as regional standards setting and methodology improvement. Consensus also emerged on the importance of the five principles of the Paris Declaration, Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Management for Results and Mutual Accountability which all call for effective evaluation both in partner and donor countries/organizations. Question, however, did remain in regard to the implementation of these five principles which is often related to the extent of ECD in the partner countries and the headquarter policies in donor countries concerned.

WG B presentation and the discussion reflected responses to the four major questions regarding: a) skills and methods in project management, data analysis, project goal setting, budget management and performance auditing, b) various types of national organizations providing evaluation services and training programmes for ECD, c) potential candidates of evaluators in the future, with both positive and negative aspects of different evaluators, and d) different users of evaluation results ranging from policy makers through implementing agencies to academic institutions, each requiring its respective dimensions.

In the discussion that followed the presentation of the WG Summary at the second-day plenary session, there were a number of points raised which were common to the summary of two WG presentation, such as how to meet the funding requirements for ECD and how to link project, programme and country evaluations, as well as others felt important in relation to specific situation facing different partner countries and the implications of globalization of economic and social development to evaluation requirements in different partner countries.

The participants in the 7th ODA Evaluation Workshop expressed their deep appreciation to the two organizers of the Workshop for their excellent organization of the Workshop and to the presenters for their comprehensive and enlightening presentation of their country and organizations' experiences on the two main Workshop agenda items as well as to the Government of Malaysia for their warm hospitality that made the Workshop both fruitful and pleasant to all. They all expressed an urgent need for continuing this sort of exchange of country experiences and straight-forward dialogue in order to improve evaluation and enhance the evaluation capacity in partner countries of this region as well as to expedite the process of establishing a regional network of evaluation professionals in the region.