Oscar's Closing Statement – ICT4Eval

Over the past two days we have heard from numerous speakers and presenters on a range of applications of technology to evaluations. We have seen from our Tech Fair Exhibitors on what vendors have to offer. We have discussed our key takeaways from the individual sessions of the conference. We have heard that technology is only a tool to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our evaluations and that technology is only as good as the evaluator who uses it. However, this ICT4Eval conference can be deemed successful only when we go back to our work with concrete thoughts on how to move forward from here.

Allow me to start the iterative process by putting across how I see the way forward. We need to recognize that we are evaluators first and not technology wizards. Resources and capacities are not always sufficiently geared towards mainstreaming technology into our work. In such context, the key lies in tapping into complementary and shared capacities with partners. For example, IFAD itself could start with the low hanging fruit by collaborating with its Rome based sister agencies to start capitalizing on capacities that exist within, and they certainly do, as showcased during breakout sessions of this conference. It could mean other new collaborations for other participants here. Private sector, and academia also have a key role to play.

However, such new collaborations should not be seen as a burden but rather as a contribution towards measuring progress on SDGs and direct contribution to SDGs themselves – Let's remember SDG 17 – Partnership for the Goals ! Within it, Improving access to technology and knowledge is seen as an important way to share ideas and foster innovation. However, we as evaluators, should move a step further. I envision shared capacities for a mutually beneficial partnerships. This task will not be easy and will nor will it be linear path. We will need to overcome organizational inertia, we will have to learn, innovate and grow.

I would like your attention for a moment to recognize the contributions made by a number of colleagues who made this conference a great success. Let me start by thanking Chitra Deshpande, Delphine Bureau, Elisa Finocchiaro, Jaqueline Souza, Linda Danielsson, Maria Cristina, Melba Alvarez, Miron Arljung, Prashanth Kotturi and Xiaozhe Zhang.

So let us step out of here with an open mind and with new knowledge of what exists out in the world and with the recognition that this is just the beginning of a long iterative journey on how to keep improving our evidence based work. To use a farming metaphor, I am sure these experiences and ideas were planted on fertile ground and will yield wonderful fruits. This is ICT4Eval ! Many thanks for your participation.