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Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MONITORING & EVALUATION INDABA

PARALLEL SESSION ABSTRACTS

Main Theme:	Aim of the Indaba
Opportunities and Challenges of Using Evidence from Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) to Accelerate Economic Development and Employment in Africa	The Indaba seeks to promote knowledge exchange and learning from experience among African governments and key stakeholders in the M&E space to use evidence from M&E to contribute to economic growth and employment.

Expected outcomes of the Africa M&E Indaba

1. Enhanced learning and a common understanding of how M&E can be used to address economic development; employment and inequality facing African countries.

2. Strengthened use of information (data, statistics) and evidence from M&E in policy, planning, programme design or implementation and development impact (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, African Agenda 2063, Country Development Plans, etc.)

3. Improved understanding of the importance and benefits of political leadership championing M&E.

4. Platform created for building partnerships and networking opportunities for the use of evidence to enhance human development.

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1. M&E Ecosystems

The field of M&E is continuously evolving influenced by experience and context. Within a country there are many stakeholders in the national M&E system ranging from state bodies and non-state actors like civil society and the private sector. The web of relationships and interactions among these role-players in the M&E community within a country and internationally can be characterized as an M&E ecosystem. The various approaches to M&E acknowledge the importance of use of evidence for decision-making, accountability, performance improvement, efficiency, learning, effective development and sustainability.

This conference stream will address the main theme by engaging stakeholders drawn from all sectors of society: government, Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluators (VOPES), multilateral institutions, independent evaluators, academia, civil society, parliamentarians and private sector to engage on the contribution of M&E evidence to addressing issues of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Discussion questions

What are the mechanisms for strengthening country M&E systems for better institutionalization and utilization of M&E findings? What lessons can be gained from African M&E ecosystems?

What are we learning from governmental M&E systems? What are some experiences from central government bodies?

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2. Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

Countries with the greatest demographic opportunity for development are those entering a period in which the working-age population has good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependents. Smaller numbers of children per household generally lead to larger investments per child, more freedom for women to enter the formal workforce and more household savings for old age. When this happens, the national economic payoff can be substantial. This is a "demographic dividend."

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without assuring that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to economic growth. Developing policies and investments to secure that future requires that governments know the size, sex, location and age structure of their present and future populations.

This session will focus on ways to improve national data systems to map and address inequalities, advance Sustainable DGs and the ICPD agenda. We will also discuss the mainstreaming demographic intelligence to improve the responsiveness, targeting impact of development policies, programmes and advocacy.

Discussion questions

How can we use population data to assess the potential demographic dividend of countries?

How can we utilize the analysis model to guide policy-making and the development of programmes?

How do we measure Human Capital Development to ensure that no one is left behind?

Through the global ICT revolution and continuous telecoms innovation, data is being generated at an unprecedented rapid pace in the form known as big data. Big data sets include mobile phone data and data generated on the internet through applications such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Administrative data is data collected for administrative purposes often during the delivery of a service such as record keeping or registration rather than research purposes. For example, when municipalities bill citizens for services such as refuse collection, this data is administrative data.

At the same time as there is impressive technological innovation, there is inequality, precarity of job security and many of the world's citizens live in dire poverty. The United Nations call to leave no one behind means that the development data sought in terms of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators needs to track what is happening at a local level. This requires data that is much more granular than the data that we have customarily collected at an aggregated national level.

Governments are becoming increasingly aware of the need to utilize technology to provide responsive and timeous services to citizens. Ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goal commitments are translated into effective action requires a precise understanding of target populations. Disaggregated data needed to address all vulnerable groups – including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants – as specified in the 2030 Agenda, are sparse. Civic technology offers an avenue through which to engage with citizens about the services which governments deliver and can also be employed to do citizen monitoring.

Big data, administrative data and civic technology offer avenues for data innovation. They offer an opportunity for governments to better understand the needs of citizens and to gain nuanced insights to guide decision-making regarding policy choices and the design of programmes.

Discussion questions

How can big data be utilized to improve decision-making for development?	How can administrative data be utilized to improve decision-making for development?	How can civic technology be utilized by governments to be more responsive to citizens' needs?

This session will explore how evaluations are used to move economic development outcomes forward for countries. The session will demonstrate evaluation studies in relation to reviewing government programmes, improving policies, accountability and decision making on economic development initiatives; and creating employment opportunities.

The session is a unique opportunity to analyze effective government evaluation systems and to promote the use of evidence at an analytical, strategic and operational level in order to improve the role of M&E in economic development and employment. Sub-themes include: evaluation and culture; role of donors/power relations; and incentives for use in government. This conversation will bring together academia, varied government departments and donor agencies.

Discussion questions

What are the challenges and wins of using evaluation at government-wide level?

What is the evaluation culture in your country?

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5. Gender, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups

Central to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the concept of "leaving no one behind," so that development can be equally shared amongst all segments of society. However, disaggregated data and evidence by age, sex, income level, and location of residence are often scarce and does not provide relevant insights for policy making to address all vulnerable groups. This makes it difficult for policies and programmes to address the specific needs of different groups including women and youth.

With a focus on Gender, Youth and Vulnerable Groups, this session will discuss the challenges and potential solutions of the use of M&E, so that policies will include those that are often "left behind" and how these policies can be inclusive in the country's economic growth including on issues relating to employment.

Discussion questions

What are the challenges and potential solutions to generate age and sex disaggregated data and evidence for policy and programme formulation and implementation?

What are equity focused evaluations and how can they be utilized to ensure that we leave no one behind?

What are some examples of how M&E systems can support policies and programmes that improve economic growth and create jobs for women, youth and vulnerable groups? How can these be scaled up in the national or regional level?

Over the past decade, macroeconomic models have become quite sophisticated, thanks to advances in computing power. These models are increasingly becoming indispensable tools for policy makers, useful in both forecasting and comparing different policy options. Policy makers need to predict the future direction of an economy before they can decide on which policy to adopt; the use of models has the benefit of elevating decisions to a scientific and systematic level. Models can be used to test different theories under specific underlying hypotheses and assumptions and provide policy guidance and explanations for the implications of policy changes.

However, in many developing countries few policy makers are adept at developing suitable models that relate to specific country contexts and there is usually limited understanding of how a model works such that for most policy makers, models remain a mystical "black box". Additionally, a lack of reliable, timely and appropriately disaggregated data restricts the scope of econometric and aggregate analysis, but also requires highly developed skills for extracting meaningful quantitative information from the limited available data. The expected outcome of this session will be the demystification of modelling as a tool for policy analysis and decision making. The session will also bridge the gap between policy and the use of data and M&E systems for decision making.

Fore-sighting is increasingly used as a process for identifying opportunities and threats which may arise in mid-to-long-term versions of the future. It systematically looks at the long-term horizon of science, technology, and institutions within dynamic economic, political, and social contexts to identify strategies that will yield the greatest benefits. As a way of thinking, fore-sighting also encourages innovation, strategic evaluation and the proactive shaping of the future. Where traditional planning has sought to prevent failure, strategic foresight prioritises resilience, namely early detection and fast recovery. Forward-looking, adaptive and resilient policies allow public administrations to engage with and shape events to the best advantage of their citizens.

An effective foresight system represents an information generation and management process that generally consists of three phases: 1) collecting information, 2) interpreting the data and formulating different versions of the future and 3) developing strategic options for action. For traditional organizations moving towards fore-sighting, this not only requires a paradigm shift about how to think about the future, but also a cultural shift towards creating a learning organization. In government, this means encouraging civil servants to capture knowledge, share information and practice anticipatory thinking at every level of public administration, from front-line service delivery to top-level decision-making.

As a collaborative diagnostic tool, fore-sighting is critical for projections of future investments needed within an innovation system. Additionally, fore-sighting processes facilitate stakeholder engagement and learning that can lead to technical and institutional changes.

Discussion questions

What are linkages between theory and macroeconomic models and what are the fundamental blocks in macroeconomic modelling?

How do we use models for forecasting and fore-sighting?

What are the differences between forecasting and fore-sighting

How can online tools be used to increase participation in the fore-sighting exercise?

What sets of evaluation criteria are used to assess the success of national fore-sighting programmes?

How do we adapt a global or national foresight programme to a local context?