

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION



Speech by Mr. Madhusoodhanan Mampuzhasseril

Division Manager, IDEV.2 / African
Development Bank Group

gLOCAL Evaluation Week 2025

Panel: Catalyzing Sustainable Growth through
Evaluative Evidence – Lessons from Sierra
Leone and Liberia

Date and time: 3 June 2025, 9.30 GMT

Mr. Gilles Fagninou, Regional Director for
UNICEF WCARO,

Mr. Prosper Charle, African Development
Bank's Country Economist for Sierra Leone,

Dear Panelists, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to all participants joining us from around the world.

It is a great honor and privilege to speak at this important session of the gLOCAL Evaluation Week 2025. On behalf of the African Development Bank's Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV), I extend my sincere thanks to UNICEF's West and Central Africa Regional Office for their excellent collaboration in organizing this session, and for their unwavering support to strengthening evaluation capacity in our region. I also wish to thank our moderator, Prosper Charle, and the evaluation community present here today from

partner governments, civil society, to Multilateral Development Banks, UN agencies, and bilateral partners. Your presence is a clear reflection of our shared commitment to evidence-based development action.

Today's session focusing on "Catalyzing Sustainable Growth through Evaluative Evidence" addresses a challenge that is timely and deeply consequential. At a time when the world continues to face interlocking crises from public health emergencies and economic uncertainty to climate shocks and conflicts, the importance of evaluation as a learning and accountability tool has never been greater.

In fragile and transition contexts such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, evaluations are more than just mechanisms for reflection; they are essential for adaptation, learning, and strategic course correction. They help us answer not just the question, "Did we deliver?" but more importantly, "Are we on the right path to transformative, inclusive, and sustainable development?"

At IDEV, we recently completed two comprehensive evaluations of the Bank's Country Strategies and Programs for Sierra Leone and Liberia, covering the period from 2013 to 2023. These evaluations assessed the Bank's strategic positioning, development effectiveness, and responsiveness to evolving country needs. The findings highlighted not only the impact of external shocks such as Ebola and COVID-19 but also the critical importance of institutional capacity, financial sustainability, and implementation agility.

Similarly, our colleagues at UNICEF WCARO have conducted robust country program evaluations in both countries, generating valuable lessons on how to build resilience in systems, empower communities, and advance gender

equity. Their focus on systems strengthening, rather than just service delivery, aligns closely with the Bank's goal of achieving sustainable impact at scale.

These evaluations show us how evidence can be used to inform government policy, enhance accountability, and drive inclusive growth.

Importantly, they highlight a core tenet that the evaluation context matters. Evaluations must be sensitive to local realities and adapted to complex, often fragile environments. We must go beyond standard metrics and indicators to truly understand the lived experiences of the people we serve.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also emphasize here the vital importance of partnerships. The impact of evaluation is significantly amplified when it is co-created—when we engage governments, civil society, the youth, the private sector, and development partners from the very beginning. Evaluation should never be a solitary exercise; it is, by nature, a collaborative endeavor grounded in trust, open dialogue, and a commitment to shared objectives.

Looking ahead, our challenge is to continue building a culture of evaluation, one that not only demands accountability, but also fosters learning, innovation, and adaptive leadership. At the African Development Bank, we are committed to this path. Through IDEV, we are investing in stronger methodologies, greater transparency, and more systematic use of evidence in strategy design and implementation.

Let me close by returning to the theme of this year's gLOCAL Evaluation Week: "Evaluation for a Better Future: Environmental Sustainability, Inclusion, and Peace." These are not abstract ideals; these are imperatives and evaluation has a

critical role to play in achieving them. It can help us understand the trade-offs, confront the hard truths, and shape strategies that truly leave no one behind.

Thank you once again to our partners at UNICEF WCARO, to all the contributors to today's session, and to each of you in the audience for your dedication to learning and progress. I look forward to the rich discussion ahead and to continuing our collective journey toward more impactful, evidence-informed development.

Thank you for your attention!