



24th Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) Congress

Koror, Palau

28 February to 3 March 2023

PASAI Communiqué

1. PASAI held its 24th Congress in Koror, Palau from 28 February to 3 March 2023. The Office of the Public Auditor for the Republic of Palau hosted the Congress. The theme for the Congress was “Looking to the future.” Representatives of 22 PASAI member national, state or territory government audit offices attended from the Australian National Audit Office, Australian Capital Territory (Australia), New South Wales (Australia), Western Australia (Australia), the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National, FSM Pohnpei, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Representatives attended from the Brazilian Federal Court of Accounts (Chair of INTOSAI), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, the Government Accountability Office USA, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), the International Journal of Government Auditing, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the United Nations Development Programme Pacific (UNDP) Office, Graduate School USA, the Minister of Finance of Palau, and Beasley Intercultural.

Video presentations were provided by representatives from the Secretary-General of INTOSAI, the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA), the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the World Bank.

PASAI Secretariat staff also attended.

2. SAI Heads **expressed** their deep gratitude to the Public Auditor and staff of SAI Palau for making such excellent arrangements in hosting the Congress.

Looking to the future

3. SAI Heads **acknowledged** the invitation from the INTOSAI Secretary-General, Dr Margit Kraker, to visit the [INTOSAI website](#) to read an overview of the 12 professional pronouncements that were endorsed at INCOSAI in November 2022. SAI Heads **noted** her invitation to PASAI’s state and territorial members who are not already affiliate members of INTOSAI, to apply for this category of membership.
4. SAI Heads **agreed** with the sentiment of the INTOSAI Chair, President of the Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil, Minister Bruno Dantas, that it is in the interest of all of humanity that small island developing states (SIDS) thrive. SAI Heads **acknowledged** his invitation to join the Climate Scanner project after the pilot stage and **noted** his recognition of PASAI’s mainstreaming of

gender and inclusion in its Human Resource Management work. SAI Heads **appreciated** his offer to work together on IT capacity challenges.

5. SAI Heads **were encouraged** by the Minister of Finance of Palau's statement that all Pacific Island ministers of finance should be utilising the platform provided by the Pacific Island Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) to advocate for high quality government audits.
6. SAI Heads, along with all other Congress participants, **concurred** with the PASAI Secretary-General's expression of appreciation for the attendance of the INTOSAI Chair and his delegation from Brazil and acknowledged the significance of the INTOSAI Chair's support for the PASAI Congress. The Rio Declaration reinforces that we all face the same challenges no matter the size of the SAI.

Secretariat work update

7. PASAI Secretariat's Chief Executive **reported** on the current focus areas of PASAI's programme.
8. SAI Heads **noted** that the completion of the SAI Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) assessments for all 20 SAIs that are beneficiaries of PASAI's programmes has strengthened the evidence base on the status of SAI independence (Strategic Priority 1). The Secretariat continues to support work with SAIs across the region to improve independence and to monitor progress on independence at the SAI level. In-country visits to Samoa in December and Kiribati in recent months have been focused on supporting SAI Heads to undertake advocacy with key stakeholders. Assistance is also being provided to SAIs to develop independence strategies.
9. SAI Heads **noted** that to advocate to strengthen governance, transparency, accountability and integrity (Strategic Priority 2) the Secretariat is progressing its 'Accountability and Transparency Study' report. This report is expected to be published soon. The Secretariat continues to collaborate with PFTAC to complete Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments. PEFA assessment results are used to identify focus areas for PASAI's programme. Supporting SAIs to develop and implement communications strategies continues. In-person communications and media workshop training has recommenced recently. PASAI's monthly blog continues to be used as part of its advocacy programme.
10. SAI Heads **noted** that to achieve high quality audits on a timely basis (Strategic Priority 3) the Secretariat continues to support SAIs to complete the financial statements of government (FSG) audit where these audits have a backlog. PASAI continued its work with the IDI on the programme 'Provide SAI level support for efficient and timely FSG audits in compliance with ISSAIs'. Quality Assurance (QA) reviews for SAIs involved in this programme are progressing. The Secretariat published a report on findings from FSG audits in December 2022. The insights into common issues identified from these audits will be used to inform support to SAIs.
11. SAI Heads **noted** that PASAI's work to enhance SAI capacity and capability (Strategic Priority 4) is currently focused on assisting SAIs to design and implement strategic plans, operational plans, performance monitoring systems and to strengthening Human Resource Management (HRM). The HRM programme continued with support from SAI Sweden.
12. SAI Heads **noted** that following the completion of SAI PMF assessments for all recipient member SAIs PASAI has now published a report summarising the results for the region. This work will guide the focus of PASAI's programme into the future strategic period.

13. SAI Heads **noted** that in support of member SAIs (Strategic Priority 5) the Secretariat's four programme directors are now working with a portfolio of SAIs. This is intended to enhance the depth of understanding of PASAI's staff of the needs of PASAI's members to ensure the Secretariat is providing relevant support to SAIs.

Development Partner and stakeholder updates

14. SAI Heads **acknowledged** the clear messages of ongoing support received from PASAI's development partners (the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank).
15. SAI Heads were **grateful** for the presence of the Australian Ambassador to Palau and the UNDP's PFM Technical Specialist at the Congress and for the video messages provided by other development partners.
16. SAI Heads **noted** the important contributions of other INTOSAI bodies in the development of PASAI's member SAIs.
17. SAI Heads **noted** the high level of participation of PASAI staff in the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) Professional Education for SAI Auditors – Pilot (PESA-P). SAI Heads also **noted** PASAI member participation in the IDI's Transparency, Accountability and Inclusion (TAI) Audit programme.
18. SAI Heads **noted** the relevance of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing to Pacific Island nations and upcoming regional working group meeting to be held in New South Wales in May 2023.
19. SAI Heads **acknowledged** the importance of building partnerships and the need for Development Partners and other stakeholders to join with SAIs to increase attention to issues such as SAI independence challenges.

Twinning partnerships

20. SAI Heads **acknowledged** the work of INTOSAI's Capacity Building Committee to support peer-to-peer cooperation under the Goal 2 work programme and the alignment of this INTOSAI work stream with twinning activities occurring between PASAI members. SAI Heads **noted** the desire of PASAI to increase the extent of twinning work within its programme.
21. SAI Heads **heard** the Head of SAI USA strongly supports the establishment of twinning partnerships for North Pacific SAIs. SAI Heads **noted** work that is underway to develop a connection between SAI USA's Center for Audit Excellence and PASAI members to establish development partner supported twinning style long-term partnerships. SAI Heads **noted** other opportunities available through SAI USA including its international auditor fellowship programme.
22. SAI Heads **heard** that Graduate School USA, in its role providing customised training and a peer review process support to Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors (APIPA) members, welcomes opportunities to work more closely with PASAI in the future.

23. SAI Heads **noted** that the Congress provided a valuable opportunity for twinning partners to connect and reconnect, build mutual understanding and plan for future work together.

Pacific SAIs living the INTOSAI motto

24. Congress participants **dedicated** much of their time together to sessions where they shared experiences to achieve mutual benefit and encouragement. The INTOSAI motto, *Experientia mutua omnibus prodest* (Mutual experience benefits all), and PASAI's motto, "Pacific auditors working together," were **confirmed** as foundational guides for the work of PASAI through these sessions. Sub-region representatives shared their challenges and issues, SAI purpose and achievements were considered along with discussions on the important issues of SAI independence, delivering quality in their core audit mandates, and achieving impact through their work for the benefit of their communities.

25. SAI Heads **shared** creative responses to the question, "What reflects the importance of your work?" which set the tone for the working sessions. This tied the SAIs' work to their cultural heritage and highlighted that there is a commonality of challenges but also passion to maintain the important role of SAIs. SAI Heads **resolved** to work together to address the many common challenges that they have.

Exploring SAI independence

26. SAI Heads **noted**:

- The journey from a low to high level of SAI independence may take time and requires persistent advocacy.
- That IDI provides a range of tools to help SAIs gain independence, monitor independence challenges and support SAIs with advocacy where needed. Where a SAI has high levels of independence it must be jealously guarded. In cases where SAI Independence is under threat IDI has a SAI Independence Rapid Advocacy Mechanism (SIRAM) available to support SAIs.
- It is critical SAIs lead by example and act with integrity.

Securing quality in SAI's core mandate

27. SAI Heads **noted** that:

- Twinning and peer-to-peer support provide valuable ways of learning from the experiences of others.
- Quality Assurance review processes build a culture of continuous improvement within SAIs.
- Training staff at a time that is close to when they will be able to apply the skills is the most effective way to learn.
- While technical training will be important, even more so is ensuring staff understand the values of their organisation and apply these in all that they do.

Enabling audit impact

28. SAI Heads **noted** that:

- The INTOSAI Journal of Government Auditing provides a platform to share stories of audit impact for the encouragement of others. The Journal plans to dedicate an edition to small island states later this year.
- PASAI's recent focus on assisting SAIs to develop communications strategies is enabling SAIs to increase audit impact. Examples were shared of actions taken to implement these strategies

including SAls' increasing interactions with public accounts committees and initiating events with community groups to share audit results.

- Representatives of the INTOSAI Chair's delegation provided the example of the coordinated audit on protected areas being implemented by the SAls of seven Portuguese-speaking countries and who will disseminate communication products related to this work from the second half of 2023.
- PASAI's Enhancing Strategic Management Capability programme has developed the knowledge of participants on strategic management concepts including value creation, strategic priorities and key performance measures.

Strategy development

29. SAI Heads **concurred** that the existing Strategic Priorities have steered PASAI well and that significant progress has been made across all strategic priorities during that time.
30. SAI Heads **noted** the continuity of PASAI's role over many years and the importance of its continued focus on supporting the needs of its members.
31. SAI Heads **valued** the opportunity to have detailed discussions with other Congress participants about what has helped and hindered PASAI in its work, how well it has succeeded in the past, what emerging issues are likely to affect its work in the future and what kind of activities PASAI should be prioritising.
32. SAI Heads **noted** the next steps in the development of its future Strategic Plan would include extensive consultation with PASAI members, development partners and stakeholders over the coming months.

PASAI general business

33. SAI Heads **reviewed** the communique from the 23rd Congress meeting held online from Wellington from 22 to 24 June 2021.
34. SAI Heads **noted** the Chief Executive's report for the period July 2022 to January 2023.
35. SAI Heads **noted** the current functionality of PASAI's Learning Platform and development of a draft Competency Framework.
36. SAI Heads **adopted** the recommendations provided to Congress by PASAI's Governing Board that held its 33rd meeting on 27 February 2023 being the following:
 - the delay of the previously approved PASAI membership fee increase to NZD8,000 per annum scheduled for 1 July 2023 to 1 July 2024 as a consequence of the impacts of COVID-19 on the region.
 - in accordance with Article 3 of the PASAI Charter that the Australian Capital Territory Audit Office and the Western Australia Audit Office be admitted as new members of PASAI.
 - the PASAI Secretariat office to remain in New Zealand.
 - as previously agreed in 2021 that if the Secretariat was to be relocated it would require three years for selection of an alternative location and for relocation to take place.
 - that the next consideration of the Secretariat location is three years before the end of the next Strategic Plan period.
 - that the Secretary-General role is best linked to the country that hosts the Secretariat, although this is not a requirement of the Charter.

- the position of the Secretary-General of PASAI remains with SAI New Zealand.
37. SAI Heads **confirmed** SAI Tuvalu to represent the Polynesian group on the Governing Board and thanked Sefita Tangi, Auditor-General of Tonga, for his six years of service on the Board.
 38. SAI Heads **confirmed** SAI Vanuatu to represent the Melanesian group on the Governing Board.
 39. SAI Heads **confirmed** SAI Marshall Islands to represent the Micronesian group on the Governing Board.
 40. SAI Heads **confirmed** SAI New Caledonia to represent the 'Other' group on the Governing Board.
 41. SAI Heads noted the **confirmation** of the continuation of Fuimaono Camillo Afele, SAI Samoa, as PASAI Representative on the INTOSAI Governing Board until 2025 that was confirmed in 2022 prior to INCOSAI.

Host of the next PASAI Congress

42. SAI Heads **supported** the offer of SAI Cook Islands to host the 25th PASAI Congress in 2024.

Koror, Palau
3 March 2023