

Aide Memoire

25th UN/INTOSAI Symposium

Working during and after the pandemic: Building on the experience of Supreme Audit Institutions for strengthening effective institutions and achieving sustainable societies

28 to 30 June 2021



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1 Background

Since 1971, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), and the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) have organized twenty-four interregional seminars and symposia.

The UN General Assembly Resolutions A/66/209 (22 Dec. 2011) and A/69/228 (19 Dec. 2014) recognized the work of INTOSAI and its member Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in promoting greater accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration, which is conducive to the achievement of national development objectives and priorities as well as the internationally agreed development goals. Resolution A/69/327 (6 Oct. 2015) also encouraged Member States and relevant United Nations institutions to continue and to intensify their cooperation, including in capacity building, with INTOSAI in order to promote good governance by ensuring efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency through strengthened Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs).

Against this backdrop, INTOSAI and UNDESA will organise the joint 25th UN/INTOSAI Symposium from 28 to 30 June 2021. Given the travel restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Symposium will be organised remotely through virtual sessions. The Symposium is a continuing joint activity and an occasion to better focus the collaboration of the two institutions.

This Aide Memoire was prepared by UNDESA and INTOSAI to support preparations for the 25th UN/INTOSAI Symposium (hereafter referred to as “the Symposium”).

2 Topic of the 25th UN/INTOSAI Symposium

The participants of the Symposium will deliberate on the following topic:

“Working during and after the pandemic: Building on the experience of Supreme Audit Institutions for strengthening effective institutions and achieving sustainable societies”

During the Symposium, representatives from UNDESA and INTOSAI, its participating members as well as additional participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the topic above. The discussions will recognize and consider the different regional points of view as well as the diversity of national realities, levels of development, capacities and priorities of participating SAIs.

The discussions will be organised along four main sub-themes as follows:

- Impact of COVID-19 on SAIs' organization, working methods and processes
- Experiences and good practices in the external control of COVID-19 responses and recovery plans
- Innovation in enhancing transparency and accountability on COVID-19 responses
- Resilient accountability systems and institutions in the aftermath of COVID-19

3 Programme

Keynote speeches by a high-level representative of UNDESA and the Secretary General of INTOSAI are foreseen to initially frame the topic and the subthemes of the Symposium.

Determined by the time available, INTOSAI members, representatives of international organizations, resource experts and other participants are invited to make short presentations or interventions on concrete topics related to the theme and sub-themes of the Symposium and to provide more complete contributions in written form. The speakers will represent relevant regional working groups, ensuring a balance between regions and INTOSAI working languages.

The 25th UN/INTOSAI Symposium aims to allow a balanced view of the various starting situations and different points of view of the participants. Participants will be able to fully engage in the deliberations. As the Symposium will take place virtually for the first time, an effort will be made to accommodate different time zones in order to facilitate wide participation of SAI representatives and other stakeholders.

The sessions will be designed as to maximize and encourage interactive discussions, where the participants can react spontaneously to the topics and contribute to the output of the Symposium.

4 Date and Premises

The Symposium will be held virtually from 28 to 30 June 2021.

5 Languages

The working languages of the Symposium will be Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation and translation will be provided for plenary sessions by INTOSAI.

6 Targeted Output

An official report of the Symposium, summarizing the main contributions, conclusions and recommendations, will be prepared under the leadership of INTOSAI with the collaboration of UNDESA. The report will be prepared and published in the five working languages of the Symposium. The report will be available on the INTOSAI website and linked to DPIDG's website.

In addition, a publication will compile all substantive contributions prepared by SAIs and international and national resource experts. The publication, which will be issued after the Symposium, aims to provide different perspectives on each of the topics addressed. The publication will be available on the INTOSAI website and linked to DPIDG's website.

7 Documentation

INTOSAI will prepare substantive documentation for the Symposium in consultation with UNDESA. The documentation will comprise:

1. Summarized contributions prepared by international and national resource experts;
2. Summarized contributions presented by SAIs.

Concise contributions will be prepared in English by the SAI representatives and experts at their own expense. By submitting their contributions to the Symposium, they will authorize INTOSAI and UNDESA to reproduce these works in related publications.

8 Participants

Approximately 300 participants are expected to attend the Symposium. The target audience are primarily heads and senior staff of SAIs. Other participants may include representatives of the United Nations, international organizations, resource experts and relevant organizations.

All participants should have excellent technical qualifications, professional experience and good knowledge of at least one of the working languages of the Symposium.

Participants will have to register in advance. Pre-registered participants will be approved by INTOSAI. All registered participants will receive a dedicated invitation with the credentials and information for accessing the online sessions.