



April 13, 2020

Dear Members of the INTOSAI Policy, Finance, and Administration Committee,

We hope that this letter finds you, your loved ones, and your colleagues safe and healthy during the rapidly-evolving and unprecedented COVID-19 Pandemic. In recent weeks, we have all seen the effects of the pandemic on public health, the global economy, our governments, the citizens we serve, INTOSAI, our SAIs, and our employees.

As we seek to fulfill our own institutional obligations as well as our mandate under Goal 4 of the INTOSAI Strategic Plan, we are writing to invite you to participate in a new INTOSAI COVID-19 Initiative under the auspices of the Policy, Finance, and Administration Committee (PFAC) that will be led by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) in consultation with the General Auditing Bureau of Saudi Arabia and all members of the PFAC.

Underpinning this initiative is our belief that strong and capable SAIs will be of even greater importance and value now and in the future, as we will play a major role in auditing related programs and expenditures, and in seeking to prevent future pandemics.

Working together, we will focus on (1) maintaining continuity of operations within INTOSAI, (2) assisting individual SAIs with their continuity of operations, (3) sharing practical, technical, and audit-related information across INTOSAI members; and (4) developing a high-level lessons learned document for external stakeholders such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization that will focus on preventing or minimizing similar situations in the future, with an emphasis on actions that could be taken to limit the spread of disease via aviation.

Key issues that we will address within these work streams include practical information on remote work, the use of technology for virtual meetings, real-time auditing, and staff training, among others. We will also share relevant audit findings and methodologies on topics such as pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response; past audits related to disease outbreaks such as Ebola and SARS; health systems; financial markets; and expenditures related to COVID-19.

We envision this as a short-term and informal initiative that will involve discussions among the PFAC, with outreach to regional and sub-regional bodies, working groups—especially those with relevant jurisdiction such as the Working Group on Financial Modernization and Regulatory Reform, and all interested SAIs. We will also leverage GAO's leadership of the International Journal of Government Auditing as the primary communication mechanism for INTOSAI. A critical component of our work will be a dedicated web page with relevant and timely resources that all SAIs can access.

Mr. James-Christian Blockwood (BlockwoodJC@gao.gov), GAO's Managing Director of Strategic Planning and External Liaison, will manage this initiative under the direction of Comptroller General Dodaro with the assistance of Mr. Michael Hix (Hixm@gao.gov), Director of International Relations.

While we are deeply saddened by the consequences of this pandemic, we have a unique opportunity to provide a steady hand to assist the INTOSAI community during a highly uncertain and troubling time. We will follow up shortly with additional details and welcome your participation and counsel.

With kind regards and wishing you all the very best,

Dr. Hussam Alangari



President of the General Auditing Bureau of Saudi Arabia
Chair of the INTOSAI Policy, Finance and Administration Committee

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro



Comptroller General of the United States
United States Government Accountability Office
Vice Chair of the INTOSAI Policy, Finance, and Administration Committee
Chair of the International Journal of Government Auditing