



### Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs)

#### Supreme Audit Institutions

Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) help their respective governments to improve performance, enhance transparency, ensure accountability, maintain credibility, fight corruption, promote public trust, and foster the efficient and effective receipt and use of public resources for the value and benefits of their citizens. SAIs also make an essential contribution to the success of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



#### Independent SAIs are essential and valuable

**for the international community and the community of donors**

*as they promote*

- good governance, better public management and a transparent, accountable and responsible use of public funds
- the rule of law, integrity, economic growth, social justice and equity
- enhanced performance of the public sector
- the fight against corruption, waste and inefficiency
- the successful implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda through reviewing and following-up on the implementation of the SDGs

**for the citizens**

*as they contribute to*

- strengthening parliamentary scrutiny and democracy through holding governments to account
- strengthening the trustworthiness and effectiveness of the public sector
- the country’s stability and economic growth
- improving public service delivery
- deterring fraud in public administration

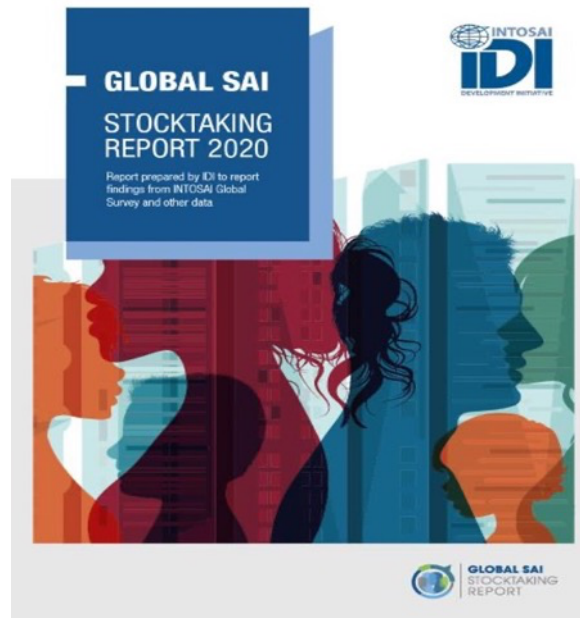
**for the United Nations**

*as they raise awareness for*

- the fact that SAIs can accomplish their tasks objectively and effectively only if they are independent of the audited entity and protected against outside influence
- the important role of SAIs in promoting the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration – factors that are also conducive to the achievement of the SDGs

## Challenges to SAI independence

*The Global SAI Stocktaking Report is a triannual stocktaking of the performance and capacities of SAIs*



### Legal status

- **68% of SAIs** perceive the legislative framework to be **adequate**. An analysis showed that an inadequate legal framework is linked to **lower levels of democracy and government functioning**.

### Operational independence / publication of reports

- **70% of SAIs** publish **at least 80% of their audit reports** (58% in 2017).

- **13% of SAIs** state that they have **no power at all** in deciding on **reporting, publication and dissemination** of their reports (10% in 2017).

- Only **44% of SAIs** report full access to **timely and unrestricted information** (70% in 2017).

- Only **66% of Parliaments** worldwide report to have clearly established **procedures for reviewing audit reports** published by SAIs (data provided by the Interparliamentary Union).

### Financial independence

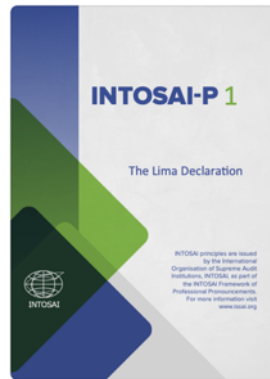
- Only **52% of SAIs** report to have **sufficient financial resources** to fulfil their mandate to the expected extent and quality.

- **40%** of SAIs report an interference by the executive in the budget process (64% in 2017).

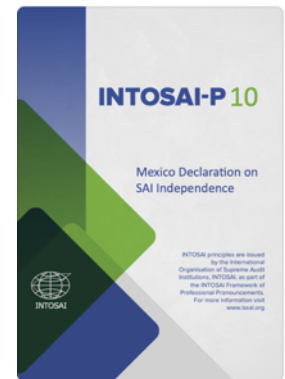
## INTOSAI initiatives to foster SAI independence

INTOSAI has been an ardent advocate of SAI independence. The following lists the numerous measures taken by the organization to promote and raise awareness for this issue:

- Adoption of the **Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts** (1977)



- Adoption of the **Mexico Declaration on the Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions** (2007) defining eight basic pillars of SAI independence



- Organization of the **17<sup>th</sup> UN/INTOSAI Seminar on “The Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions”** (2007)
- Achievement of the **repeated support** by the United Nations, in particular via the **General Assembly Resolutions A/66/209** (2011) and **A/69/228** (2014)
- Preparation and dissemination of the **folder on SAI independence** among the INTOSAI member SAIs containing the eight pillars of independence as laid down in the Mexico Declaration and the UN General Assembly Resolution A/66/209
- The **Strategic Plan of INTOSAI 2023–2028** defines SAI independence as one of its organizational priorities: “Advocate for and support SAI independence”
- Development of the **“SAI Independence Rapid Advocacy Mechanism”** (SIRAM) by the INTOSAI Development Initiative. SIRAM is a four-stages mechanism that aims to help INTOSAI and the donor community to deliver timely and effective responses to political developments or legal reforms that may negatively affect the independence of a SAI.
- **Establishment of the SAI Independence Resource Centre** (SIRC) by the INTOSAI Development Initiative, which features resource kits, publications and supporting material on SAI independence.
- In January 2022, the **INTOSAI Donor Cooperation (IDC) appointed Right Hon. Helen Clark as IDC Goodwill Ambassador** for SAI Independence to provide INTOSAI with an influential voice to bring the issue of SAI independence on the global policy agenda, to raise awareness and to help mobilize support.



- In January 2022, the General Secretariat of INTOSAI informed **UN Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin** about the findings of the IDI Global SAI Stocktaking Report.
- INTOSAI is closely working together with the international donor community, which has shown strong support for the independence of SAIs through impactful actions and programmes.