

Conference on Strengthening External Public Auditing in the INTOSAI Regions

On 26 and 27 May 2010, INTOSAI hosted a two-day conference in the Austrian Parliament on strengthening external public audit. SAI heads from all of INTOSAI's seven Regional Working Groups (AFROSAI, ARABOSAI, ASOSAI, CAROSAI, EUROSAI, OLACEFS und PASAI), representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank, the Interparliamentary Union, the donor community, and external experts attended the event.

The first conference day addressed the role and responsibilities of external public audit. The speakers emphasized the role played by SAIs within the system of checks and balances of the state powers in democracies, ensuring efficient and transparent government and accountability, and promoting good governance. Moreover, they underlined that SAIs were instrumental in fighting corruption and achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

There was general agreement that SAIs were gaining importance and influence, given the current financial and economic crisis. SAIs are perceived as embracing values such as credibility and trust by the citizens and the international community.

The speakers repeatedly stressed that independence was a fundamental prerequisite for the effective delivery of SAI tasks. The conference re-endorsed INTOSAI's objective of incorporating the basic principles on independence as laid down in the Lima and Mexico Declarations in international law. Moreover, the crucial role of INTOSAI's standards and guidelines in asserting SAI independence was recognized.

The speakers emphasized that presenting the value and benefits of independent SAIs, in particular for government and civil society, was yet another major prerequisite for the effectiveness of external public auditing and that communication with the public was instrumental in this respect.

INTOSAI



The second day of the INTOSAI Conference was devoted to capacity building of SAIs. Issues addressed included cooperation of INTOSAI and the donor community on institutional capacity building in developing and emerging countries. Specific presentations addressed the current activities of the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) in this area, and the role of IDI in the context of cooperation between INTOSAI and the donor community.

Based on the specific needs and challenges identified by the SAIs represented, delegates recommended in their joint Conclusions to place stronger focus on the following core issues: independence, institutional capacity building; developing material and staff competences; development and use of professional audit standards and methods; training and development; knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer; presentation of the value and benefits of independent SAIs..

