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Letter from the Chair of INTOSAI

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Vital do Rêgo

Letter from the Chair



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Challenges and Strategies for Strengthening the Credibility of Supreme Audit Institutions

The Chair of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), Minister Vital do Rêgo, highlights the challenges and strategies for strengthening the credibility of Supreme Audit Institutions.

In a global landscape marked by increasing political uncertainty and complex social transformations, the role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) can serve as a beacon, guiding society toward social stability, economic development, and good governance. However, we observe with concern the gradual decline in public trust in governments, political leaders, and the media. A phenomenon that directly impacts the legitimacy and effectiveness of all public entities, including our own oversight institutions.

Across many countries, the public distrust in government institutions is fueled by episodes of corruption, poor service delivery, and lack of transparency. Although SAIs play a crucial role through independent oversight and combating these weaknesses, their effort is often not fully understood by the public. Detailed audit reports, technical opinions, and evidence-based recommendations may fall short of their potential impact if not translated into concrete actions perceived by society as drivers of change.

INTOSAI remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening the credibility of SAIs globally and has been closely monitoring this issue. Last year, the Supervisory Committee on Emerging Issues (SCEI) released the report [Navigating Global Trends: Future Implications for Supreme Audit Institutions](#), which addresses, among other

topics, the decline in trust in government institutions. The report provides a range of statistical data on the subject and emphasizes that while SAIs are affected by increasingly complex audit environments, they can also play a crucial role in fostering trust in institutions and democracy. To reinforce their legitimacy, it is essential that SAIs operate with institutional independence, ensure transparent processes, and adopt modern methodologies. However, I would emphasize that we must go even further. We must improve the way we communicate our work, making our audits more accessible and understandable by using clear language and strategies that bring SAIs closer to citizens.

Many SAIs within the INTOSAI community have excelled in reversing distrust scenarios. Around the world, these institutions have implemented innovative initiatives that amplify the impact of audits: interactive dashboards for real-time monitoring of public spending, citizen participation in audit follow-up, use of artificial intelligence to optimize audits, and partnerships with academic institutions to strengthen the technical credibility of analyses. These experiences demonstrate that when there is a willingness to innovate and engage in dialogue, trust can be restored.

Moreover, trust in SAIs is directly linked to the perception of their impartiality and independence. In some contexts, political pressure and attempts at external influence can undermine these institutions' autonomy, damaging their credibility before society. To mitigate this risk, it is essential to reinforce institutional safeguards, ensuring that oversight bodies can carry out their mandates neutrally and without interference. This is a commitment that must be collectively embraced, both by INTOSAI, which is responsible for promoting global best practice guidelines, and by each individual SAI.

Another key factor for SAI credibility is the ability to adapt to new challenges. In a rapidly evolving world, where issues such as digital transformation, climate change, and social inequality take center stage, SAIs must demonstrate they are prepared to effectively oversee public policies addressing these challenges. Public trust will naturally be greater in institutions that show innovation and a commitment to tackling issues that directly affect people's lives.

At INTOSAI, we recognize that reversing the decline in trust in SAIs is a long-term, global challenge. Our role is to support SAIs by providing guidance, promoting the exchange of best practices, and encouraging actions that strengthen governance and accountability. But this is a shared responsibility: each SAI, within its national context, must commit to reinforcing its legitimacy, safeguarding its independence, and improving how it communicates and carries out its work.

Trust is not a static asset, it must be continuously earned and actively safeguarded. While it is difficult to build, it can be easily lost. By promoting transparency, improving communication, maintaining independence, and demonstrating the positive impact of our work, SAIs can not only restore public confidence but also solidify themselves as indispensable pillars of democracy and good governance.

Vital do Rêgo
Chair of INTOSAI

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