

# **Address by the Chair of INTOSAI Mr. Aleksei Kudrin on Supreme Audit Institutions and INTOSAI response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Dear colleagues!

First of all, I hope you, your families and loved ones are doing well and enjoying good health!

## *The pandemic's impact on the society, the state and SAIs*

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all social spheres, like healthcare, education, industry, all the key sectors of the economy. It has become a **stress test for every family, public agency or Supreme Audit Institution.**

In this context we should quickly adapt to the new reality, make use of our knowledge and experience to stay relevant for our citizens.

## *Moscow Declaration*

In September 2019, we endorsed the Moscow Declaration. We agreed:

- to adopt a strategic approach to audit,
- to use IT-instruments, open data resources,
- to promote inclusiveness,
- to build remote auditing capacity.

We could not have imagined that these opportunities and skills would become relevant so quickly and on such a scale.

## *COVID-19 Response in the Accounts Chamber*

The Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation established a COVID-19 Emergency Headquarters. We were one of the first government

agencies to transition almost 90% of our personnel to remote working. We have provided them with all the necessary digital instruments. Audits have been postponed so as to reduce pressure on government agencies during the pandemic and avoid making them stay at their offices.

### *International Monitoring*

We understand how important it is in critical situations to learn from each other, share knowledge and analyse colleagues' experience in this situation. So, we have started to monitor on a daily basis measures adopted by governments and SAIs to fight the pandemic.

### *SAIs Response to the Pandemic*

Now we can say that the contribution of Supreme Audit Institutions has not decreased in the current situation. Most of them successfully switched to remote working. All the processes were transferred online with the help of all the digital technologies available. I will name some of the measures taken:

- SAIs have created special task forces to respond to the pandemic;
- they are raising the awareness of the infection and ways to avoid it among citizens;
- they train their employees;
- some employees act as volunteers, help those in need, help medical institutions, donate part of their salaries to fight the pandemic.

It is evident that SAIs have become more open. More data are being published on the Internet regarding their work, they set up dashboards to monitor public procurement and data collection platforms. Special hot lines and mobile applications have been launched.

### *The Initiative of the Accounts Chamber as INTOSAI Chair*

In the new reality, in my opinion, the task of the Accounts Chamber as the INTOSAI Chair is to analyse and use the experience we have gained thanks to the hard work of our employees in order to develop agile approaches to responding to such challenges in the future.

For that purpose, we have put forward the initiative to establish a special Expert Group under the INTOSAI Supervisory Committee on Emerging Issues under our leadership. The group will focus on the Strategic role of SAIs in addressing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that the activities of this group should be based on the provisions of the Moscow Declaration supported by the absolute majority of SAIs.

#### *COVID-19 Expert Group: objectives and principles*

We see the Expert Group as a focal point for anti-COVID practices, technologies and response methods of all the auditing community. This work can later result in recommendations that will help all those in need of support right now as well as make us more resilient when faced with similar challenges in the future.

The work of the Group and its results will be open for all the auditing community. No one should be left behind. I am sure that all interested SAIs, working bodies and organizations of INTOSAI will make a contribution. We plan to engage other stakeholders from international organizations and leading global think tanks.

#### *COVID-19 Expert Group: Communication channels*

We are going to use all the available tools to communicate on the Expert Group topics, for example, INTOSAI Community Portal, all the internet resources of the organization as well as our own. At the same time, we are always open to face-to-face communication with our colleagues,

even if still via videoconferences. We would like to have our first one in a few weeks!

### *Conclusion*

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues who have already supported our initiative and have expressed their willingness to join it.

We are working on a qualitatively new level while developing a new standard for SAI response to global challenges and increasing responsibility for our actions.

Once again, dear colleagues, stay safe and take care!