



PRESS RELEASE

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PASAI's 22nd congress focusses on Pacific SAIs' roles in their government's implementation of the 2030 agenda and applying strong governance to improve the lives of citizens

Natadola, Fiji, 13- 16 August 2019: PASAI's 22nd Congress took place at Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa, Natadola, Fiji.

Attending the Congress were over 60 participants representing 19 member SAIs, development partner organisations and international bodies supporting the work of PASAI in meeting its strategic plan, subject matter experts on climate change, gender equality and other global initiatives, and PASAI's Secretariat along with other observers. The Governing Board of PASAI held their 21st meeting on 12 August 2019 before Congress began, with chairmanship handing over from Mr. Grant Hehir, Auditor-General of Australia, to Fiji's Auditor-General, Mr. Ajay Nand.

The central theme of the Congress, 'SAIs' Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs), was introduced by the Speaker of the Fijian Parliament, Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau. In an impressive and inspiring summary, the Speaker emphasised how the implantation of the 2030 Agenda relies on good governance along with the qualities underlined by SDG 16 – openness, transparency and inclusivity. He also stressed that the success of SDG implementation relies on "the whole community having the resources and unwavering will to implement change," adding, "It is no longer business as usual."

Attendees heard from organisations, innovators and SAIs from around the region on the many initiatives being undertaken to implement far-reaching SDG strategies, particularly those relating to the region's biggest challenges – Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Climate Change (SDG 13). On gender issues, UNWomen reported that domestic violence rates in the Pacific are among the highest in the world, while UNDP stated that 'The Pacific is in a constant state of recovery' after series of natural disasters. All speakers and PASAI development partners spoke of the role that SAIs can play in questioning governments about their plans to implement the SDGs and monitoring progress against those plans.

PASAI's member SAIs were encouraged to align their strategies for auditing implementation of the SDGs with their learning from the cooperative audit on preparedness for SDG implementation. It was acknowledged that while Pacific Leaders have committed annually over recent years to implementing the SDGs in Pacific nations, the

seventeen SDGs represent cross-flowing issues that may require innovative audit approaches. A single SDG can impact across many different ministries, plans, policies and budgets (horizontal), and across different governance levels (vertical), so a comprehensive approach is required. SAI Heads recognised the many challenges facing them in auditing the implementation of SDGs in the Pacific context, including fitting it in with current SAI priorities and difficulties in accessing and obtaining data that is held in multiple forms and locations.

The Congress then focussed on practical ways that SAIs might approach the audit of SDG implementation, through integration or adaptation of existing frameworks, for example, and by growing capacity and capability via PASAI's delivery approach for the second half of its 2014- 2024 Strategic Plan which offers 'the right support, at the right time, in the right way.' SAI Heads enjoyed a lively 'Survivor Fiji' debate delivered by the PASAI Secretariat to analyse and present their SAI-specific capacity-building needs, both in general for the purposes of good governance and accountability, and in readiness for audits of SDG implementation.

Hosted by Fiji's Office of the Auditor-General and the AG himself, Mr. Ajay Nand, Congress and Governing Board participants enjoyed a wonderful Fijian 'Welcome home' from all involved, including a traditional dinner with the citizens of Sanasana village and a motivational speech from Fiji 7s coach, Gareth Baber, who shared many insights into how to lead a world-class team while honouring all their local and personal cultural influences.

PASAI looks forwards to next year's 23rd PASAI Congress to be hosted by SAI Palau. Meanwhile, the full communiqué from Congress 2019 can be viewed [here](#), and photos from the event [here](#).

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