



Media release

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Navigating towards better public financial management after PASAI visits Papua New Guinea

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: Senior representatives from the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) spent five days in Port Moresby last week to help advance productive relationships between the Auditor-General's Office (AGO) and other Papua New Guinean government agencies.

PASAI Chief Executive, Esther Lameko-Poutoa, and recently appointed Programme Director, Susana Laulu, met Auditor-General, Gordon Kega, in person for the first time to discuss how PASAI can support the AGO with its audit capabilities.

The AGO made arrangements for PASAI staff to meet with the parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and its Secretariat to discuss the scrutiny of the audited financial statements of government, audit recommendations, the follow-up process and the importance of pursuing the AGO's independence.

Regarding audit office independence, Ms Lameko-Poutoa said, "We have identified scope for legislative reform to improve the financial and operational independence of the AGO and to protect its staff.

"We will continue to advocate for such prerequisites of a functional public financial management system in Papua New Guinea, as we do in the nations of all our member offices."

The AGO has an audit backlog of the government's financial statements. PASAI staff and senior AGO officers met with staff from the departments of Finance and Treasury, committing to complete these outstanding audits as a priority and collaborate to ensure the timeliness of future audits.

The visit coincided with the online launch last week of PASAI's fourth report in its Transparency and Accountability series. The Chief Executive of Transparency International, Arianne Kassman, participated in the launch as a webinar panellist and expressed the importance to civil society of the AGO being able to produce timely audit reports and make them publicly available.

Ms Lameko-Poutoa was positive some important institutional relationships had been established during the visit saying, "We succeeded in conveying to key stakeholders in parliament and the public sector how important it is for the people of Papua New Guinea that the AGO is able to fulfil its mandate."

Through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Institutional Partnership Programme, a senior advisor from the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) is currently deployed to the AGO. She was instrumental in coordinating the week of meetings and presentations while planning how PASAI can complement the existing twinning relationship ANAO has, to better support the AGO.

Mses Lameko-Poutoa and Laulu also made a courtesy visit to the New Zealand High Commissioner, Pete Zwart, stationed in Port Moresby.

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and DFAT.

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PASAI Programme Director, Susana Lauulu; Advisor to Auditor General, Meegan Reinhard; Transparency International Papua New Guinea Chief Executive Officer, Arianne Kassman; and PASAI Chief Executive, Esther Lameko-Poutoa



With senior representatives from the Auditor-General's Office and members of the PAC, including the Hon Richard Masese, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee; and Gordon Kega, Auditor General (fifth and sixth from left, respectively)



With AGO's financial auditors and senior representatives of the departments of Finance and Treasury



With the New Zealand High Commissioner, Pete Zwart