



**Media Release
For immediate release
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Tuvalu leads the way in strengthening SAI independence and the role of Public Accounts Committee

The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) in partnership with the Office of the Auditor-General of Tuvalu, delivered a four-day workshop involving Public Accounts Committee (PAC) members, Parliamentarians, audit entities and other stakeholders, in Tuvalu from the 3 – 8 March 2017. The workshop was aimed at strengthening the financial oversight and external scrutiny roles of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), and the role all other stakeholders play in upholding public accountability and transparency in Tuvalu.

On day 1, Friday 3rd March, 2017, representatives from seven audit entities attended and discussed relevant audit issues including the need to form an Institute of Accountants for Tuvalu, the quality assurance process over the completion of audits, and the independence and the composition of the Public Accounts Committee during the workshop. These audit entities were the Tuvalu Electricity Corporation, Tuvalu National Provident Fund, Tuvalu Development Bank, Tuvalu Maritime Institute, Telecom Corporation, Tuvalu Broadcasting Corporation and the National Bank of Tuvalu.

The workshop continued on Monday and Tuesday 6th and 7th March 2017, for members of parliament in which eleven of the 15 members of Parliament of Tuvalu, including the Honourable Prime Minister, Hon. Enele Sopoaga, and cabinet members attended. The Honourable Prime Minister stressed the importance of the value PASAI can contribute to the work of the Pacific Forum through its work in the Region. During the sessions, the members held discussions, among other issues, on the proposed Tuvalu Public Accounts and Budget Committee Bill currently before the Speaker which enhances the role of the PAC and its ability to provide effective financial oversight and external scrutiny on the reports of the Audit Office and all government entities.

In December 2016, Tuvalu Parliament passed the new Audit Act 2016, which enhances the independence of the Office of the Auditor-General and includes a provision on financial

independence for the Office, the first country in the South Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand) to achieve this.

The Honourable Speaker, Hon. Otinielu Tauteleimalae Tausi, closed the session for Parliamentarians on Tuesday, 7th March 2017, by thanking the PASAI facilitators for a very short, but very important exercise. “While we as Parliamentarians are not auditors, it was good to be reminded of the importance of having checks and balances in place, and for Members of Parliament to always keep the principles of accountability and transparency in mind when undertaking their duties”. The four day programme concludes with a final session for all other stakeholders including media organisations, civil societies, non-government organisations and permanent secretaries on Wednesday, 8th March 2017.

This is the seventh workshop PASAI has delivered in the Region with the aim to build the capacity of the Members of Parliament who are also Members of the Public Accounts Committee to better understand their role in providing financial oversight of public expenditure.

The workshop was co-presented by the PASAI Advocacy Team, Mr Eroni Vatuloka, PASAI Advocate, Ms Aolele Su’a Aloese, Director of Advocacy, Engagement and Financing, the Auditor-General of Tuvalu, Mr Eli Lopati, and the Tuvalu Director of Planning, Budget and Aid Co-ordination, Mr Niuatui Niuatui, who presented on the Tuvalu national budget processes.

This programme comes under Strategic Priority 2 - Advocacy for governance, accountability and transparency of PASAI’s long-term strategic plan. PASAI appreciates the assistance provided by the Auditor-General of Tuvalu and his staff, and also acknowledges the valued support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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Photo Above : Members of Parliament including Public Accounts Committee Members and workshop facilitators from PASAI and Tuvalu Office of the Auditor-General.



Photo above: Participants to the workshop from Audit Entities represented mainly by Chair of Board of Directors of State Owned Enterprises and Accounting Staff of Public Bodies of Tuvalu



Photo above: Auditor-General of Tuvalu, Mr Eli Lopati, addressing the participants from audit entities



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