

13th PASAI CONGRESS
“Promoting Accountability and Transparency”

**(Press Statement issued by the Secretary-General of PASAI,
and the Chairperson of PASAI, 31 August 2010)**

1. Auditors-General from around the Pacific region convened the 13th congress of the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) in Tarawa, Kiribati, from 7 to 9 July 2010.

2. The Vice President of Kiribati Hon Ms Teima Onorio welcomed the PASAI members and reinforced and underscored that audit offices play a critical role in promoting good governance because auditors perform an essential service to strengthen accountability and transparency in governments.

“Given the competing demands on the limited resources available to their governments, public auditors often had to make do with an under-resourced office. That is now changing, thanks to the collective and individual efforts of the auditing profession,” said Ms Onorio.

She acknowledged the good work that PASAI has spearheaded under the Pacific Regional Audit Initiative (PRAI), particularly the pooling of resources to address common objectives such as the sub-regional audit support (SAS) program. Ms Onorio also acknowledged the continuing support by PASAI’s development partners.

3. The PASAI Secretary-General Mrs Lyn Provost applauded Ms Onorio’s keynote address ahead of the three-day Congress meeting to review results of PASAI programmes from the past year.

4. Mr Saturnino Tewid, the acting Public Auditor of Palau and outgoing Chairperson of PASAI, thanked the Governing Board and members for their support in the progress that PASAI has made during the last 12 months.

“PASAI has made encouraging achievements and the task ahead looks promising for SAIs in the region,” added Mr Tewid.

The Auditor-General of Kiribati Mr Ramon Taake accepted the chairmanship of the association and thanked the Congress, saying that he looked forward to the members’ co-operation and support in the next 12 months.

5. The PASAI Secretary-General Mrs Lyn Provost told the Congress about the key decisions made at the Governing Board meeting held at Novotel Nadi on 5 July 2010. She mentioned that “the establishment of the PASAI Secretariat in Auckland and the registration of the association as an incorporated society under New Zealand laws are important milestones for PASAI”. The Secretariat opened for business at 46 Parnell

Road, Auckland, on 18 January 2010. It will soon be fully resourced and be able to conduct its activities effectively for the benefit of the members of the association. The funding of the PASAI activities is important to keep in focus, and most importantly a medium to long-term strategy should be developed to ensure the sustainability of PASAI. The PASAI website is being revamped and will contain reports and publications, and latest updates on the progress of PASAI activities.

6. The PASAI accountability report 2009 has been completed; and the Congress endorsed the report to be published. In addition, the Secretary-General and the Executive Director will prepare a communication strategy to maximise the impact of accountability and transparency reports during the life of the PRAI. The Executive Director will plan the 2010 survey/work and consult with partners, considering opportunities for linking this work with other governance initiatives in the Pacific; focusing on mandate, independence, and parliamentary scrutiny, which were matters of concern identified in the 2009 report, and maximising opportunities to identify good practice on these matters. The 2010 accountability work plan will be circulated to the Governing Board for comment and approval by 30 September 2010.

7. The capacity building programme started with a “kick-off” conference held in Auckland from 21 to 29 June 2010. “If the enthusiasm of the participants (members of the working groups) is anything to go by, PASAI should expect successful development of the manuals, guidelines, and training materials,” said Ms Linda Weeks, the capacity building programme advisor. The appointment and confirmation of some members of the Governing Board as “champions” of the manuals and training materials will lend support to the work of the working groups. Ms Weeks also emphasised the need for PASAI members to be professionally certified, and the programme has grouped SAIs into certification clusters to facilitate the process.

8. The Sub-regional Audit Support (SAS) programme had a successful first year. The on-the-job training of secondees in the 3 countries Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Nauru provided much-needed financial audit support to the small island states, and in the process updated a few outstanding audits. The programme provided a benchmark on how it could be improved in the future, especially how to overcome the challenges specific to the islands. In order to continue to raise capacity in the audit offices, the second round of the programme will involve the audit of the same entities.

9. The first co-operative performance audit ended successfully with 7 of the 10 Auditors-General signing off the reports on the management of solid waste in their jurisdictions, two of which have been made public and attracted wide media attention. “The success of the first co-operative performance audit was due to the manner in which the audit was planned and executed, and peer-reviewed,” said Ms Claire Kelly, the Audit Advisor. A draft regional report on the audit has been produced and will be made public when all 10 audit reports have been tabled in their respective legislatures and made public. The Congress endorsed the report and looks forward to the second co-operative performance audit – “Access to fresh drinking water” – which is expected to start with a planning meeting in Nadi late August 2010.

10. The Congress heard a presentation made by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on accountability and financial reporting in the Pacific region. The ADB technical assistance is expected to provide support to the 3 small island states in the preparation of the accounts of selected entities which will be subject to SAS audits. There were also presentations by the Pacific commonwealth network on internal audit, INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), and members who represent PASAI in INTOSAI committees and working groups.

11. PASAI Congress made the following appointments:

- Secretary-General – New Zealand
- Member of the INTOSAI Governing Board – New Zealand
- Certification committee – NSW, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands

11. In closing the Congress, the Secretary-General Lyn Provost said that PASAI should be proud of its achievements. However, the work programme for 2010/11 should align with the performance management framework and a medium to long-term funding strategy should be put in place. “It is essential in PASAI’s progress that the results of PASAI’s work, especially the PRAI activities, have lasting impact in the region,” added Ms Provost.

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