



University of INTOSAI

ACCOUNTS CHAMBER OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Member of the Governing Board

Dear colleagues!

I am happy to welcome you at the INTOSAI University!

In this video message, I would like to share with you the experience of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation in promoting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda, as indicated in the first provision of the Moscow Declaration.

The pandemic crisis has drawn countries' attention to the social aspect of the 2030 Agenda. From an environmental point of view, we have witnessed a global experiment on suspending production which has slightly improved the environmental situation.

The crisis revealed the interconnection of the three key pillars of the Agenda: economy, society and environment. It also revealed the inadequacy of many national agendas, which are sometimes unbalanced in these three areas.

The issues of economic inequality and social justice have become ever more relevant. Climate responsibility is no longer just a point of political rhetoric and needs practical action at all levels: state, commercial, civil.

The SDGs are comprehensive. It is only possible to achieve sustainable development if we move towards the achievement of all the goals.

The SDG indicators are balanced metrics that help national governments and auditors to determine how sustainable national development is. Even a seemingly healthy economy can have internal imbalances, and our task is to identify them and make our assessments available for the public.

The first developments and recommendations for SDG audit were presented at INCOSAI XXII in Abu Dhabi in 2016.

The INTOSAI Strategic Plan includes Crosscutting Priority 2 — “Contributing to the follow-up and review of the SDGs within the context of each nation’s specific sustainable development efforts and SAIs’ individual mandates.”

The main areas for INTOSAI activities in the context of the SDGs implementation were identified in accordance with this Crosscutting Priority. INCOSAI XXIII held in September 2019 in Moscow confirmed the high importance of the SDGs in the context of the work of SAIs.

The Moscow Declaration, adopted at the Congress, identified key provisions for the future of public auditing. Three of them are dedicated to the role of SAIs in the achievement of the SDGs, and demonstrate the interest and desire of SAIs to contribute to further activities in achieving SDGs.

The role of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation in implementing the Agenda is set in our Development Strategy for 2018–2024. It outlines the role of the Accounts Chamber as a strategic partner of public and civil society organizations, particularly, in shaping a comprehensive understanding of the risks of failure to achieve the SDGs.

In 2019, an Audit Unit for Comprehensive Analysis of Sustainable Development was created that deals directly with SDG audit issues.

The Accounts Chamber is going through digital transformation processes. New data analytics tools are being introduced, which are also used for SDG auditing.

SAI Russia translated into Russian the IDI guidelines on the audit of preparedness for the implementation of the SDGs and ISAM to assist auditors through their SDG-related activities. We engage highly qualified external experts and academicians in our audit work to improve its quality.

Following INTOSAI recommendations, this year we have analyzed the preparedness of the public administration to implement the Sustainable Development Agenda. The following objectives were formulated for this audit:

to assess the integration of the Sustainable Development Agenda into the national context;

to analyze the availability of necessary resources for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda;

to assess the preparedness of the monitoring system for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda in the Russian Federation.

We analyzed the integration of the Sustainable Development Agenda into the public administration following the adapted INTOSAI 7-step model. We went through:

- legal regulation;
- strategic planning system;

- institutional organization and interagency interaction;
- resource and methodological support;
- organization of monitoring;
- mechanisms of stakeholders' interaction;
- ensuring openness, accountability and transparency.

During the audit, we examined to what extent the 2030 Agenda was incorporated into the national context. We provided recommendations on the system of responsibility distribution, interagency interaction, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the progress in implementing the SDGs. This work was carried out in active cooperation with federal executive authorities and with a wide range of experts.

We are confident that, on the whole, Russia is ready to implement the Agenda. Most of the goals and objectives of sustainable development, to one degree or another, are incorporated into the main strategic documents adopted in Russia.

However, there is also a number of issues associated with understanding the mechanisms for implementing the Agenda, the distribution of responsibility and management. These issues have yet to be resolved.

Information on this audit was included in the First Voluntary National Review on the achievement of the SDGs in Russia. It was presented in July this year at the UN High Level Political Forum. Most importantly, we have already received feedback from the Government and seen some improvements.

The Accounts Chamber also contributes to the 2030 Agenda as the Chair of the Working Group on SDGs and Key Sustainable Development Indicators.

The Working Group on Key National Indicators, chaired by the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation since 2007, was transformed into the current WG on SDGs

The group focuses mainly on the following aspects of the SDGs audit:

- Analysis of the relationship and mutual influence of the SDGs, specific objectives and key indicators;
- Development of approaches to future-oriented recommendations, bearing in mind that SDG implementing programs must have a long-term strategic perspective.

We decided to focus on:

the development of practical documents, practical recommendations based on various guidelines, including ISAM,

effective communication and regular awareness raising activities in the INTOSAI community on the group's work,

openness and inclusiveness, by involving, among others, the relevant INTOSAI committees and working groups in the development of approaches, methods and criteria for auditing the SDGs, as well as on project management and innovative approaches.

The working group actively cooperates with the INTOSAI Development Initiative, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), the OECD, the World Bank and other stakeholders. SAI Russia is could possibly provide audit support to the SAIs of CIS states on the use of ISAM.

We regularly publish the Working Group's Newsletter, which contains up-to-date information on our activities, materials on the national experience of SAIs and other relevant information on the SDGs.

The group plans to actively cooperate, promote the relevance of SDGs audit issues, and collaborate with INTOSAI working groups and regional organizations to share experience.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the success of the implementation of SDGs largely depends on effective monitoring, analysis and control.

Even before the pandemic, there were experts who seriously doubted the feasibility of achieving the SDGs by 2030. There were different reasons that impeded the implementation of the Agenda. Some of them were associated with the lack of funding, others were organizational ones, some depended on internal political and geopolitical factors.

The pandemic crisis has seriously slowed down the progress towards the SDG achievement. Now we need to step up and mobilize resources so as not to waste time.

Under generally worsening conditions for achieving the SDGs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is increasingly important to enhance the role of SAIs in assessing the performance of national governments.

These activities of SAIs can guarantee the transparency of the work that is carried out, make the achievements available for the public and define the vector of public development.

Of course, in order to achieve the goals of the Agenda, we need to have all the participants moving towards one another.

The Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation will be glad to cooperate and exchange knowledge on this important topic and we thank you for your kind cooperation.