

Dear Chairman Patskan, Dear President Untila,

By thanking You, President Untila for the great welcoming that you offered to us and the excellent organization of this fourth Meeting, let me emphasize two important features of the impressive progress that the Working Group on the Audit of Funds Allocated to Disasters and Catastrophes has achieved from March 2017 Meeting in Rome.

In first place, the focus chosen by the guiding SAI of Ukraine in the preparation of the good practice recommendations for conducting the audits in the field of prevention and consequences elimination of floods is a right one. We also in Albania, as in many other countries in Europe, are subject to perpetuated floods, caused by nature, but also by human activities. A few days ago, the northwestern part of my country, a large surface of thousands of hectares was flooded again. Almost every year, my country suffers damages in the region of tens and hundreds of millions of euro from flood devastations.

We as ALSAI appreciate very much the work done by the SAI of Ukraine in conducting national audits in the field of prevention and consequences elimination of floods. This huge experience is of extreme importance to us. We welcome the seminar of next day that will be dedicated entirely to the SAI of Ukraine experience in using the ISSAIs in such an audit. This is very important, is fundamental to our work and mission. *“Experientia mutual Omnibus prodest”* is our motto throughout the world and I think these two days we will benefit a lot from your experience.

Although a small SAI in the Balkans, we have tried to be pro-active in a number of INTOSAI and EUROSAI initiatives, Working Groups and task forces. In March 2016, we launched a twinning project, supported by EU funds, together with the SAIs of Poland (NIK) and of Croatia, to enhance our audit capacities. We learnt a lot from the large experience Polish auditors, in particular.

In the last years, our auditors worked together with the auditors of a lot of SAIs participating in this Group, in the Task Force on Auditing and Ethics, Task Force on Municipality Auditing, Task Force on Environmental Auditing and in the Working Group on IT Auditing, but I think what you are doing in this Group is unique.

It is unique because the work of this Group directly affects and contributes to the achievement of a number of UN Agenda 2030 goals, such as strategic goal number 1 “No poverty”, number 2

“zero hunger”, number 6 “clean water and sanitation”, number 7 “affordable and clean energy” and so on. We are talking of populations in the flooded areas, or in other disasters and catastrophes that lose a great part or all their wealth. A thorough, responsible and qualitative audit of State aid to them is of paramount importance.

Dear colleagues,

Although our Working Group has been only recently established, only four years ago, it has gained experience and momentum. It has benefited from the inheritance and work of the task force with the same mission born in 2008. This Task Force gave a good response to many questions and concerns rising on the effective ways to audit State aid after disasters and catastrophes.

The Group worked intensively also on best and most effective ways to prevent disasters and catastrophes, which is probably having the same importance, if not more. I think this is a bright future for us, because the preventing power of our societies to calamities from nature or mankind should be strengthened.

Our Strategic Activity Plan for 2017- 2020, approved in the Rome Meeting in March 2017, gives us a new impetus, as Contributing to the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 is a key orientation of INTOSAI and EUROSAI, being chosen as one of main priorities of INTOSAI activity at the INCOSAI XXII in Abu D’Habi in December 2016.

I am sure this Meeting will show a lot of good practices in the internationally coordinated effort to audit the use of budget funds allocated to prevention and consequences elimination of disasters and catastrophes, especially of floods.

By wishing all of us good work and success in these two days, let me propose that the next Fifth Annual Meeting of the Working Group on the Audit of Funds Allocated to Disasters and Catastrophes be held in Tirana, Albania. As I said before, we are a small SAI trying to modernize our activity in full compliance with our INTOSAI standards. Our strong will is to be supportive to all European SAIs in exchanging the lessons learnt from our good performances, with the best we can.

Thank you!