



Discussion Note on the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador

Background and context.

During the INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee (IDSC) Meeting in Kuwait in 2018, SAI independence was intensively discussed after the 2017 Global Stocktaking Report highlighted that independence was backsliding in several countries. Participants identified the need for greater involvement of INTOSAI and bilateral and multilateral donors in supporting SAIs in gaining and/or maintaining their independence. In this context, the idea of a SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador was born, with the envisaged role that the ambassador would lend soft power to the issue. The IDSC leadership established a task force, composed of representatives from the INTOSAI General Secretariat, IDI, GAO, GAB, SECO and the World Bank. The Task Force was mandated to carry out the selection process and make a recommendation to the IDSC Leadership, for final approval by the IDSC. This note provides a summary overview of the work conducted by the Task Force and raises issues for discussion in the September 2020 IDSC meeting.

Role, reporting lines and accountability mechanisms for the position of the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador

The “SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador would be a distinguished individual, carefully selected from the fields of art, literature, science, entertainment, sports or other fields of public life. This prominent personality would volunteer his/her time, talent and passion to raise awareness for the importance of SAI independence in improving the lives of citizen by ensuring value for public money.¹” However, the Task Force found it helpful to further define his/her role and identify potential reporting lines and accountability mechanisms.

Role of the SAI independence global ambassador

The Task Force recommends that the focus of the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador should be advocacy at the global level. This would be consistent with the objective of mainstreaming the topic of SAI independence by moving from awareness raising to action and reaching to broader audiences including, policy influencers and policy makers. It would be beneficial if **the advocacy work could also address the specific dimensions of independence that are at risk and not only focus on the generic topic of SAI independence.** In fact, various data sources indicate that even though some progress has been made, key

¹ Concept Note on the Establishment of a SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador, SECO



aspects of SAI Independence are still at risk, specifically the existence of an appropriate and effective legal framework (and the de facto application of this framework) and the access to resources (financial and human). **The focus of the advocacy work of the Ambassador should therefore be at the global level and the messaging should be on specific points.** Engagement at the country level, possibly in support of the SAI Independence Rapid Advocacy Mechanism (SIRAM) or any in-country advocacy work shouldn't be prioritized but could be considered on an ad-hoc and need basis.

The possibility of appointing several Ambassadors that could potentially complement each other was also considered. Although this possibility is interesting, it was also highlighted that it could lead to challenges down the line including coordination and communication, as well as immediate challenges in terms of enticing multiple candidates and conducting a selection process for multiple positions. Therefore, the current process focuses on selecting one Goodwill Ambassador that will act at the global stage. Once that process will be completed, the possibility of establishing a pool of individuals or experts with a deeper knowledge of SAIs and PFM in specific context to support the Goodwill Ambassador at the regional or country level will be considered.

Reporting lines and accountability mechanisms

Another dimension to consider is the reporting lines and accountability mechanisms of the Ambassador. The Task Force is of the view that the Ambassador will act on behalf of the IDC. One key aspect is to provide enough flexibility to prevent bottlenecks and enable accountability to keep the IDC Leadership and Steering Committee informed. The IDI (through regular interaction with IDSC Leadership) could manage the functional relationship with the Ambassador and report on his/her undertakings both to the IDSC Leadership and the IDSC. The reporting would focus on:

- The Ambassadors annual work plan and its implementation;
- Allocation and management of resources to establish and maintain the position;
- Any significant update or changes to the work plan and/or any other relevant issue.

A dedicated timeslot should be included in the IDC meetings to allow for appropriate oversight, feedback and guidance. Participation of the Goodwill Ambassador in the meetings (either virtually or physically) will also be encouraged to the extent possible.



Update on the selection process of the Goodwill Ambassador

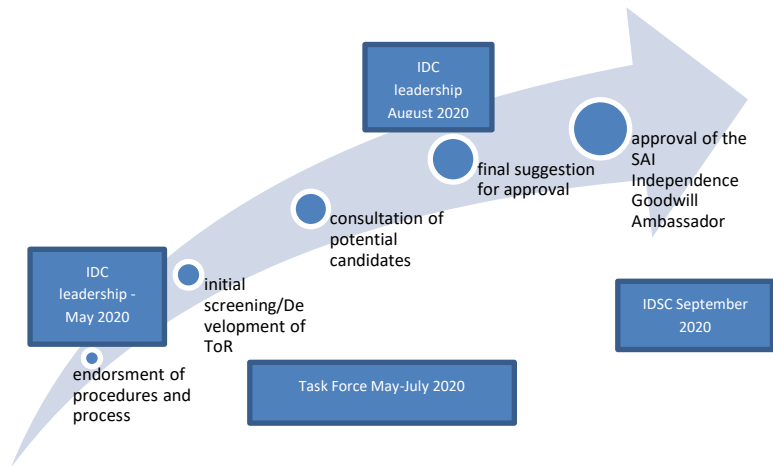
Selection process

The original target was to have the nomination of the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador put forward for approval by the IDSC in September 2020.

An inclusive process, involving the different structures in the IDC (Task Force, IDC Leadership, IDSC) was designed to that end.

The process included:

- Endorsement by the IDC Leadership of the selection process and approval procedures of the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador (May 2020)
- Initial screening, consultation of potential candidates (May-June-July-August 2020)
- Development of the Terms of Reference for (June -July 2020)
- Recommendation from the IDC leadership for approval by the IDSC (August 2020)
- Confirmation of the approval on a no-objection basis by members of the IDC SC (September 2020)



The process has been delayed and the Task Force has conducted step 1 and parts of step 2 of the process and is awaiting the endorsement of the screening results by the IDSC Leadership to consult selected candidates and continue the process.

Screening of candidates

Candidates were identified by the Task Force and were assessed using selection criteria drawn from the **UN Guidelines for the designation of Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace** and adapted to the SAI context. The selection criteria were as follows:

- a) Possess widely recognized talent in public affairs, politics at global level, global business or other fields of public life;
- b) Be persons who demonstrate a strong desire to help mobilize public interest in, and support for, global causes, and who demonstrate the commitment and proven potential to reach out to significant audiences, including decision makers;
- c) Possess the personality and dignity required for such high-level representative capacity;



- d) Be influential beyond their national borders, thus having the ability to promote an issue internationally;
- e) Be knowledgeable about Public Financial Management and potentially about Supreme Audit Institutions and be able to articulate issues around these topics.

The criteria were weighted to reflect the need to select an individual who could be influential beyond borders and effectively promote the issue internationally. Knowledge of SAIs and PFM is highly desirable, and a combination of relevant knowledge and international influence would be ideal. However, if potential candidates do not combine both attributes, the influencing power should take precedence over other criteria, with any knowledge gap in SAIs and PFM addressed through onboarding once the selection process is completed. An additional criterion was included to reflect the availability and accessibility of potential candidates.

The Task Force established a list of potential candidates, and assessed the candidates using the above criteria. The candidates were from different backgrounds, including active or former politicians and statesmen or stateswomen, businessmen, philanthropists, and athletes. Due consideration was given to gender and geographical balance.

Subject to the endorsement of the screening results by the IDSC Leadership, the Task Force will contact the candidates in prioritized order. Given the tight deadlines, this will be done after the September SC meeting. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the approval of the SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador will be done on a no-objection basis (Per Capsulum approval) by members of the IDC SC once the previous steps are completed, alongside the approval of the Terms and Conditions, and the annual work plan of the Ambassador.

The Task Force also recommends that once the appointment process of the Ambassador (working on the global level) is completed and sufficient insight has been gathered, we should strongly consider the possibility of establishing a pool of individuals or experts with a deeper knowledge of the topic and/or well-respected figures at the continental/regional level to support the advocacy work at the regional or country level.

Discussion points for the Steering Committee

Given the current stage of the process, the Task Force would appreciate general feedback on the process and would like to receive the Steering Committee's input on the following points:

- 1) **Regarding the Role of the Goodwill Ambassador, does the Steering Committee agree with the proposed role of the Ambassador, and how can he/she add most value?**
- 2) **Regarding the reporting lines and accountability mechanisms, does the suggested mechanism sound appropriate? How can it be improved or strengthened?**



3) Regarding the Terms and Conditions of the Position (which are to be developed), what should be the term for the Position? Is there any specific condition that should be included?