

SAI20 2024 Online Technical Meetings – Main aspects of discussion

Theme: Fight Against Hunger and Poverty

Date: February 27, 2024

Session 1: 10 am – 12 am / **Session 2:** 09 pm – 11 pm (GMT -3)

Maximum number of participants:

Session 1: 49

Session 2: 38

SAIs represented:

Session 1: Brazil (host), Egypt, France, Germany, India, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

Session 2: Brazil (host), China, Indonesia, Japan (observer), Mexico (observer) and South Korea.

Welcoming remarks and agenda overview – Raisa Ojala

- Raisa Ojala, Director of International Cooperation at SAI Brazil, commenced the event, recognizing the collective expertise, dedication, and wisdom of all participants in addressing global hunger and poverty. Also, she highlighted the gratitude extended to all participants for their presence.
- Ms. Ojala ended the opening remarks by providing an overview of the event's agenda, comprised of other four core moments, structured to facilitate meaningful dialogue, and consensus-building towards actionable outcomes: **1.** Opening words (Junnius Marques); **2.** G20 Agenda Overview on the theme of Fight Against Hunger and Poverty (Saulo Arantes Ceolin); **3.** Group Discussion (all participants, with the facilitation of Fernanda Cabral, UNDP Consultant); **4.** Consensus-Building Session (all participants, with the facilitation of Fernanda Cabral, UNDP Consultant).

Opening words: Role of the SAIs in the Fight against Hunger and Poverty – Junnius Marques Arifa

- In his opening words, Junnius Marques Arifa, Deputy Secretary General of External Control at SAI Brazil, elucidated the role that SAIs have in addressing hunger and poverty, highlighting the humanitarian nature of the issue, and stressing the need for immediate action.
- He urged collective attention and action, emphasizing that addressing hunger and poverty requires the commitment of everyone present.
- According to Mr. Arifa, despite the complexity, audit institutions must not remain passive and must actively engage in finding solutions, highlighting the significance of audit institutions as guardians of the efficiency of public resources.
- Mr. Arifa concluded his speech with gratitude for the participants' presence and expressed reliance on each SAI to contribute meaningfully to the discussions and workshops.

G20 Agenda Overview on the theme of Fight Against Hunger and Poverty – Saulo Ceolin

- Saulo Ceolin, General Coordinator for Food and Nutrition Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and Co-Coordinator at G20's Task Force for a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, provided a brief overview of the G20 agenda on the themes of Hunger and Poverty.
- In his presentation, Mr. Ceolin remarked the need for urgent, ambitious, and out-of-the-ordinary actions to address this issue, stressing the importance of consistent and sustainable efforts to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2.
- He highlighted the Brazilian experience in implementing social protection policies and the three main normative foundations of G20's work on these themes: the *Matera Declaration*, which recognized the interlocking nature of poverty and hunger; and the *Deccan High-Level Principles* and *Delhi Leader's Declaration*, both calling for cross-cutting action to address food security and nutrition issues.
- In spotlighting the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, established under the Brazilian G20 presidency, emphasized the role SAIs can undertake within the "Knowledge" pillar of the Task Force. This involves furnishing invaluable insights into the criteria for incorporating actions into the Alliance's portfolio of policies. He emphasized that the alliance includes only government-funded programs.
- In the critical need to streamline global initiatives, it becomes apparent that many smaller endeavors lack defined goals. This is where audits from SAIs can serve to effectively map out efficient initiatives.
- He concluded the presentation by stressing the significance of related forums and initiatives at the multilateral level, particularly highlighting the role of effective governance of the initiative as a coordination mechanism for its success.

Additional comments by Mr. Arifa

- By complementing Mr. Ceolin's presentation and introducing the upcoming Group Discussion, Mr. Arifa emphasized the need for SAIs collaborative work, specifically when addressing common standards and initiatives to cooperate with governments in implementing solid policies to tackle hunger and poverty.

Group Discussion – All participants, with the facilitation of Fernanda Cabral

- After the initial sessions, all participants were engaged in a group discussion facilitated by Fernanda Cabral, a consultant hired through the cooperation of SAI Brazil with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The main objective of this session was to collaboratively identify and prioritize key themes on "Fight Against Hunger and Poverty" that should be communicated from SAIs to the G20.
- To achieve this objective, in Session 1 all participants were divided into small groups, using breakout rooms, for in-depth conversations based on the two following guiding questions. In Session 2, due to a reduced number of participant SAIs, the conversation was held within one sole group (Plenary):
 - **1. How can SAIs contribute to improving government policies and programs for the Fight Against Hunger and Poverty?** a) *What types of audits can/should be carried out;* b) *What types of programs should be audited;* c) *How SAIs identify errors in the implementation of these Policies?*

2. From the SAIs' perspective, what are the main risks associated with government policies and programs focused on the Fight Against Hunger and Poverty? a) Problems in formulation or implementation; b) Fragmentation, overlap, and duplication; c) Problems in evaluation and monitoring

- The main findings (Key Messages) were shared with participants and can be found in both Appendixes A and B of this document, respectively related to Sessions 1 and 2.

Consensus-Building Session

- Based on the group discussions, the final step of the meeting aimed to collectively endorse 1-3 priority messages that reflect SAIs' shared vision and aspirations for combating hunger and poverty.
- With participants gathered as one group, all SAIs had the opportunity to read the listed messages and to subsequently vote on their priorities (Appendixes A and B).

Final remarks

- Ms. Raisa Ojala underlined the upcoming deadlines and engagements, drawing attention to the next milestones of this year's edition of SAI20:
 - **March 5th:** Online technical meeting about "Climate Financing".
 - **February 28th - March 19th:** SAI Brazil will draft a first outline of the Communiqué internally based on the discussions held during the online meetings.
 - **March 19th:** The consultant will deliver the "Report of the Outcome of Preparatory Online Meetings".
 - **March 20th - April 10th:** SAI Brazil will share the Report and Draft Communiqué with all members and observers for comments.
 - **April 15th – April 18th:** Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Brasília, Brazil. Finalization of Communiqué.
 - **April 20th – May 20th:** Finalization and Circulation of the final Communiqué.
 - **June 16th – June 18th (tentative):** SAI20 Summit in Belém (TBD). Approval of the communiqué and insights to incorporate SAI20 Communiqué Recommendations within the INTOSAI Framework.
 - **July (TBC):** SAI20 presentation to G20 Sherpas.
 - **Second semester:** Incorporation of SAI20 Communiqué recommendations within the INTOSAI framework, joint side event P20, J20, and T20 (TBC).

Appendix A – Key messages gathered from Session 1

Items primarily voted in Session 1: 1,3,4,5,8,9,10,12,16,19,20,23,24,25,27 (Highlighted in green).

1. Reiterating the importance of developing a set of cohesive actionable and measurable indicators, which can be used universally by SAI20 members for evaluation, audit, and follow-up of national policies, including social policy (Need for indicators for a multidimensional approach to poverty).
2. Ensuring a strategic approach to social policy planning, including the aspect of financial sustainability and resilience to unplanned crises/shocks.
3. Ensuring the coherence of policies in different domains of the social sector so that there are no duplications, spillovers, and other negative effects and a clear division of responsibilities is present. (Work with different governmental levels).
4. SAIs are not responsible for public policy design, but they can play an important role in providing feedback about malfunctioning or ineffective mechanisms used in programs or public policies.
5. A combination of approaches ranging from performance to compliance audits can provide a broad perspective on the effectiveness and efficiency of poverty and hunger public policies.
6. An official definition for multidimensional poverty, making it possible to measure, pursue, and achieve target 1.2 is important.
7. Develop relevant strategic approaches to support the achievement of national priorities and targets and contribute to more effective, transparent, and informative accountability for outcomes through program and policy evaluation.
8. Adopt innovative methodologies to assess the impact and leverage technological advancements and big data analytics to better monitoring and evaluation.
9. Enhance the value of public auditing and extend the provision of audit-based advice on issues that are of strategic interest to parliament, government, and public administration. Implement collaborative approaches that can be forged between SAIs and relevant stakeholders to amplify the reach and influence of audit findings resulting from specific auditing.
10. Main risks: overlapping and duplication, the public policy design (target, clarity of what's to achieve).
11. Integrate the SDGs and consider how environmental and other social aspects are taken into account.
12. Types of audits – performance audit + elements of compliance audit (combined audits); Types of programs audited – direct subventions. How SAIs identify errors – using the government databases + leveraging the potential of IT.
13. Key risks – overlap & duplication between different levels of public administration.

14. Formulation of goals, setting specific criteria and providing clear definitions for goals and target groups.
15. Ensuring the budget credibility and effectiveness of budget process.
16. Both Governments and SAI must develop and implement comprehensive approaches to address wicked problems such as Hunger and Poverty.
17. Mainstreaming hunger and poverty issues in the design of public policies.
18. Scan, identify and cluster vulnerable groups.
19. SAIs should be aware of the risk of the government designing policies to fight poverty without considering climate change and the role of small farmers.
20. Evaluate the relevance and completeness of government targets and associated policies that aim to fight poverty and hunger.
21. The adoption of multidimensional measures of poverty would facilitate the integration of public policies directed to reduce hunger and poverty.
22. The importance of obtaining more information concerning informal earnings and family members has great potential to reduce improper payments and overcome targeting problems.
23. The need to evaluate possible overlaps or duplications across different levels of government.
24. Different approaches can be used to access databases used to ensure good targeting, to identify the possible errors of: (1) selecting individuals that should not benefit from the interventions (inefficiency, money leakage) or (2) not selecting individuals who should benefit (ineffective selection, leaving poor people behind).
25. A major Key risk is insufficient financial resources. As the UN Secretary General keeps saying: achieving SDGs targets requires a new Bretton Woods. Hence, SAIs should play a key role in sustainable public finance.
26. International cooperation financing should be revised and the role of SAIs in auditing the programs implemented in this area is decisive.
27. An important area often ignored is Food wastage and imbalances in food distribution both spatially (inter and intra-country) and temporally (need for food compared to the availability of food). SAIs need to focus their efforts to identify food wastages. They also need to identify ways to point out imbalances in food distribution resulting in escalating food prices.

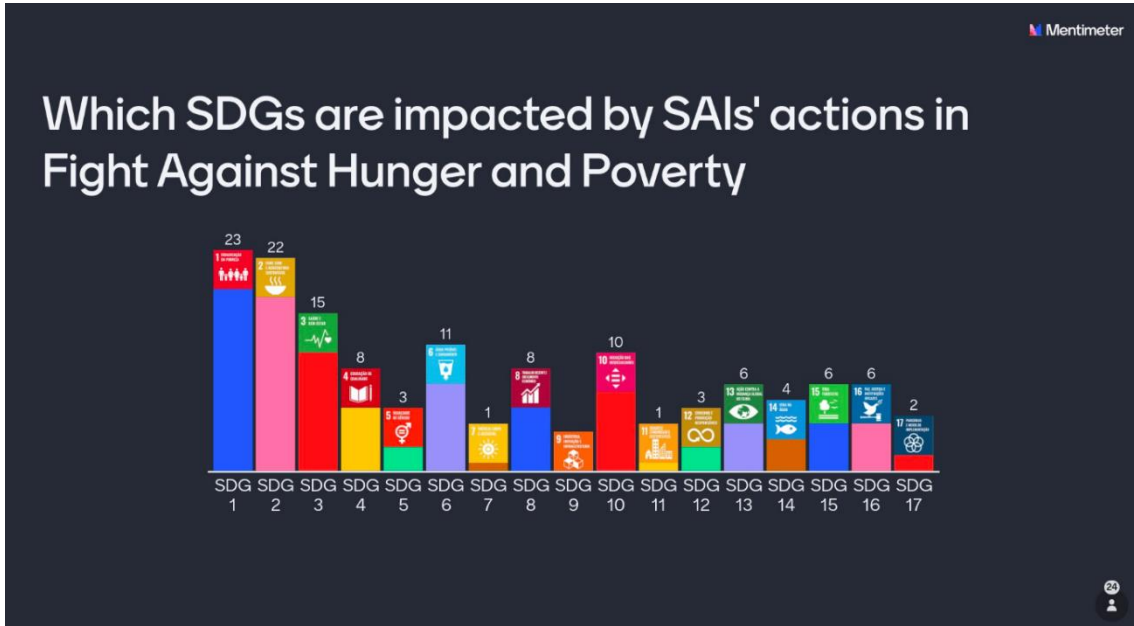
Appendix B – Key messages gathered from Session 2

Items primarily voted in Session 2: 1,2,3,6,7,11,14 (Highlighted in green).

1. To induce adoption of multidimensional measures of poverty that would facilitate the integration of public policies directed to reduce hunger and poverty in all its dimensions (e.g., health education, housing conditions).
2. To stress the importance of obtaining reliable data that can reduce improper payments and targeting problems (i.e., not reaching those who need and including those that do not need).
3. To emphasize the need to evaluate possible overlaps or duplications across different public policies at the same level of government or similar policies across different levels of government (e.g., federal, state, municipal).
4. SAIs can help promote the implementation of relevant policy measures through auditing.
5. SAI can help promote the effectiveness and efficiency of poverty alleviation funds and projects through auditing.
6. SAI can help solve problems revealed in auditing by enhancing audit follow-up.
7. Leveraging new technology in auditing.
8. SAI may assess the policy coherence to address the policy's alignment.
9. The audit should address the national priority to play the most important role in providing recommendations to the government.
10. SAIs should carry out performance audits, with focus on 2 topics: 1) government support on poverty, and 2) government efforts to increase food production (these 2 are very broad topics).
11. Main risks are duplication of programs between each level of governments, allocation of resources, which programs to support and which beneficiary to receive support from, data validity and reliability.
12. Establish a comprehensive database to encompass all individuals in need of support.
13. Developing precise criteria for selecting the appropriate recipients and beneficiaries.
14. Coordinating and consolidating policy establishment and implementation across diverse organizational levels to mitigate overlaps, duplication, and the omission of beneficiaries.
15. Regularly assess and review recipient eligibility to identify and address any potential overlaps or irregularities.

Appendix C – Consensus Building on SDG’s impacted by SAIs actions.

Session 1



Session 2

