

**GOVERNANCE**  
COVID-19  
**RESPONSE**

**ROLE OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (SAIS) IN GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSE TO COVID19: EMERGENCY AND POST-EMERGENCY PHASES**

Edward Olowo-Okere, Global Director, Governance Global Practice



**WORLD BANK GROUP**  
Equitable Growth, Finance & Institutions

June 9, 2020

# COVID19: The bigger picture



## World Bank Response

- ✓ Swift response with projects in 100 countries
- ✓ USD 160 billion over 15 months
- ✓ Protect lives
- ✓ Protect poor & vulnerable
- ✓ Bolster economic recovery, and help maintain the private sector
- ✓ Knowledge and partnership

## WBG Governance Global Practice Response

- ✓ Series of policy notes on Governance & Institutions (eg: State Continuity, Agile treasury operations, ensuring integrity during COVID19, etc)
- ✓ Tracking of policy actions of Governments for advisory support
- ✓ Global knowledge events and partnership

## Unprecedented risks to public revenues and expenses during in COVID19

- ✓ Traditional PFM controls modified / diluted
- ✓ Abuse of emergency procedures
- ✓ Quick budget changes & borrowing
- ✓ Difficulty in capturing COVID19 expenses
- ✓ Increased risks of fraud and corruption
- ✓ Market failure & single source procurements at abnormal price
- ✓ Role of SAI critical for ensuring integrity of public finances, and securing transparency and accountability.

# The Role of SAIs in Governments' Response to COVID-19



## Emergency phase: Be safe, monitor Government actions, conduct audits, prepare, and protect independence

- Prioritize safety of people, including audit and auditee staff
- Raise awareness among stakeholders on the risks of emergency activities based on insights from previous audit findings
- Take advantage of remote audit technology to continue audit operations or initiate real-time audits on COVID-19
- Secure audit trails on COVID-19 through monitoring, documenting and analyzing government responses
- Enhance capacity through sharing of knowledge and experiences on COVID-19 with peers
- Keep communicating with key stakeholders and ensure the establishment of adequate built-in oversight mechanisms in government emergency relief packages
- Protect SAI independence and financial resources

## Post-Emergency phase: Deliver timely audit products to support corrective actions & strengthen system resilience

- Plan combinations of compliance, financial and performance audits in COVID-19 response context
- Provide advance information to the auditee teams so they are adequately prepared
- Use the government's own assessments of COVID19 response and build on them
- Use professional judgment to contextualize conclusions
- Develop approaches for expenditure from blended funding sources
- Use GovTech solutions like Artificial intelligence
- Ensure timely audit output; short and quick reports could be impactful
- Coordinate with Internal audit, Anti-corruption agency etc
- Consider cooperative audits – regional joint or parallel audits