

Opening Remarks
International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management
32nd International Training Conference
Miami, Florida
May 13 – 18, 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management, honored guests:

Good morning and welcome to Miami. My name is Lucie Phillips and it is my honor and pleasure to serve as the President of ICGFM.

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 33rd Annual International Training Conference on Governmental Financial Management. The ICGFM Board of Directors, the Officers and I are pleased to see all of you here for a week that will bring us up to date on trends, tools and skills useful in public financial management. When ICGFM was founded 41 years ago, financial management was largely manual and every government worked out its own system. Today we are moving toward international standards and data exchanges that harmonize fiscal policy, procedures and practices. Yet there is no static perfect state of public financial management. As new tools come out regularly, and

people change roles in PFM, the situation is always changing. We are moving toward a rhythm of continuous, measurable performance improvement in every unit of government. Achieving that, actually even aiming for that, develops trust among countries, oiling the wheels of international commerce and finance.

We look to you to turn on active learning this week and volunteer your insights to others, sharing while you are here and planning how new techniques can be applied at home. We have seen that the results of fiscal reform with more transparency permeate every aspect of society. Achieving fiscal sustainability generates confidence at home and among foreign investors, driving economic growth and job creation.

ICGFM is an umbrella professional organization bringing together practitioners and theorists in each of the financial management specialties. This broad field allows each of us to understand how our own experience fits into the larger picture of government finance. ICGFM continues to grow by working globally with governments, organizations and individuals to find new ways to improve financial management. When done with integrity, improved finances enable

governments to invest in infrastructure and service delivery, visibly improving the life of citizens.

We talk about the growth of ICGFM every year. Look around the room today to appreciate that growth. We have representatives from approximately 27 countries here with us this week and 132 persons registered. We also continue to diversify the number of countries and regions represented, and we ask you to spread the good word to help us continue to attract new participants and partners to our conferences.

Together we are ICGFM and we are clearly having an impact around the world. A special and warm welcome goes out to our new members and first time conference participants. If you are attending an ICGFM Conference for the first time, I would ask you to please stand so we can recognize you (pause for applause).

ICGFM has worked hard over the years to develop a unique interactive approach to exploring the latest tools in PFM, clarifying professional standards and fostering best practices in Public Financial

Management (PFM). During the week you will meet and discuss with participants from many countries.

- Offer them your advice on sound approaches to financial reform.
- Let them know how you are solving problems that arise in the reform process.

The EventLeaf Guide app that we are using this year for the first time, will allow you to stay in touch with other participants and speakers once you are back at work. In the end you will have a global support network.

The next session after these remarks will familiarize you with the EventLeaf app and the use of social media so that you can participate fully now, here and later at home.

This year's theme is Government Financial Management in a Changing World. Most of the trends in this changing world affect government financial management directly. Take a few:

- Information and communications technology
- Social Media

- Citizen participation in budgeting and other areas
- Globalization of communications and monetary flows
- Population movements: travel and migration

Information technology improves the coherence of our data and our ability to share it, within countries and among them. Customs data from an importer can be matched, shipment by shipment to the export data from countries of origin. PFM work, including tax collection, audit and procurement are becoming less mysterious, secretive processes. We will even have a presentation on Citizen Participation in Audit. Yet bigger data can be harder to manage and less secure.

Social media allow individuals to communicate immediately on witnessing an event or trend. Instances of abuse are recorded and transmitted, sometimes going viral in minutes. This makes it harder for financial abuses to continue unchecked. On the other hand, it appears to be easy to manipulate opinion on social media, which erodes trust in statistics and visual information.

Travel and migration are also changing our world. Think how much more you have traveled than your parents could. Even those who cannot travel get an understanding of other parts of the world through both formal media and social media. They often respond by “voting with their feet.” This situation cannot be stabilized unless countries at all levels of development work to slow and eventually reverse the growing inequality of living conditions. Public financial management is a core process in that correction.

We expect you to learn a lot through this week’s program, as we have all had that learning as a previous experience. That is why I joined and now volunteer with the ICGFM. We invite you to do the same. All participants in this conference are automatically granted a year’s membership in ICGFM. Participate fully, stay connected with those you meet here, and take home new insights to improve finances and living conditions in your community.

I’d like to recognize our Vice President for Programs, Dave Pearl and the Program Steering Committee for their efforts that have gone into

preparing this year's program. You will find the names of those individuals listed in your conference program (Dave and all the members of the program steering committee and conference support team please stand). All of these individuals worked many hours on this conference as well as our other ICGFM conferences and meetings, and we are deeply grateful for their support. (Applause)

It takes many people to make events like this possible. I would like to recognize a number of individuals whose participation with ICGFM and in the development of this conference have been invaluable.

- The Executive Committee and Board of Directors who give their knowledge and time to guide this organization and make it work. I would ask each Executive Committee and Board Member to please stand and be recognized. (Let's give them a round of applause.)
- Our Managing Director, Pat Cornish and our Project Consultant Mari Robinette Deasel. We thank them both for their commitment and dedication. (Pat and Mari Please Stand.)

I also want to recognize our conference sponsors, without whom we could not have put together this exciting program and conference. We are very fortunate to have DAI as a Silver Sponsor and Swale House Partners and Nathan as supporting Organizations this year. Thank you so much for your continued support which makes ICGFM events like these possible. I would ask all representatives of our sponsoring organizations who are in the room to please stand – and for everyone to join me in a warm round of applause and thanks for our sponsors’ support. We invite you to review materials provided by our sponsors in your conference bags to learn more about the important and impactful work our sponsors are leading in the PFM arena.

As you assess what you have learned and contributed during this conference, we ask you to do three things: (1) Give us honest and specific feedback on what was most useful to you and what was less so. (2) Take home the conference materials and share them with your colleagues. (3) Stay in touch with those you met this week so that we continue to learn from one another, growing into a Community of Practice in Public Financial Management. We also encourage each of

you to be advocates of the ICGFM in your countries to help us achieve our shared vision of an international consortium that helps improve Public Financial Management in developing and emerging countries, and developed countries alike.

We are confident that you will find the 2019 International Training Conference to be professionally and personally rewarding. I wish you every success and look forward to meeting each of you this week in Miami.