

Mr Giorgi Tsotskolauri
 Director of Social Service Agency &
 Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced
 Persons form the Occupied Territories,
 Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
 Social Service Agency
 144, Akaki Tsereteli Avenue
 GE-0159 Tbilisi
 Georgia

ISSA/COVID-19/CEO/2020

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COVID-19: Activities of the International Social Security Association (ISSA)

Dear Mr Tsotskolauri,

The world has dramatically changed in the past weeks due to the COVID-19 crisis. Social security institutions are at the centre of the response, helping to mitigate the health, economic and social impact of the crisis. ISSA member organizations and their staff have responded rapidly and in an impressive manner. Thanks to these efforts, social security systems have once again demonstrated their key role for individuals, societies and economies.

The global spread of the coronavirus also affects the activities of our Association. While we are eagerly looking forward to seeing you again at our events that had to be postponed or changed to a virtual format, I wish to assure you that the implementation of all other activities continues as foreseen in the ISSA Programme and Budget for 2020–2022. Let me thank all members for their ongoing active involvement in our projects, Technical Commissions and regional structures.

At the same time, I am keenly aware that the role of the ISSA to analyse the measures taken and support social security institutions during this unprecedented crisis is of key importance. As an immediate response, we have developed a number of new services:

1. **The Coronavirus Monitor** – a global social security news monitor, lists of measures taken by governments and social security institutions in more than 143 countries, and articles analysing parameters of responses in different countries;
2. **Webinar series** – including case presentations by senior representatives of ISSA members on their institutional crisis response measures and offered in several languages – more than 1,100 member representatives have registered for the first ten ISSA webinars. All webinars are recorded and accessible online;

3. **Online learning** – we are working with our training partners to offer online learning opportunities for our members.

As some countries move towards reducing restrictions, the ISSA is now shifting the focus to supporting the exchange of experiences regarding these important steps. In the longer-term, we will add the topic of business continuity and crisis response as one central theme for ISSA activities during the triennium, including through the development of a new set of Guidelines.

Please do not hesitate therefore to contact the ISSA for information and support in the immediate crisis response, during the longer-term adaptation to restrictions and to strengthen crisis preparedness in the future. The ISSA Coronavirus Monitor and our webinar series are good opportunities to share your experience with colleagues dealing with similar challenges, and I would appreciate your readiness to send us information and engage in this exchange.

To close, let me also voice a word of optimism. As the global social security community, we will no doubt make a key contribution to the recovery from the crisis, and will be an even stronger voice for social security in the future.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano".

Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano
Secretary General