

TRIBUTE TO MARIO PESSOA
International Monetary Fund

8th Brazil International Congress of Accounting, Costs and Public Expenditure Quality – August 15 – 17, 2018 in Belo Horizonte, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil
(www.congressocq.net)

Mario Pessoa was a great supporter of accounting and costing initiatives in Latin America countries, especially in Brazil. We are happy to share this tribute with his colleagues as we deeply miss him at the IMF and in the PFM community after his sudden passing last October.

Colleagues and friends at the Fund have come forward with many tributes to Mario's warmth and generosity of spirit, to his brilliance, availability, reliability, and friendliness, to his politeness and gentleness, to his devotion to work and excellence as a team player, and to his unfailingly helpful and courteous mentoring of less-experienced staff and experts.

We would like to highlight a few of the many tributes from Mario's friends and colleagues:

Mario was an excellent person who devoted his life to work. Every day we remember his legacy in the IMF as we carry out our activities based on his example of dedication and professionalism.

Mario was a highly-respected professional. He will be well known to many fiscal experts as well as to colleagues at the Fund, country officials, and anyone with an interest in PFM.

Mario was the Deputy Division Chief of the Public Financial Management Division of the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department. Prior to joining the IMF, as you well know, Mario worked in the Ministry of Finance of Brazil in various positions in the Treasury Department, Economic Policy Department, and Internal Control System (Secretaría de Política Económica, la Secretaría de Control Interno y en la Secretaría del Tesoro Nacional).

His fruitful career is reflected across the world and his work is greatly appreciated:

- He led more than 30 technical assistance and capacity building missions to countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Pacific.
- He co-authored and edited several technical notes and books on public financial management issues including on treasury management, financial management information systems and spending controls. Among the most recent publications is the book entitled *Public Financial Management in Latin America: The Key to Efficiency and Transparency*, which was published in 2015 and is widely used by

regional specialists. Other leading areas of work include an IMF board paper on *Building Fiscal Capacity in Fragile States* in 2017, and a technical note on *Prevention and Management of Government Expenditure Arrears*.

- Mario helped establish the Latin American Treasurers (FOTEGAL) and the General Accountants (FOCAL) fora. He was a leading light in these groups as a speaker and an organizer of seminars and conferences, working closely with colleagues at the IADB and the World Bank. His last article in the PFM Blog, reported on a FOTEGAL meeting in Costa Rica.
- He participated in the development of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Code and headed fiscal transparency evaluations in three countries. He also led missions on public investment management assessments in Peru and Honduras.

Mario has always been interested in helping countries improve their fiscal reporting. He led and delivered training on fiscal reporting to countries across the globe. He was very conscious of the importance of fiscal reporting for making good fiscal policy decisions. He specifically underscored the significance of government accounting for fiscal reporting. He wanted to move government accounting beyond covering only the central government level and producing only financial statements.

He thought government accounting should evolve and make steps in two directions: i) improving the scope to cover the entire public sector and ii) having information on the cost of public services (cost accounting). There were many examples in which Mario highlighted the importance of broaden the coverage of fiscal reporting, but the most significant is in the Fiscal Transparency Evaluations he led. In regard to the second point above, there is one project to which Mario dedicated a lot of time and effort. This is very well-known to all the Brazilian accounting experts: The cost system of the state of Sao Paulo. Mario's idea was to design a cost model system with the capability to be applied to other countries. This dream became real when some principles of the model were applied to other countries' cost accounting systems.

Mario was a fire-fighter who could always be relied upon to resolve issues in a sensitive and diplomatic way. Mario led many technical assistance missions to countries all over Latin America, but also in Africa and Asia, including most recently in Indonesia and India. He was a realist about what could be achieved, and unstinting in his desire to ensure that all possible avenues were explored in the dialog with counterparts, and that the fullest possible understanding was reached on complex and sometimes politically-sensitive issues.

Mario was a wonderful colleague and a unique person to whom we at the IMF owe much more than could we share in some sentences today.

He would surely have liked to join you today, he will do it from his soul, as your work in these areas of the conference: Accounting, Costs and Public Expenditure Quality have been at the center of his career and his daily life.