

Reports of the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Sessions of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

Your Excellency, Madam President, Distinguished Representatives

I have the honour to present to you, on behalf of myself and my Co-chair, Mr. Mathew Gbonjubola, the reports of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. These sessions were held in hybrid form – in person but with provision for virtual participation.

The twenty-fifth session was held in Geneva from 18 to 21 October 2022. The twenty-sixth session was held in New York from 27 to 30 March 2023. The in-person meetings were attended by 20 members of the Committee and 220 registered observers. Three members of the Committee and 340 registered observers participated virtually. This hybrid form of meeting is complicated, but has allowed very high participation, and allowed us to hear the voices of those unable to travel. The record participation at the twenty-sixth session reflects this benefit, but also an increased interest in the UN Tax Committee's work. This experience reminds us of the need to ensure that rules of procedure of ECOSOC-related fora are adapted to new ways of conducting business across countries and time zones, in particular with respect to voting which has been raised by the membership of the Committee as a problem for members participating on-line as they cannot participate in voting procedures at the meeting.

The two sessions considered a wide range of issues that included issues related to guidance products like the United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries, as well as other guidance on key issues in such areas as: transfer pricing, taxation of the extractive industries, environmental taxation, taxation issues related to the digitalized and globalized economy, digitalization and other opportunities to improve tax administration, increasing tax transparency, wealth and solidarity taxes, health taxes, and the relationship of tax, trade and investment agreements. The Committee's work programme is ambitious but well on track.

The session discussions are always referring to the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in any discussion of international tax cooperation, with emphasis laid on prioritizing action on the SDGs in the current socioeconomic context. The role of taxation in supporting the SDGs through domestic resource mobilization but also in supporting sustainable behaviours by corporates and individuals is well understood by the membership and therefore we have focused our work on aspects where we think taxation can help in reaching those goals as for example prioritize issues such as health, environmental, and wealth and solidarity taxes.

The Committee has reiterated its commitment to integrating SDG considerations and perspectives into all its workstreams and to exploring additional ways of helping developing countries to identify and respond to not just (1) additional *vulnerabilities*, but also (2) *opportunities* to deploy tax measures effectively and efficiently with a view to achieving the SDGs. The Committee's guidance products, and capacity building based on them, remain vital to achieving this.

The need for taxing rights of developing countries to be affirmed and supported is a common thread that runs through the Committee work, but so too is the need to consider a balanced investment environment, which can itself play an important part in meeting the SDGs.

At the twenty-sixth session, and with this background, the co-coordinators of the various subcommittees presented progress reports on their workstreams and documents for first consideration or approval, as the Committee's membership hits the halfway mark. The Secretariat also updated the Committee on the capacity development work and sought and received input from the Members.

In conclusion, The Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters presents with pride the reports of these two sessions and recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the draft decision provided at Chapter 1 of the Report of the twenty-sixth session, which proposes an agenda for the twenty-seventh session reflecting the Committee's existing work program and also proposes that the twenty-seventh session be held in Geneva from 17-20 October 2023.