



Opening Remarks by His Excellency Ambassador Munir Akram, President of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to United Nations in New York, to the ECOSOC Special Spring Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

29 April 2021
New York

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to welcome you to the 2021 spring meeting of the Economic and Social Council on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. Across the world, the adverse economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has helped reverse the hard-won development gains of at least a decade.

It has exacerbated inequalities within and across countries and laid bare the inherent vulnerabilities of our global financial and international cooperative systems. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the commitments of the Paris Agreement.

I'm glad to share that the recently concluded Financing for Development Forum Outcome Document has been able to achieve a consensus on some of the key actions required to recover from the current crisis. It has also provided guidance on effective global responses for a stronger and more forward-looking international cooperation, including cooperation on tax matters.

International tax cooperation will also strengthen and help fund cross border public trade and crisis within the health systems. It will help us to achieve an effective health response to the pandemic, including a large-scale vaccination that delivers vaccines to all countries and people.

Excellencies,

We live in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent global system, including a financial system, with advances in technology that continue to reduce certain barriers to the flow of goods and finance. In this context, member states need to work together to stop the leakage of resources for sustainable development caused by illicit financial flows as well as corporate and personal tax avoidance and evasion.

There is an urgency to address the issues of tax savings and profit shifting practices by big multinational corporations. A minimum global corporate tax has been proposed as one way forward.



Additionally, to improve tax transparency, multinational companies should be required to publish accounting and financial information on a country-by-country basis. Taxation of the digital economy could bring enormous benefits to the developing countries by providing them their fair share of revenues. Taxes should be paid where economic activity has occurred and revenues are generated.

International tax reforms and tax transparency standards through an open, inclusive, and legal instrument with universal participation has been widely supported. To this end, I endorsed the recommendation of the FACTI Panel for discussions aiming at an agreement on a UN Tax Convention. Since there is no single global inclusive forum for international tax cooperation at the international level, these discussions should also lead to the establishment of a universal intergovernmental tax body under the auspices of the United Nations.

Excellencies,

The Economic and Social Council has embarked on a range of initiatives to ensure that no country is left behind in mobilizing revenues to fund a sustained recovery from the pandemic. Such efforts include recent guidance to help resource-rich developing countries to collect appropriate levels of revenue to finance their development and to invest in safety nets, crucial for achieving the SDGs. I thank the United Nations Tax Committee for its distinctive contribution to mainstreaming tax and domestic resource mobilization and tax in the SDGs in the work of the Council.

The three panels which we will hold today on topical issues will provide us with an opportunity to examine, in greater detail, the role of tax policy and administration in directly supporting the achievement of the SDGs by addressing challenges such as inequality, climate change, and health.

Let make full use of today's platform to intensify our collaboration on tax matters in support of a sustained and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.

I thank you.