

16th Session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

(New York, 14 May 2018)

Opening statement by Mr. Navid H. Director, Financing for Sustainable

Co-Chairs,

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Distinguished Observers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I am pleased to welcome you to the 16th session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

It is a pleasure for me to be here as the new Director of the UN Financing for Sustainable Development Office.

Today, I would like to focus on three aspects of the Committee's work.

1. The key role of taxation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
2. Strengthening international cooperation in tax matters, including through the work of this Committee;
3. Building capacity for more effective and efficient tax systems and administrations.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the utmost priority for all. This is the best way of ensuring that no one is left behind.

Financing is key in the timely realization of the Agenda and tax policies with the priorities of the 2030 Agenda.

It also recognises that Domestic resource mobilization and its effective use are critical to achieving sustainable development. We know that improved tax policies and administration will help realize more efficient and effective domestic resource mobilization.

This Committee has a critical role in providing guidance to countries on how to achieve such tax systems.

The Platform has also started to assist developing

Progress was also made in implementing country-level technical cooperation projects in the area of double tax treaties and tax base protection.

Two projects were completed in Angola and Paraguay. New projects were launched and activities started in the Dominican Republic, Mongolia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Finally, two workshops were held in Africa, in Ethiopia and in Swaziland. These were attended by tax officials from 35 countries in the region and focused on tax base protection and transfer pricing respectively.

Later this week, my colleagues will report extensively on capacity development activities since the last session of the Committee.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am really encouraged by the Committee's resolve to expand its work and make higher impact.

I would like to assure you that the Secretariat will make every effort to support you in this ambitious work plan. In fact, we have already taken modest steps to enhance our support to you.

I am pleased to announce that we have established an International Tax and Development Cooperation Branch. It will bring closer together the work of the Secretariat of the Committee and the work of the Capacity Development Unit.

I am also deploying one full time professional to the team supporting the Committee.

This will ensure more effective dissemination of the Committee guidelines to developing countries.

It will also use the input received from developing countries feedback during training activities into the work of the Committee.

I look forward to meeting all members of the Committee to discuss how we can better assist you in your tasks.

I would greatly appreciate your candid and constructive feedback. This will allow us to quickly understand your needs, as there is no time to lose in advancing your important work.

My special thanks to the Secretary of the Committee and my esteemed colleague Mr. Michael Lennard for his hard work and dedication in supporting your work.

I wish you a productive meeting.

Thank you.