Financing for Development Forum 2024

Overall theme: Enhancing on the path toward the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

Panel Discussion 2: Domestic Public Resources. Lead Discussant Tove Maria Ryding. Eurodad

Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak here today. This discussion on domestic resource mobilization takes place at a truly historic moment. We now have an intergovernmental UN tax body. And we are on the road to the finalization of the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation. If only we had a tax dollar for every time we were told this day would never come. As civil society we once again express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the leadership shown by the Africa Group to get us to where we are today. We are not yet at the finishing line and there is a very important time coming up. I want to stress three points. That we will be paying much attention to going forward.

1. The first point is we expect all governments to negotiate in good faith and be constructive in the upcoming extremely important Intergovernmental UN tax negotiations. This includes standing by agreements that have been reached. We were extremely pleased to see that there was a consensus reached in February this year in this building on how to move forward in the UN Tax negotiations. It's extremely important that the financing for development process supports the UN tax negotiations. and does not become a forum to reopen discussions that have already been resolved in the UN's tax negotiations. We expect to see all governments fully committed to delivering a fair, ambitious and effective UN Framework Convention on International tax Cooperation.

2. Secondly time is of the essence. The best estimate we have for how much tax revenue is lost. Because of illicit financial flows tell us that we are losing well over a billion dollars every day. Imagine that and imagine how costly it will be to block the negotiation and prevent us from moving forward in resolving this problem. If we do not get an effective solution to tax related illicit financial flows, we will not be able to find the resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals or address issues such as the climate crisis.

3. Third Point is that an intergovernmental negotiation on tax and the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation is in the interest of all countries. And it will never be

duplication. Because we have never had an inclusive intergovernmental space to discuss global tax issues.

We often hear OECD countries mention issues such as automatic information exchange as an example of a problem that has been solved. But this is a good example of the problem that we have today. The vast majority of developing countries do not have automatic information exchange. They are not part of this so-called success. And that reflects the fact that the global standard on automatic information exchange was negotiated by less than 50 countries. And several proposals that could have made the standard better fit the realities of developing countries were not taken on board. We need to add to that that the international standard on automatic information exchange still has loopholes. That means it could be working better even for the OECD countries that have automatic information exchange, so it is in the interest of all countries to review this issue and negotiate a truly global agreement on automatic information exchange. The situation is perhaps even more extreme with the OECD agreements on corporate tax. Academic studies show that after the first OECD corporate tax package in 2015, profits shifted to tax havens went up. And we are currently at a historic high. It is a long discussion how the second package on corporate tax, the so-called pillar one and Pillar 2. Also comes with loopholes. I'm sure we'll be discussing that in the intergovernmental tax negotiations, but one important point to stress is that pillar one and pillar 2 is not only deeply concerning for developing countries even for OECD countries the estimates of how much extra tax revenue would come because of these pillars are widely exaggerated. And for some OECD countries, implementing pillar one and pillar two would even mean they would lose tax revenue, despite being high tax countries. So, there's a number of issues that are deeply concerning about pillar one and pillar two, and it is a welcome opportunity for all countries that we have a chance to review this international area, that needs substantial improvement. Ultimately, the intergovernmental UN tax negotiations and a UN Framework Convention on tax is a very important opportunity to boost tax revenue in both developing and developed countries. And I once again stress that we are extremely happy to be part of this discussion and we have some very important weeks and months and years ahead. Thank you very much.