



Ad Hoc Committee to Draft Terms of Reference for a United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation

Agenda Item 2 (b) Objectives & Principles – April 29

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Thank you chair,

Esteemed delegates

I wouldn't think anyone in the room underestimates the magnitude of what we are doing here, our **collective actions** will shape the **future** of our **planet** and the **generations to come**. We have seen resounding acknowledgment from the member states regarding furthering the development goals through the convention, in their written inputs. But it is imperative that both **human rights and development** be included in the **objectives and principles** and that their financing be a priority objective for the convention.

Human rights are a fundamental element of the global legal framework, representing one of the United Nations' **three pillars**. All member states are **bound by obligations** set out in the **human rights treaties** they have **ratified**, and therefore, **rights standards offer a benchmark against which to assess tax systems**. Several UN bodies have increasingly recognized the relevance of human rights norms in taxation and vice versa including the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. However, **despite the close interlinkages**, the commitments that States undertake upon ratifying human rights treaties are often **overlooked** in international tax cooperation.

Human rights **reinforce the very importance of international tax cooperation in addressing inequalities within and among nations**, and in providing governments with the necessary resources to **respect, protect, and fulfill** human rights. We must embrace this duty wholeheartedly, **transcending narrow national interests** and working together to create a tax regime that benefits all nations.

States can **promote a more equitable society** by using taxes

- **to generate revenue** for funding rights and public services,
- **redistributing wealth** to lessen inequality,

- **adjusting prices of goods and services** to discourage harmful practices, and
- **improving democratic governance through better representation.**

A fundamental reason for re-writing international tax rules emanated from **harmful tax competition to attract multinational corporations** and **corporations abusing a poorly coordinated system**, all of which undermined States' -especially lower-income countries- capacity to realize rights. The Convention must ensure that lower-income countries can raise their fair share of taxable revenues, enabling them to spend newly-freed resources on economic and social rights. Recognition of human rights principles in the convention offers the opportunity to **balance individual considerations such as right to privacy with broader and comprehensive** considerations of **maximizing available resources**.

Equality and non-discrimination are also crucial rights principles for this Convention. **Progressive tax policies** are essential for **reducing inequality, promoting gender equality, and fighting discrimination**. We mustn't tolerate systems that concentrate wealth and power, leaving many behind. The international tax regime's **opacity and secrecy** also **undermines public trust** and **erodes resources**. We need **binding transparency measures** to **empower citizens** and hold **corporations** and **individuals accountable**.

The Convention must also **enshrine the principles of inclusiveness and public participation**. The voices of those **most affected by tax policies, particularly from historically disadvantaged groups, must be heard and respected**.

For a Convention that comes close to achieving the goals we have set out to achieve, it should build **new transparent, inclusive, and participatory mechanisms** that prevent the **unjust enrichment of powerful states and entities due to historical imbalances**. To achieve these goals, **human rights mechanisms** are an **indispensable tool of guidance** that **must be brought to the center of tax cooperation**.

Esteemed colleagues, the path before us is challenging, but the stakes have never been higher. Let us seize this moment and work together to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world for all.

Thank you.