



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

Agenda Item 2 (b) Topics for High Level Commitments – April 30

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Thank you very much Chair and distinguished delegates. My name is Rebecca Riddell and I'm here today on behalf of Oxfam, a global organization working in over 80 countries that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice.

We wish to recognize the important efforts of Global South countries, and the leadership of the Africa Group in particular, which have brought us to this historic moment. As civil society, we're committed to supporting this process and eager to see it deliver a more fair, inclusive, and transparent international tax system - one that tackles inequalities, and supports the realization of human rights.

We're delighted to contribute to today's discussion regarding the taxation of high-net worth individuals and we welcome the remarks by delegates today linking the issue with inequality. I'll offer three short points:

First - our world is in the grips of an extraordinary inequality crisis.

Inequality has risen in [most countries](#) in recent decades. Since 2020 - while a pandemic and a global cost of living crisis have made life much harder for many - the world's very richest have thrived. Billionaire wealth overall has [risen](#) by over 3 trillion dollars.

We're living through a second gilded age with unimaginable concentrations of extreme wealth at the very top. Such severe inequality can harm poverty reduction, undermine democracy, and fuel climate change.

Second – this inequality crisis is, in many ways, the result of a rigged tax system that allows the very wealthy to get away without paying their fair share.

It is the result of too many laws and too many policies designed not to address inequality, but rather to facilitate the accumulation and retention of extreme wealth by a small elite.

In recent decades, taxes on the very wealthy have effectively [collapsed](#).

In [country](#) after [country](#), the very richest individuals now pay lower tax rates than ordinary families - even as [little](#) as 2% of their income. Globally, research shows billionaires [pay](#) a tax rate equivalent to between 0 and 0.5% of their wealth.

At the same time, communities and countries are being deprived of the resources they need to tackle poverty and inequality, and to provide the fundamental services required for everyone to thrive. This deepens an unjust global debt crisis and contributes to harmful rounds of austerity.

Make no mistake: every tax dollar dodged by a billionaire is one that could have gone to pay a nurse, buy a child a textbook, or ensure a family had enough to eat. Such extreme wealth and extreme hardship are two sides of the same coin – a coin minted by a tax system that allows the most well off to not pay their fair share.

Third – we need international cooperation to tax the very wealthy.

No country can tackle this problem alone. There are a litany of approaches, existing and proposed, designed to ensure that the very wealthiest finally pay their fair share. These include proposals to tax income and wealth which would ensure that the absolute richest - for example the top 1% in each country - pay significantly more than ordinary people.

This process we're embarking on here holds great promise for advancing efforts to tax the richest.

Countries ought to have support in building tax systems that reduce inequality and raise revenue from the very wealthy. International cooperation is also critical to strengthening any one country's domestic efforts to tax the rich. Such cooperation can and should complement progress to stop illicit financial flows.

In closing, we believe the Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation should support the establishment of more progressive tax systems that reduce inequality by taxing high net worth individuals. We therefore urge this issue be reflected in the terms of reference that result from this Committee's process.

Thank you, Chair and delegates, for your time.