

YAOUNDÉ DECLARATION

A CALL FOR ACTION TO TACKLE ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TAX COOPERATION

We, signatories of this joint declaration gathered in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 15 November 2017, for the Tenth Plenary meeting of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (the Global Forum);

Recalling the commitment of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to redouble efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion through strengthened national regulation and by scaling up international tax cooperation, including to support access to beneficial ownership information for competent authorities and progressively advance towards automatic exchange of tax information among tax authorities as appropriate.

Acknowledging that the report from the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa has focused attention on the scale of the issue of illicit financial flows in Africa, which includes tax evasion and other criminal activities, and its negative impact on Africa's development and governance agenda while also identifying ways in which to tackle it, in particular by increasing cooperation and exchange of information to improve domestic resource mobilisation.

Emphasizing the unprecedented efforts made by the international community to improve tax transparency and exchange of information which are a prerequisite for effectively tackling international tax evasion and addressing gaps and mismatches in tax rules that allow for artificial profit shifting.

Recalling the universal Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, and in particular the domestic resource mobilisation objective, as well as the African Union principles in this area.

Affirming that sustainable development and good governance are among the seven African aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Having deliberated on the theme "Fighting illicit financial flows through international tax cooperation: A Call for Action in Africa".

Reaffirm the important role of the Global Forum in bringing about transparency in tax matters and in assisting developing countries in the implementation of the standards of exchange of information in tax matters (EOI) and the use of the EOI instruments in their domestic resource mobilisation strategy.

Note that while progress has been made in Africa, many countries still do not fully benefit from the new transparent tax environment: only 27 African countries are participating in exchange of information on request (EOIR), only five African countries are committed to automatic exchange of financial accounts information (AEOI), and a large number of African countries continue to have a small EOI network, gaps in their domestic legislation and administrative capacity constraints that hamper efforts to tackle international tax evasion.

Encourage all African countries and the Regional Economic Communities to strengthen their efforts in the fight against international tax evasion through tax cooperation and transparency and work towards more regional coordination;

Resolve to lead by example in using the powerful EOI infrastructure which has now emerged to counter international tax evasion and to support domestic resource mobilisation;

Endorse the renewal for three years (2018-2020) of the Africa Initiative launched in 2014 by the Global Forum with the support of the African Tax Administration Forum and the Centre de Rencontre et d'Etudes des Dirigeants des Administrations Fiscales and the World Bank Group.

Welcome the continuous support of the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Swiss Confederation to the Africa Initiative and **Call upon** other international bodies to support the efforts of African countries in building their capacities.

Consider that tackling illicit financial flows in Africa through improved tax cooperation and transparency would be enhanced if carried out at the continental level under the auspices of the African Union with the support of all development partners and international and regional organisations.

Undertake an initiative by the African Union to begin a high level discussion on tax cooperation and illicit financial flows and their link to domestic resource mobilisation.

Encourage African countries with the support of the Global Forum Secretariat to explore with the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Regional Economic Communities and the African Development Bank a collaboration aimed at boosting African countries' efforts towards implementing the international EOI standards and using EOI tools to improve their domestic resource mobilisation;

Request the Global Forum Secretariat to report back to the Africa Initiative Taskforce on the outcome of the above proposal within 6 months.

Made in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 15 November 2017

In two originals in English and in French,

Signatories

H.E. Alamine Ousmane Mey, Minister of Finance of Cameroon

H.E. Adolphus Forkpa, Deputy Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia

H.E. Haruna Kasolo Kyeyune, Minister of State, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda

Mr. Servais Adjovi, Chief of Staff, Representing the Minister of Economy and Finance, Benin

In presence of:

H.E. Gilles Thibault, Ambassador of France in Cameroon

Mr. Pascal Saint-Amans, Director, Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, OECD

Ms. Maria-José Garde, Chair of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes

Ms. Monica Bhatia, Head of the Secretariat of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes

Ms. Elfrieda Tamba, Commissioner General, Liberia Revenue Authority, Liberia

Mr. Sie Abou Ouattara, Director General of Taxes, Côte d'Ivoire

Mr. Modeste Mopa, Director General of Taxes, Cameroon