

India Plays Key Role in Taking Forward the G20's Pledge to Ensure Greater Tax Transparency

12 February 2010, New Delhi: The Ministry of Finance hosted a key meeting of the Steering Group of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes on 11 – 12 February. (See www.oecd.org/tax/transparency for more information.)

G20 leaders have welcomed the expansion of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information - now comprising 91 jurisdictions - and the agreement to deliver an effective program of peer reviews. The G20 has asked the Global Forum to complete their peer review processes, and to assess adherence to international standards. G20 has also made it clear that it is important that developing countries are able to benefit from this new environment of transparency.

India, which is both a member of the Global Forum's Steering Group and a Vice-Chair of its Peer Review Group, has played an active role in making sure that high standards of transparency and exchange of information are in place throughout the world to prevent tax evasion from depriving Governments resources for development and growth.

This week the Steering Group, which guides the work of the Global Forum, considered the core documents required to launch the peer review process. It also examined the progress of the Global Forum in moving forward on the mandate given to it by the G20 in November 2009.

India has been at the centre of the Global Forum's work to build the peer review process. Finance Minister in his welcoming message to the Steering Group , said, " India is strongly committed to the Global Forum's work and I am confident that the needs of the developing countries will be taken into account by the Forum . Tax plays a crucial role in helping developing countries mobilize their domestic resources and enforcing high standards of transparency and exchange of information internationally will be an important part of this strategy. The work of Global Forum is very important for fighting tax evasion and that is why we have worked so hard to ensure that the peer review process can start quickly."

The Global Forum's peer reviews will indicate the extent to which jurisdictions have implemented the international standards on transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes and identify those jurisdictions which are not making progress. Final reports will be made public.

The full membership of the Global Forum will meet in Singapore on 30 September and 1 October 2010 and at that meeting it will finalise the first set of peer review reports. As a demonstration of its commitment to this work, India has agreed that its peer review will be amongst those to commence this year.

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