

THE YAOUNDÉ DECLARATION

The 10th plenary meeting of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (the Global Forum) was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 15 – 17 November 2017. The meeting, hosted by the Government of Cameroon, gathered 186 delegates from 78 jurisdictions (including 15 African jurisdictions) and 12 international organisations and regional groups.

African members of the Global Forum took advantage of this second Global Forum plenary meeting to be held in Africa to reflect on ways of ensuring that African countries can benefit from the enhanced tax transparency landscape. To this end, H.E. Alamine Ousmane Mey, the Minister of Finance of Cameroon hosted a high-level meeting of African Finance Ministers and Heads of Tax Administrations on 15 November. Participants recognised that while the global landscape for fighting tax evasion and avoidance has changed, African countries are not fully exploiting the advances in international cooperation in the mobilisation of their much needed domestic revenues.

A call for action was made through a landmark document, the "Yaoundé Declaration" which urges the African Union to begin a high-level discussion on tax cooperation and illicit financial flows and their link to domestic resource mobilisation. Attached hereby is the text of the Declaration.

Since its first signature, the Yaoundé Declaration is generating a lot of interest with more African countries joining it. The African Union Commission has also added its voice to this call for action. Other supporters of the Declaration includes the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France and the United Kingdom.

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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

LIST OF SIGNATORIES (as of December 2020)

Countries and organisations		Date
1.	 Cameroon	11/2017
2.	 Liberia	11/2017
3.	 Uganda	11/2017
4.	 Benin	11/2017
5.	 Togo	01/2018
6.	 Ghana	02/2018
7.	 Seychelles	02/2018
8.	 Chad	03/2018
9.	 Madagascar	04/2018
10.	 Niger	04/2018
11.	 Gabon	04/2018
12.	 Burkina Faso	04/2018
13.	 Congo	04/2018
14.	 Guinea-Bissau	04/2018
15.	 Mali	04/2018
16.	 Senegal	04/2018
17.	 Mauritius	05/2018
18.	 Mauritania	06/2018
19.	 Comoros	06/2018

Countries and organisations		Date
20.	 Côte d'Ivoire	06/2018
21.	 Lesotho	07/2018
22.	 Nigeria	08/2018
23.	 South Africa	09/2018
24.	 Morocco	03/2019
25.	 Tunisia	05/2019
26.	 Egypt	11/2019
27.	 Kenya	11/2019
28.	 Cabo Verde	11/2019
29.	 Djibouti	11/2019
30.	 Eswatini	09/2020
31.	 African Union Commission	12/2020

SUPPORTERS OF THE DECLARATION

Countries and organisations		Date
1.	 OECD OECD	11/2017
2.	 France	01/2018
3.	 United Kingdom	01/2018