

**Economic and Social Council**  
**Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Extractive Industries Taxation**  
**ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York, 28 May 2013**

**Note for Participants**

**Background**

The **Expert Group Meeting on Extractive Industries Taxation** will be a relatively informal meeting designed to initiate the work of the Secretariat and the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the Committee). The Committee will consider such issues for the first time in October 2013, and we anticipate that a report from this meeting and a Secretariat paper will assist the Committee to identify areas where focused work may assist developing countries in dealing with the many tax issues arising from extractive industries, including in their wider context.

**“Chatham House” rules will apply.** This means that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. This is designed to encourage openness and sharing of information.

The discussions will focus on issues that developing countries face when designing and administering an extractive industries fiscal regime **with a view to ensuring that the UN tax cooperation work can further support developing countries in this important area of development.** During the meeting, discussants from national tax authorities, international organizations, non-governmental organizations the private sector and academics will propose and consider issues of international tax cooperation in the extractive industries sector, including institutional arrangements to promote such cooperation. **It is important that the views of all stakeholders in tax systems be heard in an open and welcoming forum on such a central tax issue as the treatment of extractive industries.**

**Discussion**

Important subthemes will include (in no particular order):

- a) the importance of **stable, transparent and conducive investment climates** to encourage investment (which can be a spur to sustainable development);
- b) the need to balance that aspect with **a revenue base that can help achieve sustained development** through financing schools, hospitals and other public goods, and helps deal with systemic shocks;
- c) **tax incentives and the so-called “race to the bottom”;**
- d) **the relationship of tax policies to other policies** in this area including as to the environment;
- e) how to address **volatility of revenues from these industries,** due to the volatility of markets;
- f) **diversified versus undiversified economic and revenue bases;**
- g) relevant **differences between various types of extractive industry;**

- h) the role of **tax treaty policy and administration** in this area;
- i) the role of **transfer pricing policy and administration** in this area;
- j) **transparency issues**, including their impact in this area and possible wider significance;
- k) lessons learned from **capacity building including how to set up tax policy administration capabilities in this area**;
- l) roles for **taxpayers and others including NGOs in building capabilities, and more broadly**; and
- m) last but by no means least, how to encourage that **the respective “competitive advantages” of international organizations active in this area**, including the UN, IMF, World Bank and the OECD as well as regional and other organizations are used to best advantage in a **needs-driven and needs-responsive, but not merely reactive, way**. This needs to be done cooperatively, so that **unnecessary duplication and fragmentation are avoided, while still respecting their differing respective mandates and allowing for the possibility of developing countries receiving “second opinions”** on issues of great relevance to them.

## Objectives

The Expert Group Meeting will aim to:

- a) identify **pressing issues of developing countries** in the area of taxation of the extractive industry as well as **potential new challenges**;
- b) indicate the **existing availability of assistance, and gaps in available assistance**;
- c) to **inform the work of the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters** as to how the Committee may make a **unique “value added” contribution in this field while working constructively with others**; and
- d) **bring together the different stakeholders** involved in these issues with a view to **identifying and developing a network of experts** that the Committee can draw upon, such as if it forms a subcommittee on these issues.

Note that the Special Meeting of ECOSOC on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on **29 May 2013, which some of you are also attending** (see <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/index.htm#upcoming>), is a more formal meeting, at which statements can only be made by the Member States and accredited organizations. **That meeting is being separately organized and you will need to be specifically invited to that meeting also to gain access** (a contact for requesting invitations is noted below). We will explain more about the logistics of that meeting in advance of, and during, the meeting of 28 May.

## Meeting Times and Venue

**The Expert Group Meeting on 28 May 2013 will be held from 9:40 am to 6:30 pm. Registration will begin at 9.15 am.**

The venue is the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Chamber of the United Nations**, recently refurbished (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sgsm14964.doc.htm>). We will not fill this very large room, but have relocated to it because other available rooms were too small for the large numbers of representatives who have expressed interest in the meeting.

The route to the Chamber is not always clear as renovations continue in other parts of the UN complex, so please follow the registration procedures noted below.

## Registration

Please proceed through the UN Visitor's Entrance at **46th Street and First Avenue**: <http://visit.un.org/wcm/content/site/visitors/home/plan/directions> . Once past security, you will be in the **lobby area of the General Assembly building where there will be a desk with people identified as organizers of this meeting who can give you day passes on verification of your identity** with your passport or national ID and **who will escort you in groups to the meeting room**. They will be there at least until 10:00 am on 28 May. After that time please call Marilyn Elblein at (646) 251-4060 for assistance. **You need to wear the pass at all times while on the UN premises**. It will be valid for 28 May only – those invited to attend the 29 May meeting will receive a second pass on that day.

## Security Processes

Please allow sufficient time to go through security clearance, (preferably as early as possible, but no earlier than 9:00 am – you will not be allowed into the UN complex until then). Security is strict and we advise against bringing in substantial items of luggage.

**Remember to bring a passport or a national ID card with photo and your formal invitation to the meeting**. If you have not received the invitation, or have been invited to the meeting of 28 May 2013 but would also like to attend on 29 May, please contact Marilyn Elblein at [elblein@un.org](mailto:elblein@un.org) by 20 May.

## Seating

We will be reserving seats for listed speakers and Chairs of sessions; other seating will be unassigned.

## Speakers

The sessions for the Expert Group Meeting are **very concentrated, with a brief and strictly enforced (12 minutes) maximum presentation** time for panelists. This is to give as much opportunity for key points to be made by as many speakers as possible, while allowing other participants not on panels to also address important issues. This means that there will be **no time to deliver prepared speeches, only a few key points likely to be of special interest to developing countries**. More detailed written materials can be made available to participants by the Secretariat, **if provided by 23 May**.

**Powerpoints** are not required in view of the short presentation “slots”, but are welcome to help others grasp the key points of your presentation. Such presentation however, still needs to fit in the 12 minute-time slot and be **made available to the Secretariat by 23 May**. Please send them to **Ilka Ritter** ([ritter@un.org](mailto:ritter@un.org)) and **Michael Lennard** ([lennard@un.org](mailto:lennard@un.org)) and bring a copy with you on 28 May on a USB drive also. Note that 27 May 2013 is observed as a holiday in the UN Headquarters in New York.

We also ask that speakers and chairs send your **short biography to us by Friday, 17 May** (send them to Marilyn Elblein at [elblein@un.org](mailto:elblein@un.org)). The bios will be made available in short form to participants, as time will not allow extensive introductions before each session.

## **Chairs**

We have not sought to circumscribe how the Chairs perform their roles – we welcome them giving their own brief observations and summaries, subject to the tight time restrictions. A main task will be to rigorously ensure that speakers keep to the very strict timings, in fairness to other speakers, and the Secretariat will be represented on the podium to assist in this and other respects. The Secretariat will briefly introduce the Chairs.

Participants are kindly requested to print and bring their own copies of the draft agenda and background. Please note that **there will be no facilities in the meeting rooms for editing or photocopying of documents.**

## **Interpretation**

For budgetary reasons, there will unfortunately be no interpretation provided on 28 May – proceedings will be conducted in English only. The one exception is that the Keynote Speech may be delivered in Spanish – there will be an English version of the speech made available in that case.

## **Coffee/Tea/Lunch**

During the meeting of 28 May there are no coffee breaks or provided meals. There is currently no coffee readily available near the ECOSOC Chamber and drinks are not allowed into the room. We will give directions to the cafeteria for the lunch break during the meeting.

## **Hotels in New York City**

For your convenience, a list of hotels reasonably close to the UN is attached. You should make your reservation ahead of time by calling the hotel's telephone number. Some of the hotels offer preferential rates to people attending meetings at the UN (you will have to indicate you are attending these meetings), though you should also check the usual hotel booking sites for a better deal also.

## **Transportation**

In New York, you will be responsible for your own transportation to the hotel and to the meeting venue. For transport to UN Headquarters see: <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/visitors/home/plan/directions>

We look forward to seeing you in New York!