



**ATAF INPUT ON THE UNITED NATION COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS  
ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN TAX MATTERS  
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The United Nations has through the years played pivotal roles in addressing the challenges of the world. The body is of great importance, in particular in championing the issues of development so very necessary for the developing world.

Taxation is central to implementing the development agendas of developing nations and, just as importantly, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as initiated by the UN. The African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) recognises that building effective tax systems is a vital and central part of the development process. It thus strives towards promoting and supporting the mobilisation of domestic resources through the provision of a continental platform to improve the performance of tax administration in Africa. Better tax administration will enhance economic growth, increase accountability of the state to its citizens, and more effectively mobilise domestic resources. And this is highly reliant on efficient and effective tax systems within revenue authorities.

The complexities of international business transactions place a particular burden on African tax administrations in that they lack the necessary advanced skills to adequately deal with tax evasion and avoidance. Added to these challenges are the promotion of transparent business practices and accounting methods, sharing of tax information and cooperation with other states in effectively implementing tax treaties and agreements.

ATAF is leading the way on the African continent through its exchange of information initiatives among its members through its Working Group on Exchange of Information. The UN Committee of Experts can thus play a significant role in aligning some of its programmes for developing countries with ATAF to remove duplication. A further important aspect in the work of ATAF is the Working Group on Transfer Pricing, which aims to tackle particular tax evasion and avoidance schemes in international business transactions. As transfer pricing involves complex accounting methods, the Committee of Experts could use some of the work commissioned by the UN Commission on Trade Law to encompass a broader approach to multinational enterprise behaviour.

The UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters has an important role to play in supporting the mobilisation of domestic resources. It is the only body within the UN system that focuses on those tools that would assist countries in developing home-grown solutions to diminishing their dependence on donor assistance.

The UN has the advantage of being at the forefront of international engagements. In particular, the UN also represents a broad community of countries from the developing world. It is therefore imperative that it plays a stronger role in the global tax and development agenda.

The UN Committee, therefore, should be used as a platform to further these debates at an international level while involving key role players from both developed and developing countries as well as international organisations. The importance of the UN Committee of Experts should be emphasised by increasing its resources and reach so that it can partake in collaborations with ATAF and other regional tax groupings on technical assistance programmes as well as capacity development initiatives.

Lastly, it is important that the UN Committee should comprise of a significant number of experts from developing nations as they would be better equipped to identify and champion the issues that are important to the developing world. All the members of ATAF are developing countries who are in the process of developing long-term capacity to strengthen their revenue authorities. The UN Committee of Experts can play a pivotal role in assisting these countries in increasing their domestic resources through the provision of assistance of tax technical experts from developed and developing countries and international organizations.