



**20 April 2015**

**New York**

**ECOSOC Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States  
'International cooperation in tax matters including, as appropriate, its contribution to  
mobilizing domestic financial resources for development and the institutional  
arrangements to promote such cooperation'  
delivered by  
John Busuttil, First Counsellor**

Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

At the outset we would like to express our appreciation to you and the Secretariat for the organisation of this meeting and for the work on the SG report under consideration in this meeting (E/2015/21)

As underlined most recently as last week, during the second drafting session on the outcome document for the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis, domestic resource mobilization and enhancing fiscal capacity are essential for financing the attainment of sustainable development. In this regard, the EU and its Member States fully acknowledge the need to further promote international cooperation in tax matters and will continue to engage constructively on this issue.

Supporting developing countries in designing efficient and cooperative tax systems is a priority of the EU's development policy. The EU and its Member States are fully engaged internally and internationally on efforts to improve cooperation in tax matters. We participate actively in the important work carried out in international fora, such as the OECD, including through the OECD

informal taskforce on tax and development, and engages in extensive dialogue with developing countries through instruments such as the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information and the Global Forum on development.

Enhancing the involvement of developing countries in relevant international fora on tax dialogue and cooperation contributes to their efforts to effectively tackle tax evasion and other harmful practices. We support broader participation of developing countries in existing structures, and enhanced cooperation between the OECD, the UN Committee of Experts, the International Tax Dialogue, and the International Tax Compact, taking into account the specific needs and capacities of developing countries.

In this context, we recognize the important role of the UN, through its Committee of Experts on international cooperation in tax matters, and the need to ensure that the Committee maintains its effectiveness. In October 2009 the Committee of Experts decided to create 9 Sub-committees in order to address new developments on international tax cooperation, thus responding to the Doha mandate to examine the strengthening of UN institutional arrangements on tax matters.

However, before considering options such as those in the zero draft for Addis, or those in the Secretary General report under consideration, on setting-up new intergovernmental bodies or upgrading existing structures, every effort should be made to ensure that the existing Committee and sub-committees function in the most effective way. Last week we already expressed the view that we cannot agree to the upgrade of the UN Tax Committee. For the EU, the current format of a committee of independent experts, chosen on a broad international basis, is appropriate. We should not indulge in institutional proliferation, and rather focus on improving cooperation among existing bodies and making sure that all countries are in a position to participate and fully benefit from increased transparency at international level

It should be recalled that there are already a number of international fora pursuing similar objectives (ie the OECD Global Forum and joint task-force on tax and development, the UN

Committee of experts, the International Tax Compact and the International Tax Dialogue). In our view, strengthening institutional arrangements should not lead to the creation of competing fora.

Rather, the focus should be on improving cooperation among these bodies and priority should be to create synergies with on-going OECD activities. For example, progress in the implementation of international tax standards made through the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information has been steady. 125 countries, including emerging and developing countries are now part of the Global Forum, which conducts peer-reviews to assess progress in the implementation of the standards. Effective cooperation of the UN Committee of Tax Experts with OECD fora should aim at reinforcing this type of processes.

Also, increased dialogue and cooperation with regional fora such as the African Tax Administration Forum and the Inter-American Centre of Tax Administrations, IMF regional technical centres, and with related initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), could be further explored.

Mr President,

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that whilst domestic resource mobilization and enhancing fiscal capacity are essential for financing the attainment of sustainable development, the setting up of new intergovernmental bodies is not necessarily the most effective way in moving forward on this important issue. Identifying ways of creating synergies among existing fora, and directing resource commitments to areas where they can most effectively deliver results, will in our view remain the most appropriate way forward.

Thank you.