

U.S. Statement to ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

As delivered by Esther Pan Sloane, Adviser, ECOSOC Section, US Mission to the UN

April 22, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much to the panelists for sharing their tremendous expertise with us. We are also grateful for the informative update on the work of the tax committee.

With domestic resources dwarfing official development assistance in even the Least Developed Countries, mobilizing the domestic tax base and other revenues will clearly be key for lasting development. The United States remains a strong supporter of capacity-building assistance in revenue collection and management for developing countries. The U.S. has supported activities ranging from increasing the efficiency of established tax regimes through ICT programs in countries such as Egypt, El Salvador and Georgia to more foundational work such as establishing tax departments and assisting in formulating basic tax legislation and tax administrative capacity in newly independent states. The United States has also been an active participant in multilateral fora on tax issues as well. We have had an expert on the Committee since its inception, and support the efforts of the OECD as well as regional bodies such as the Inter-American Association of Tax Administrators (CIAT).

Regarding the structure and work of the Committee, the United States opposes the establishment of an intergovernmental body at the United Nations for international cooperation in tax matters, including through upgrading the existing Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. Such a body would substantially overlap with work that is already taking place in other contexts, such as the IMF, World Bank, African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), CIAT and the OECD. The work undertaken in these other contexts already takes into account the policy positions of both developed and developing countries.

The United States believes the current format has produced meaningful results and tools for developing countries, including the model tax convention and practical manuals, while minimizing duplication with the efforts of other fora. The Committee is already integrated into the work of the Economic and Social Council, following its reform. By continuing to do its work, it will help inform the Financing for Development conversation and debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, without needing to specifically align itself with those processes.

The United States is also unpersuaded of the need to significantly expand the membership of the Committee in its present status. While its 25 members act in an individual expert capacity, they bring a diversity of views and background to the Committee, representing all of the major geographic regions of the United Nations and highly varied economies. Although the Committee is linked to the Economic and Social Council, roughly half its experts are citizens of countries not presently members of ECOSOC. The Committee is both diverse enough to represent a wide variety of views and expertise and small enough to reach consensus on potentially thorny

issues. While the Committee should continue to consult broadly and openly, perhaps seeking new opportunities to engage with countries and experts that have not yet engaged with it, we see insufficient justification for a formal expansion of the Committee.

Thank you for allowing us to share our views. The United States looks forward to continuing our ongoing discussion and cooperation on international taxation issues.