

Side Event at the First Global Conference of the Platform for Collaboration on Tax
UN Headquarters, New York City, 14 – 16 February 2018, 08h30 to 09h30

Raising Domestic Revenues for Development: The Addis Tax Initiative



Moderator and Presenter:

Wiebe Anema

Coordinating Policy Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Jasmin Froehling

Coordinator, International Tax Compact

Panelists:

Elfrieda Stewart Tamba

Commissioner General, Liberia Revenue Authority

Steven Rozner

Senior Fiscal Advisor, Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, & Environment, USAID

Essa Jallow

Deputy Commissioner General/Commissioner of Domestic Taxes, Gambia Revenue Authority

Hannah Schmelzer

Senior Policy Officer, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Mari Khurtsidze

Head of International Taxation Division, Tax Policy Department, Ministry of Finance, Georgia

Gunilla Naesman

Senior Advisor, Tax and Customs Department, Ministry of Finance, Sweden

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Short Summary

The two co-chairs of the ATI Steering Committee, Elfrieda Tamba (Liberia) and Steven Rozner (USA), opened the side event by introducing the newly inaugurated ATI Steering Committee members for the 2017/18 term: Essa Jallow (The Gambia), Marine Khurtsidze (Georgia), Hannah Schmelzer (Germany), Gunilla Naesman (Sweden).

Mr Rozner briefly outlined the 2017/18 ATI work plan, which has a clear focus on involving ATI members more robustly into the further development of the Initiative, particularly by establishing the ATI consultative groups. These three consultative groups (one per ATI commitment) are established with the aim of organising and executing activities to support the fulfilment of the ATI commitments. All ATI signatories are invited to actively participate in one or multiple consultative group(s). A kick-off session to initialise the consultative groups and deliberate on the possible scope of work was held during the Third ATI meeting on 13 February 2018 in New York City. Concrete deliverables for the coming year will be defined by each consultative group in coordination with the ATI Steering Committee.

On behalf of the International Tax Compact, which facilitates the secretariat for the ATI, Ms Jasmin Froehling presented preliminary results from the 2016 Monitoring of ATI Commitment 1 (“Collectively doubling technical cooperation in the area of DRM by 2020”). With 341 million USD disbursed to support DRM in 2016, there was a significant increase in funding compared to the 2015 baseline of 223 million USD. However, these numbers will be subject to changes, given that the validation of the data by ATI development partners had not yet been completed until the end of February. The results of the 2018 monitoring exercise will be published in three separate ATI Monitoring briefs - one per ATI commitment - throughout 2018. The monitoring brief for ATI commitment 1 will be published in March and the briefs covering commitments 2 and 3 are expected for autumn and fall 2018, respectively. The data underlying the ATI monitoring can be accessed in the DRM database at drm.taxcompact.net.

During the subsequent panel discussion, all six ATI Steering Committee members provided their perspective on international cooperation to support the mobilisation of domestic revenues in 2018. The panel agreed that in order to take up the responsibility for the commitments have been agreed upon, ATI development partners should increase the coordination of support to DRM while partner countries remain in the drivers’ seat. The Addis Tax Initiative was recognised as ideally positioned to support making informed decisions in this respect.

Mr Jallow (The Gambia) emphasised the critical requirement to align efforts to reform tax systems with the respective overall development strategies. Supporting this view, Ms Tamba (Liberia) and Ms Khurtsidze (Georgia) both pointed out that the conduction of a TADAT assessment provides a solid and useful groundwork to develop a DRM strategy (the partner countries represented in the ATI Steering Committee already developed their DRM strategies based on a TADAT assessment or are planning to conduct an assessment in 2018).

Ms Schmelzer (GER) confirmed that, as was the case during their 2017 G20 presidency, DRM remains a high priority in Germany’s approach to fostering sustainable development in partner countries. As part of their increased efforts to support DRM in partner countries, Ms Naesman (Sweden) announced to hold a conference on capacity building in the tax area in Stockholm from 30 to 31 May 2018. Invitations to the event have been extended to the Ministries of Finance of numerous countries (including all ATI members).