

Remarks by

Ms. Carmel Peters,

Former Co-Chairperson, UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (2017-2021) and Policy Manager, Inland Revenue, New Zealand

And

Mr. Eric Mensah,

Former Co-Chairperson, UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (2017-2021)

Virtual Panel Discussion and Launch Event
7 October 2021, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (New York time)

Carmel Peters

Distinguished speakers,
dear participants,

My Co-Chair Eric and I are honoured to take the virtual podium today, to officially launch the seven new publications of the United Nations Tax Committee.

When we decided on our work plan in 2017, we knew it was ambitious. In 2020, in light of the outbreak of the global pandemic and the ensuing social and economic crisis all over the world, it seemed almost an impossible one to deliver.

But the Committee and the Subcommittees quickly adjusted to shelter-in-place orders. We all adapted to working virtually. We faced and overcame challenges of working from different time zones, and with constantly changing technology.

Eric and I are here on behalf of the 2017 to 2021 Committee, a group of 25 people from all over the world. In the past four years, we have worked together, discussed, agreed and sometimes honestly disagreed with each other. We always worked with a collegial spirit and perseverance in navigating some contentious issues and delivering balanced outcomes.

Today, we are proud to say that “we did it.” We look forward to seeing our guidance products distributed as widely as possible – to tax administrations and taxpayers in developing countries, and with benefit to the international tax system as a whole.

Most of the publications are already available in English. The others will follow once professional editing by tax experts is complete. To further ensure wide accessibility, translations are under way. We are delighted that a few of the publications launched today are already available online in English, French and Spanish.

We know that the Financing for Sustainable Development Office and partners will continue and expand its use of the publications in the UNDESA capacity development program going forward. Indeed, some of the publications benefitted from feedback on draft chapters used in capacity development workshops. Other chapters originated from earlier capacity development activities, which surfaced pressing needs for particular guidance.

We count on all of the participants in today's event to join in distributing these products as widely as possible in your respective organizations and fields of work.

Eric, over to you.

Eric Mensah

Thank you, Carmel.

As my Co-Chair has described, the Tax Committee has completed a tremendous amount of quality work in the past four years. We want to stress, the Members could not have done this without the support of observers to the Committee work and participants in the Subcommittees, as well as the Secretariat.

We want to thank all the observers involved in the Committee's work and participants in the multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary Subcommittees. You have added great insight, practicality, focus and value to the Committee's work. This inclusivity improves the quality of the guidance and is part of what makes the work of the Tax Committee so special. We appreciate you for lending us your time and great expertise.

We thank the Secretariat of the Tax Committee in UNDESA for its steadfast and agile support during the last four years, on all fronts, substantive, technical, organizational, logistical. We greatly benefitted from the strengthening of the Secretariat and its effective support to the Committee, in part due to generous financial contributions of Norway, as well as valued support from the Government of India and the European Union.

While we served in our personal capacities as members of the Tax Committee, we also all had "day jobs." Thus, we want to add a word of thanks for the gracious understanding of our employers, in most cases our Ministry of Finance or our countries' tax administration. We take this as another sign of UN Member States' willingness to invest in the important work of the UN Tax Committee.

Now, we are delighted to share with you a short video introduction to these results of the 2017-2021 Committee Membership. We are proud of all these practical and developing country-oriented products, and of the collegial and problem-solving spirit that produced them.