
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Africa Steps Up Fight Against Illicit Financial Flows at AU High-Level Meeting in Abuja

The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Nigeria Revenue Service, has officially kicked off the 5th Session of the Sub-Committee on Tax and Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) under the Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration (STC-FMAEPI), in Abuja. Theme: “Building the Africa We Want Through Tax and Fiscal Policy Reforms to Support Economic Growth and Domestic Resource Mobilization.”



The session brings together policymakers, tax administrators, development partners, and experts from across the continent to advance coordinated strategies aimed at strengthening tax systems, enhancing domestic resource mobilization, and combating illicit financial flows critical to financing Africa’s development.

Opening the session, Dr. Zacch Adedeji, Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service, reaffirmed Nigeria’s commitment to advancing effective tax administration and strengthening collaboration across African countries to improve revenue systems and curb illicit financial flows.

Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Adebayo Olawale Edun, Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, emphasized the central role of fiscal reforms in driving economic transformation, stating, “*Strong domestic resource mobilization and effective tax systems are essential to building resilient economies and financing Africa’s future.*”

Representing the African Union Commission, H.E. Mrs. Francisca Tatchouop Belobe, Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry, and Minerals, expressed appreciation to the Government of Nigeria for hosting the session and underscored the importance of collective action, noting: “*By strengthening tax systems and addressing illicit financial flows, Africa can mobilize its own resources, finance its priorities, and build resilient, self-sustaining economies.*”

Additional opening statements were delivered by Ms. Chenai Mukumba, Executive Director of the Tax Justice Network Africa; Ms. Mary Baine, Executive Secretary of the African Tax Administration Forum; and Dr. Timo Voipio, Senior

Advisor on Taxation and Domestic Resource Mobilization at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who emphasized the need for strengthened institutional capacity, transparency, and coordinated international cooperation to effectively address illicit financial flows.

Illicit financial flows continue to deprive Africa of critical resources needed for development. Strengthening tax systems and enhancing fiscal governance remain essential to improving public revenue, supporting inclusive growth, and reducing dependency on external financing.

Throughout the week, the meeting will feature a series of high-level panel discussions and technical sessions focused on advancing tax and fiscal reforms across the continent.

A High-Level Panel Discussion on the theme *“Building the Africa We Want through Tax and Fiscal Policy Reforms to Support Economic Growth and Domestic Resource Mobilization”* will bring together perspectives from African Tax Administration Forum, Tax Justice Network Africa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the Nigeria Revenue Service to examine practical reform priorities, including broadening tax bases, improving tax administration, addressing illicit financial flows, and aligning national reforms with continental and global tax initiatives.



Subsequent sessions will focus on:

- Domestic policy reforms and progress on the implementation of previous STC recommendations;
- The work of the Joint Technical Committee on Tax and enhanced collaboration with the STC Sub-Committee;
- Combating illicit financial flows through comprehensive tax system reforms, including country case studies;
- Addressing Value Added Tax (VAT) challenges in the context of the digital and global economy;
- Progress on international tax cooperation within the United Nations framework;
- Taxation of the digital economy and emerging policy approaches;
- Strengthening fiscal oversight through Supreme Audit Institutions and Public Accounts Committees, facilitated by supreme audit institutions; and
- Leveraging beneficial ownership data and regional data sharing to

strengthen tax governance and domestic resource mobilization.

The session is expected to deliver actionable recommendations to support Member States in strengthening tax policy and administration, improving transparency, and advancing coordinated continental responses to illicit financial flows.

As Africa advances the implementation of Agenda 2063, the meeting reinforces the continent's commitment to building resilient, self-reliant economies anchored in effective fiscal systems and sustainable domestic financing.

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