

UN Tax Convention Now! Rewrite the Global Tax Rules to Work for People and the Planet

Preamble

1. We, the people of Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka) convened as members of grassroots peoples' movements, experts from academia and public sector institutions, alongside fellow Global South allies, gathered in Manila, the Philippines, from the 20th to the 22nd of June 2024 for a Multi-Stakeholders' Forum and Asia Strategy Workshop under the theme of **"UN Tax Convention Now! Rewrite the Global Tax Rules to Work for People and the Planet."** The conference was jointly organised by the *Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ)* and *Tax and Fiscal Justice-Asia (TAFJA)*, in collaboration with the *Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)* and *Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)*. We are troubled with the rising inequality across the region, abetted by massive tax abuses, as well as the need to raise domestic resource mobilisation to finance just and equitable development and climate action. Tax justice is in dire straits.
2. We declare our shared commitment to push for decisive action by our governments to ensure that the system of international taxation eliminates, rather than reinforces, vast inequalities. We demand a UN Tax Convention that addresses issues of tax & gender justice, illicit financial flows, profit shifting, and tax evasion and abuse.

The Path to a Strong UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation

3. As stakeholders from Asia and the broader Global South allies, we have long fought for the establishment of a UN Tax Convention which rectifies the failures of international tax cooperation. The failures of global tax rules cost governments over 1 billion US dollars every day to tax abuse committed by multinational corporations and wealthy individuals. This hinders the abilities of our governments to raise the revenues needed to finance quality public services, ensure human rights, and deliver urgent climate action. It exacerbates inequalities within and between countries and disproportionately burdens the peoples and countries of the Global South. As such, we urgently call for a comprehensive, inclusive, and just UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, which is long overdue.
4. We assert that Asian and Global South countries stand to benefit immensely from the UN Tax Convention. The upcoming UN process is a historic opportunity to transform the outmoded international tax architecture which features deep structural inequalities and is rooted in colonialism and imperialism. A one-country-one-vote process at the UN allows member states a more open opportunity to address these issues.
5. We recognize that the UN is a diverse platform that brings together various viewpoints and experiences of both the Global South and North. It is critical that peoples' movements actively assert their rights by engaging in the UN negotiations and with their national governments to rewrite global tax rules.
6. We applaud the progress made in advancing the UN Tax Convention process. Following the historic vote at the UN in November 2023, a resolution was adopted to begin the process of establishing a UN Tax Convention. The success of the resolution demonstrates the strong demand from peoples and countries of the Global South for a meaningful voice on global tax rules; a voice which they have historically been

denied. In February 2024, the Ad Hoc Committee was established. Then, this past April and May, negotiations on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Convention took place, marking another step towards democratic, genuinely inclusive global tax governance.

7. We note the harmful efforts of the ADB, IMF, and World Bank to push the OECD's discredited and stalled BEPS Framework onto Global South countries. The BEPS Framework suffers from a lack of legitimacy on the international stage. It fails to provide real solutions to combat illicit financial flows and tax abuse committed by multinational corporations and wealthy individuals.
8. We know that the months leading towards August are critical to delivering on tax justice. At the UN Headquarters from 29 July to 16 August 2024, member countries will come together to discuss the [zero draft ToR](#). The ToR provides a strong draft which the tax justice movement can defend and strengthen during the second round of negotiations. We must act now for a transparent and inclusive tax negotiations process where all governments can participate on equal footing.

Our Calls for the Next Round of Negotiations in July

9. As a broad coalition of civil society organisations, grassroots peoples' movements, and stakeholders from diverse walks of life, we want a UN Tax Convention to provide adequate tax bases that can guarantee our human rights and advance social, environmental, and gender justice. We demand that the voices and interests of the Global South take priority in the negotiations and that states respect, protect, and fulfil the right to participation by being inclusive, democratic, transparent and accountable.
10. We call on governments in the Global South to act in unison and overcome the divide-and-rule tactics of the OECD countries by continuing to advance an ambitious ToR. It is only through this unity of the G77 and the Africa Group that the OECD member states will be compelled to remain at the negotiating table.
11. We demand that governments work together to deliver a UN Tax Convention ToR that is anchored firmly on tax justice principles. A strong ToR is one that establishes the link between tax policies and the financing of international goals, obligations and commitments. This includes, but is not limited to, human rights, gender equality, quality public services for all, the promotion of well-being and quality of life, sustainable development, environmental protection and climate action, and increasing equality within and between countries.
12. We demand that principles of fairness, equity, progressivity, transparency, effectiveness, and international cooperation be explicitly stated in the Preamble of the ToR and foreground the negotiation process. The ToR must advance gender equality by mainstreaming gender transformative action starting with addressing the inherent gender bias in the international tax architecture.
13. We call on our fellow peoples' movements and civil society members to demand that our national governments champion a UN Tax Convention based on these principles. The present international tax architecture is the product of colonial domination, a relationship which persists to the present day. It is imperative that all peoples who stand for the principles of human rights, equity, fairness, and transparency unite and take decisive action to rewrite the rules to finally work for people and the planet.

Signatories:

The Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ)
Tax and Fiscal Justice - Asia (TAFJA)
Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)
Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC)
Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF)
SANLAKAS
Oriang Women's Movement
Philippine Movement on Climate Justice (PMCJ)
Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
South Asia Alliance on Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC)
Tax Justice Network Africa
Center for New Economic Order Japan
AKSI! For Gender, Social, and Ecological Justice
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)
Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ)
Migrant Forum Asia (MFA)
Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN)
Publish What You Pay Indonesia (PWYP)

Contact Persons:

- GATJ Media Contact: Alexandra Wenzel alexandra@globaltaxjustice.org
- TAFJA Media Contact: Becky Lozada becky.apmdd@gmail.com