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February 5, 2026, Article 8 - Harmful tax practices
Intervention by Ryad Selmani, CCFD Terre Solidaire

Thank you, Mister Chair.
Distinguished delegates,

As we continue to call for ambition in this Convention, the discussion on Article 8 gives us the opportunity to reflect on the very foundations of this Convention. Harmful tax practices are not a peripheral issue. They are one of the clearest symptoms of a global tax system that has failed to deliver meaningful cooperation. The very reason we are here today is because the practices of a privileged few countries continue to impact the fiscal sovereignty of the majority.

We are here because the tax policies of a small number of jurisdictions—through preferential regimes, shell companies, deduction regimes, or carefully designed **harmful** incentives—have direct and harmful effects on all the others. These practices ultimately hamper the basic but powerful ability of most countries particularly of the Global South to sovereignly raise sufficient tax revenues to fund their development, their public services, or fight against climate change etc…

In the meantime, the concept of *"harmful"* has been weaponised as a political tool. We have witnessed exclusive clubs of wealthy nations (no need here to give names) establish blacklists that disproportionately target the Global South, while systematically overlooking harmful practices within their own borders, fueling again and again a global race to the bottom. We see this tendency to "North-South divide" in the room here today as well, and we see OECD countries trying to reduce the level of ambition in this paragraph. However, keeping in mind that most OECD countries are themselves losing vast sums of resources due to harmful tax practices, this makes absolutely no sense to us.

We must also confront the reality that harmful tax competition keeps evolving. The most recent and concrete example is the OECD side-by-side agreement, which not only gives us a supplementary reason to urgently make this Convention a success, but that without a doubt opens new avenues for tax competition through substance-based exemptions and targeted tax credits. These measures risk reproducing the very same dynamics we claim to be addressing—only under new labels.

Furthermore, the definition of harmful tax practices under Article 8 should be aligned with existing United Nations principles and commitments as we believe that "harmful" must also be understood in an extensive and holistic manner. Tax practices that undermine a state's ability to fulfil its social, environmental, and human rights obligations are harmful by definition…It cannot be confined to a narrow assessment of economic effects alone.

This Convention cannot settle for best practices or voluntary guidelines. Cooperation without compliance is not cooperation. If agreed standards are optional, or if non-cooperative jurisdictions face no consequences, harmful practices will persist. Not only article 8, but the overall architecture of this Convention must therefore rest on a strong legal foundation, supported by robust, transparent, and collectively agreed compliance mechanisms.

Finally, we must reject the false dichotomy between cooperation and sovereignty. True sovereignty is the ability of a state to fund its own development, free from the tax-dodging strategies of multinational enterprises and the secrecy of non-cooperative jurisdictions.This Convention offers a historic opportunity to build a tax system where every country’s right to tax is protected—through shared rules, mutual accountability, and genuine multilateralism. **Even on tax matters, cooperation is not a limitation on sovereignty—it is its necessary condition.** Thank you.