

Launch of the Government of Finland's Taxation for Development Action Programme 2020-2023, 9 June 2020

Dear Minister Skinnari, Dear Director-General Santala, Dear Mr Wort,

Dear government colleagues, representatives of the media, civil society, the academia,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

On suuri ilo saada käyttää pieni tervehdyspuheenvuoro tänään. Itselleni sekä verotukseen että kehitykseen liittyvät kysymykset ovat olleet pitkään tärkeitä. Onkin upeaa, että Suomi kulkee eturintamassa näiden kysymysten pohtimisessa!

Tunnustus on paikallaan myös Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuudelle, joka edisti komission esitystä julkisesta maakohtaisista raportoinnista. Silloin määräenemmistöä ei löytynyt, joten keskustelua verovälttelyn torjunnasta tarvitaan.

I am delighted to address the launch of Finland's Taxation for Development Action Programme for 2020-2023.

It is a pity that I can only be with you virtually, and not in person.

Today's launch highlights how Finland and the EU's vision on fair taxation align.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has stressed that one of the key foundations of our social market economy is that everybody pays their fair share.

There are challenges that we face with as a Union, focusing on policies on our home continent.

But, same time these challenges also translate into our international partnerships.

For real and sustainable development, countries need to have – not only the vital development aid and support – but also their own resources, investments, and fiscal systems and institutions that work.

We need to put domestic public finance at the heart of efforts to achieve inclusive growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All efforts on the collection side need to work alongside value for money and accountability of money spent.

This is critical for achieving our goals of inclusive growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The European Commission is committed to work for these goals and we have already done a lot.

But, instead of looking any further backwards, I want to look to the future and make three brief points.

- First, we must address more forcefully inequalities in our efforts on public finance management and taxation. Fiscal policy can be very powerful – both on revenue and expenditure.
- Secondly, we need to renew our political commitments under the Addis Tax Initiative post 2020. I am glad that the Government of Finland remains committed to the Initiative. We need commitments to equitable tax systems, policy coherence and the fight against illicit financial flows.
- Thirdly, we should include debt relief in our efforts. Pandemic is putting huge stress on public finances and debt sustainability of many developing countries. If we are to “build back better”, as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres put it, we need all sources of financing for development.

Let me conclude by thanking the new Finnish programme on Taxation for Development.

We see eye to eye on our priorities on domestic revenue mobilisation and fighting Illicit Financial Flows in the world and Africa in particular.

Uskon, että olemme yhtä mieltä myös siitä, että vain yhteistyössä, monenkeskisiä välineitä hyödyntäen nousemme tästä kriisistä ja pääsemme kohti vihreämpää, reilumpaa ja kestävämpää tulevaisuutta.

Kiitos, and thank you!