



# SECRETARIAT OF WATAF SECRÉTARIAT DU FAFOA SECRETARIADO DO FAFOA

## 6<sup>TH</sup> HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE

### IMPROVING TAX SYSTEMS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

11-13 September 2024

Bissau, Guinea Bissau

The 6th High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) of the West African Tax Administration Forum (WATAF) was held in Bissau, Guinea Bissau, from 11-13 September 2024 under the theme ***"Improving Tax Systems to Promote Economic Growth and Social Development in Africa."*** This event saw participation from tax administrations across West Africa, international organisations, development partners, and tax professionals. The deliberations focused on improving the effectiveness of tax systems in West Africa through knowledge management, ethics, governance, taxpayer services, and international cooperation. The dialogue underscored the critical role of tax systems in driving economic growth, governance stability, and sustainable development across the region.

#### **Outcome Statement:**

Following in-depth discussions, participants recognised the importance of robust tax systems in promoting sustainable development. The dialogue highlighted the need to institutionalise knowledge management, establish a culture of ethics and integrity, and build resilient tax administrations across the region. The dialogue emphasised the importance of adequate taxpayer services and education, and international cooperation in achieving improved tax compliance and resource mobilisation for economic growth. A significant milestone during the dialogue was the launch of the **WATAF Domestic Revenue Mobilisation (DRM) Framework**. This framework provides member states with comprehensive guidance to strengthen their national DRM strategies, aligning tax policies with national development agendas and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Resolutions:

1. Delegates emphasised that tax administrations must institutionalise knowledge management practices to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The delegates urged revenue authorities to prioritise collaboration among their human resources, IT, and tax training departments to establish systems that foster continuous learning and knowledge sharing within their organisations.
2. It was resolved that integrity is crucial for building taxpayer trust and fostering voluntary compliance. Tax administrations across West Africa are called to fully adopt the **ECOWAS Model Code of Ethics for Tax Administrations** and implement sustainable integrity frameworks that promote fairness, transparency, and accountability.
3. Recognising the importance of taxpayer services in promoting compliance, it was agreed that tax processes should be simplified to ensure greater accessibility and efficiency. Tax authorities were urged to engage taxpayers through education, providing clear and timely information on tax legislation, and ensuring that their services are user-friendly to support voluntary compliance.
4. Delegates resolved that resilient tax systems are essential for navigating governance and economic challenges. It was agreed that reforms must focus on strengthening governance frameworks, improving transparency, and fostering accountability in tax administrations. This would ensure that tax systems are capable of withstanding external shocks and maintaining legitimacy.
5. Participants reaffirmed the importance of DRM in achieving the SDGs and called for stronger alignment of tax policies with broader development goals. They emphasised the need for tax policy reforms that expand the tax base, improve compliance, and promote inclusive growth in the region.

Delegates formally adopted the WATAF Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Framework and encouraged all member countries to utilise it in developing their national DRM strategies. The framework serves as a guide for improving revenue mobilisation, expanding tax bases, and aligning tax systems with development objectives.

6. The dialogue concluded that international cooperation is essential for strengthening tax systems. It was resolved that West African tax administrations should enhance cross-border collaboration through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and

participation in international tax organisations to tackle common challenges and improve tax compliance.

The 6th WATAF High-Level Policy Dialogue concluded with a commitment from all participants to implement these resolutions in their respective jurisdictions. The delegates expressed their appreciation to the **Direção Geral de Contribuições e Impostos (DGCI)** and the **Government of Guinea Bissau** for hosting the event.

Done in Bissau, 13 September 2024.

