

Kieswetter elected vice chair of African tax forum

South African Revenue Service (Sars) commissioner, Edward Kieswetter, has been appointed vice chair of the Africa Initiative by the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes.



Sars commissioner Edward Kieswetter

The Africa Initiative is a programme of work focusing on tax transparency and exchange of information (EOI) in Africa. It was launched during the plenary meeting of the Global Forum on 28 October 2014 in Berlin by African members of the Global Forum, along with other partners.

Initially launched for a three-year period (2015-2017), the Initiative was renewed in 2017 to cover the years 2018 to 2020, and then renewed again for three years from 2021 to 2023.

Two pillars

Since its launch in 2014, the Africa Initiative has accentuated two strategic pillars to strengthen the benefits of tax transparency and EOI in Africa.

“The first pillar aims to raise political awareness about the benefits of tax transparency and EOI, in order to gain the necessary political buy-in and commitment from African decision makers.

“This has taken place through high-level events in Africa, as well as meetings with African cabinet ministers and partners, during which tax transparency is promoted,” Sars said in a statement.

The second pillar of the Africa Initiative aims to create awareness and build the capacity of tax administrations in tax transparency and EOI. Working with its partners, the Global Forum Secretariat assists African countries to strengthen their legal framework to ensure availability and access to information relevant for tax purposes.

“It also helps to set up equipped and skilled EOI units, as well as to provide training to officials, including tax auditors to effectively use EOI instruments to tackle tax evasion and illicit financial flows, and eventually

increase domestic revenue collection,” said Sars.

For 2021 and beyond, the Africa Initiative will:

- Continue to build political awareness throughout Africa;
- Help new members implement the Core Stage of tax transparency and EOI;
- Consolidate the progress achieved by members since 2014;
- Increase its efforts on transparency of beneficial ownership information and the automatic exchange of information (AEOI);
- Explore with interested members enhanced building blocks, such as the cross-border recovery of tax claims.

The Africa Initiative is open to all African countries and currently has 32 African member jurisdictions. Countries participating in the Initiative have committed to meeting specific and measurable targets in implementing and using the international tax transparency standards.

Kieswetter stressed the importance of tax transparency and cross-border exchange of tax information to ensure greater tax compliance.

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