

A week in DC

Published: January 13, 2026, 8:58 am

My week in DC is not yet over: I have some meetings still to do, but my on-line week nearly is. I admit it's too early to appraise all that has happened. But I'll offer first thoughts.

First highlight: [World Bank MD](#) Ngozi Ikonjo-Iweala calling for mass civil society action against illicit financial flows. Has the Bank got the issue? I think so.

Second, constructive dialogue with the Oxford team. I hope we can build on it.

Third, clear rejection of the view put forward by some economists that data prevents analysis of this issue or that there is even no issue at all. I think those who tried this line of arguing lost a lot of credibility.

Fourth, good support for progressive thinking e.g. on unitary taxation.

Fifth, some good focus on other areas e.g. human trafficking.

Sixth, the clear impression the Bank is committed to work in this area.

That was a good outcome at the Bank. It was a stressed two days, but in the end the effort in getting this far was well worthwhile — the programme for tackling abuse has moved forward.

And the Task Force? Better still. Highlights: Carl Levin, Lord Brennan, the economist's panel soundly rejecting the idea there is no issue to address, the session on asset recovery that brought this down to the nuts and bolts of getting cash for development, some say my own session on country by country reporting (I admit, I greatly enjoyed it), and more. Unlike the Bank there wasn't a duff presentation — not one. Many were superb. And with the Norwegian government re-elected this week their commitment to this work continues. Which is great news.

And why do this? As Tom Cardamone of GFI said in his closing comments: this all comes down to one word, which is justice. Justice for the poor of this world. That's the start,

the middle and the end of this work. I hate travelling — and I love my home. But the hassle of an event like this is worth it if we can help deliver real results. Nothing happens overnight in this sector, but my opinion is we are making progress against abuse; abuse that comes in many forms. And that is the motivation in all of this.