

The OECD, tax and the development of the effective stat...

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After more than 30 years the OECD held its first joint meeting of its development and tax committees yesterday. And as Jeffrey Owens, head of tax at the OECD has acknowledged this morning in discussions I'm attending, that was the result of civil society pressure.

Key things learned so far. They have said:

We have a common understanding of the central role taxation plays in development and poverty reduction: a strong tax system is the heart of a country's financial independence, its revenues are the lifeblood of the state.

This is a vital statement: this issue is much, much broader than a simple issue of corporate accountability, or information exchange, or simple technical assistance. This is about effective state building.

This is as important:

We also agree taxation is more than just about revenue mobilisation. The way in which revenues are collected and spent defines the symbiotic relationship between the state and its citizens, strengthening the former and making it more accountable to the latter.

A good start.