



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

MEDIA RELEASE

Global Forum 10th Anniversary Plenary Meeting 26-27 November 2019



Recently Revenue Management Division of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Management participated at the OECD's Global Forum Plenary Meeting on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (the Global Forum).

Over 500 delegates from more than 140 jurisdictions, international organisations and regional groups attended. 40 delegations were represented at Ministerial level.

Representatives from the financial services sector, the academic community and the media also participated in the first day of the meeting. This reaffirmed the international community's strong support for the tax transparency agenda and the work carried out by the Global Forum.

To mark the Global Forum's 10-year anniversary, on the first meeting day Ministers and other high-level representatives recalled the progress made and the widespread impact the transparency agenda has had in fighting tax evasion and avoidance. Banking secrecy has been dismantled with close to 100 jurisdictions now automatically exchanging information on financial accounts each year. Through voluntary disclosure programmes and tax investigations, Global Forum members have already identified EUR 102 billion in additional revenues (tax, interest, and penalties).

The work of the Global Forum focuses on ensuring the effective implementation of the automatic exchange of financial account information (the AEOI Standard) and of the exchange of information on request (the EOIR Standard). The Cook Islands has successfully implemented both. Last year almost 90 jurisdictions automatically exchanged information on 47 million financial accounts worth approximately EUR 4.9 trillion. 2019 is the third year of exchanges under the AEOI Standard and 94 jurisdictions are now exchanging financial account information.

This year under the AEOI Standard, Revenue Management Division has provided 44 jurisdictions with financial account information relating to over 22,000 financial accounts. As such, a number of follow up requests are being made on an annual basis under the EOIR Standard.

This year for the first time, the Cook Islands received financial account information from 31 jurisdictions which related to over 2,500 financial accounts held worldwide. Finance Minister Mark Brown said "We did give people plenty of time in 2017 to declare their incomes held in overseas accounts. The AEOI systems that we are part of means you cannot hide your income, if everyone paid their share of tax then we could look at reducing tax rates and that is fair to everyone". The Revenue Management Division's Director Xavier Mitchell said "where relevant we are now exploring how best to use this information to ensure everyone pays their fair share of tax on their worldwide income in the Cook Islands".

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