



16TH COUNTRY CORRESPONDENT CONFERENCE

18 – 20 FEBRUARY 2026

THE MARRIOTT MELROSE ARCH HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

OUTCOME STATEMENT

The 16th ATAF Country Correspondent Conference was convened from 18 to 20 February 2026 at the Marriott Melrose Arch Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Conference brought together 65 participants, including 37 Country Correspondents representing ATAF's 44 Member Countries, the Chairman and Executive Secretary of ATAF, and Secretariat staff across all departments.

Meeting at a time of increasing fiscal pressure across the continent, participants recognised that rising debt burdens, declining external assistance, and widening development financing gaps have reinforced the centrality of domestic resource mobilisation to Africa's fiscal sovereignty and sustainable development.

1. The Strategic Role of Country Correspondents

The Conference reaffirmed that Country Correspondents are strategic partners and the cornerstone of ATAF's impact. They serve as the bridge between continental ambition and national implementation, ensuring that ATAF's programmes translate into institutional reform and measurable country-level results.

Participants recognised that the effectiveness of ATAF's mandate depends fundamentally on active, empowered, and well-positioned Country Correspondents within Member administrations.

2. From Strategy to Results

The Conference examined ATAF's 2026 Work Plan through a member-centric lens, focusing on relevance, delivery, and accountability.

- **Relevance** - Participants reaffirmed the importance of aligning ATAF's programmes with national reform priorities. They acknowledged the tangible impact of ATAF's interventions, including technical assistance missions, strengthened transfer pricing audits, risk analysis initiatives, compliance improvements, and policy reforms that generated significant additional tax revenue in Member Countries. Programmes must respond to concrete institutional needs and be informed by operational realities.
- **Delivery** - With regard to delivery, the Conference agreed that strengthening programme uptake and measurable impact requires a more deliberate and coordinated approach to implementation. Participants emphasised the need to ensure earlier circulation of programmes and knowledge products in order to accommodate internal approval processes within tax administrations. They further agreed that programme scheduling and invoicing should be better aligned with national fiscal calendars to enhance participation and financial predictability. The Conference also called for stronger, structured nomination and participation processes within administrations to ensure that opportunities are matched with the appropriate technical units and reform priorities. In addition, participants supported the expansion of customised and country-specific technical assistance, alongside the systematic use of Country Profiles to tailor interventions more precisely to national contexts. Greater emphasis on applied, interactive formats was also encouraged to enhance operational effectiveness and knowledge retention. Participants underscored that measurable outcomes will depend not on ambition alone, but on coordinated execution, timely communication, and sustained follow-up at country level.
- **Accountability and Financial Sustainability** - The Conference recognised financial sustainability as a strategic priority for ATAF's long-term effectiveness and institutional credibility. Membership fees were reaffirmed not as symbolic contributions, but as investments in collective African capability and in the shared objective of strengthening tax systems across the continent. To reinforce this principle, participants agreed to strengthen follow-up mechanisms on outstanding contributions and to improve the alignment of invoicing with domestic budget cycles in order to

enhance predictability and facilitate timely payments. They further committed to enhancing communication of ATAF's value proposition to national leadership, including Ministries of Finance, and to increasing high-level engagement to reinforce political buy-in and ownership. In addition, participants emphasised the importance of defining clear performance indicators at project inception and strengthening monitoring and evaluation frameworks to demonstrate tangible return on investment. The possibility of differentiating access to certain benefits based on good standing was also considered as a means of encouraging compliance and fairness. Overall, predictable financial contributions were recognised as essential to sustaining the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 and ensuring programme continuity, quality, and impact.

3. Alignment with Member Priorities

Country Correspondents reaffirmed the continued relevance of priority areas including international taxation, transfer pricing, digital economy taxation, extractive industries, audit strengthening, and capacity development.

The Conference further identified emerging areas of importance, including tax arrears management, carbon credit taxation, and evaluation of tax expenditures.

Participants agreed to institutionalise structured consultation mechanisms during annual work plan development and to leverage ATAF's comparative advantage as Africa's specialised tax platform.

4. Adoption of the Country Correspondent Collaboration Framework

The Conference formally adopted the revised Country Correspondent Terms of Reference. The adopted framework clarifies roles, strengthens accountability, institutionalises continuity through designation of alternates, and reinforces structured engagement with the Secretariat.

Participants committed to operationalising the framework and intensifying advocacy and coordination at national level.

5. Strengthening Visibility and Global Positioning

The Conference emphasised the importance of enhancing ATAF's visibility within Member Countries and in international tax governance platforms.

Participants agreed to promote structured country engagement, strengthen collaboration with Ministries of Finance, enhance internal communication within administrations, and amplify ATAF's achievements through strategic outreach.

6. Operationalizing Continuous Engagement

The Conference introduced a new Country Correspondent Collaboration Platform to institutionalise continuous engagement, strengthen real-time coordination, and track implementation of commitments.

Participants welcomed this initiative as a practical tool to sustain momentum beyond the Conference.

7. Conclusion

The 16th ATAF Country Correspondent Conference marked a significant step in strengthening ATAF's member-centric engagement model.

Participants reaffirmed their collective commitment to enhancing programme uptake, strengthening financial sustainability, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring that ATAF's interventions translate into measurable institutional change at country level.

ATAF's impact is ultimately determined by its effectiveness in supporting stronger, more resilient, and more trusted tax administrations across Africa.

Done in Johannesburg, this 20th day of February 2026.