

## TAKE ACTION – May 2007

### Tackling transparency and accountability

**TAKE ACTION:** This month we write to the Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn (1 Palace Street, London. SW1E 5HE) to urge the UK government to report on its spending on Child Survival, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

**1) Congratulate** Hilary Benn for supporting the passage of the landmark International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Bill.

**2) Stress** the importance of improving transparency and accountability, particularly as the UK government's development budget continues to grow.

**3) Encourage** the Secretary of State to view the upcoming annual meeting of the OECD statistics and monitoring division as a prime opportunity to establish channels for reporting back on spending on Child Survival, Malaria and TB, and to further illustrate the UK's commitment to improving the transparency of international development assistance.

**4) Emphasise** that this will allow the UK to be fully recognised for the leadership role it is currently playing in the fight against the diseases of poverty and the Millennium Development Goals in general.

**5) Ask** for a response and copy your letter your local MP and to the UK OECD ambassador, David Lyscom, UK Delegation to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 140 Avenue Victor Hugo, 75116 Paris, France.

#### Background

*As we know, strong and effective advocacy largely depends on accurate facts. For many years, RESULTS partners have focused on increasing the transparency of donor spending on poverty alleviation and specific diseases as part of our efforts to improve government accountability.*

*Momentum is now growing for donors to make public their detailed expenditure on development, and more importantly, the ways in which this is having an impact, both at country level and in working towards specific Millennium Development Goals (MDG). As we approach the half-way point to the MDG deadline it is more crucial than ever to monitor progress and evaluate effectiveness, to encourage a break from 'business as usual'.*

#### Numbers count

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD) recognises the importance of analysing donor country expenditure, monitoring development progress and sharing statistics. It currently keeps track of broad government spending of all 30 of its member countries, including the UK, and makes recommendations as to where and how resources could be best spent.

On 11-12 June, the OECD statistics and monitoring division is hosting a meeting of donor agencies, where it will be decided whether countries should report on their specific expenditure on Child Survival, Malaria and TB. The issue has

arisen at the request of the World Health Organization, which cannot currently distinguish resource flows for these key development issues.

**This meeting represents a critical chance for change** in the ways in which governments record, report and share their spending on these key development areas. **Only if these figures are made public can we truly hold our government to account for its misdirected focus, or commend it for its progress to date.**

#### Progress to date – UK

The UK government is a leader in the field of international development, providing more resources to overseas

aid each year. For example, between 2004 and 2005, there was **a 36% increase in the amount of money the UK directed to development**. In addition, the UK was one of the few OECD countries which showed an increase in spending on development in 2006, with many other key donor countries, such as the USA, Canada, Japan and Italy, reporting a dramatic drop in aid from 2005 figures.

Despite the UK's rising contribution to international development there has been a strong call from MPs, NGOs and advocates to hold the government more accountable for how this money is spent. The recent passing of the **International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Bill** by backbench MP Tom Clarke is illustrative of the need to address this problem.

### **International Development Bill**

The Bill calls for the Secretary of State to produce an annual report of **total spending on development and progress towards achieving the 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) target** for overseas aid. Importantly, now the Bill has been passed, it also ensures that the government will report on the effectiveness of its interventions in each country, with the aim of improving the transparency of international development assistance.

Whilst the Bill does not require the government to account for its spending on specific issues, such as Child Survival, Malaria or TB, it does set a precedent for monitoring and evaluating how the UK is spending its development aid. This gives us a strong foundation on which to call for the UK to further track its expenditure, including on specific diseases.

### **Why track spending? (to measure impact)**

The UK government does not currently monitor or share its full spending on Child Survival, Malaria or TB. This is largely because it has made a policy decision to move away from funding specific projects and programmes (where the money is traceable) to giving support directly to national budgets.

The UK government does not currently monitor how this money is spent in-country. Therefore, beyond multilateral funding, it is currently very difficult to assess how the UK government is contributing to improving development and specifically Child Survival, Malaria and TB control.

### **Child Survival – MDG 4:**

Progress is being made worldwide in reducing child mortality, yet in 2004 **10.5 million children died before their fifth birthday** (mostly from preventable causes). The situation in sub-Saharan Africa is particularly worrying; whilst only 20% of the world's children live in the region, it accounts for **half of total child deaths**.

### **Malaria and TB – MDG 6:**

**Malaria** – Donor resources to malaria control have increased significantly in recent years and real progress is being made in rolling-out interventions. In sub-Saharan Africa for example, the distribution of insecticide treated nets has increased **10 fold in the past four years**. However, the cost of effective malaria drugs and the difficulties of reaching and protecting rural populations pose particular obstacles.

**TB** – The total number of new TB cases continues to rise, with **8.8 million new cases in 2005**. Whilst TB mortality has fallen, 1.6 million people continue to die from this curable disease each year. The rise of TB/HIV co-infection and extensively drug resistant TB (XDR-TB) pose real challenges to TB control and must be factored into country level programmes.

The UK government can make a decision to monitor and make public its Child Survival, TB and Malaria expenditure at the OECD meeting in June. If it does so it is sending a strong message that the UK government is accountable and transparent. **If it fails to do so, the effectiveness and impact of its interventions will always be in question.**

---

This action sheet uses material from: [www.mdgs.un.org](http://www.mdgs.un.org), and [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

**RESULTS**, 25 Clemens Street, Leamington Spa.  
CV31 2DP \* 01926 435430 \* [www.results-uk.org](http://www.results-uk.org)