

Tax justice positive 7: Objective reporting of government...

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Tax justice means being in favour of objective reporting of government finances. This requires that:

- a. Governments have a duty to be accountable for the income they receive;
- b. The provision of clear, easily accessed information on income received and the way in which it is expended, provided on a timely basis and in consistent and readily understood formats is an obligation of government as much as it is of trading and other entities;
- c. The individual must be able to comprehend how they relate to the activities of government and this must be explicitly highlighted in the data published by governments;
- d. Government reporting must recognise that well being matters as much as GDP;
- e. The distribution of income and the tax burden is an important issue and must be highlighted in all reporting.

Being in favour of a culture of objective reporting of government finances means that we are opposed to government spin. Government spin involves:

- a. A lack of objectivity;
- b. An emphasis upon GDP;
- c. Disclosure only of good news;
- d. Hard to access, or unavailable data;
- e. Information not available on line or at publicly accessible locations;
- f. Inconsistent reporting;
- g. Overly technical reporting incomprehensible even to the educated lay person;
- h. A failure to relate accounting information to the average reader;
- i. An absence of data on the distribution of benefits and burdens of taxation;
- j. An absence of disclosure on tax not collected, and what is being done to address it.