

Welcome views from the Conservatives on tax, transparency.

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As has been recently blogged by the Tax Justice Network, the [Conservatives recently entered into active dialogue](#) on tax, transparency and development issues for the first time when they participated in a Christian Aid meeting on these issues. This was a welcome move. Now Christian Aid have followed this up with a press release which says:

Christian Aid welcomes the recent developments in Conservative party policy on transparency, taxation and international development. All the major political parties now recognise the importance of our two major campaign asks for greater financial transparency to prevent the massive illicit outflows and tax losses that developing countries suffer, costing them more than one and a half times the amount of aid given globally every year. The two campaign asks are for transparency of jurisdictions (a multilateral agreement for tax information exchange) and transparency of multinational companies (an international accounting standard requiring the reporting of some economic aggregates including tax paid, on a country-by-country basis).

Better still, Christian Aid were able to follow up with the this:

The statement below, received from David Cameron's office and from other Conservative MPs by supporters who had sent the Christian Aid manifesto requests to their Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, highlights the new commitment.

"Just as Conservatives believe that aid needs to be more effective and accountable in order for it to have the maximum possible impact on global poverty, so there is no doubt that more needs to be done to increase transparency in tax affairs. The UK Government has a responsibility to work with other countries, including overseas territories, to ensure that information on the tax position of individuals and companies is exchanged between tax authorities. This is vital in addressing tax evasion and also money laundering. Ultimately, an international accounting standard on country-by-country reporting may well address many of the problems currently created by a lack of transparency. We need to ensure that any such reporting regime provides

the relevant information and does not deter multinationals investing in developing countries. In the shorter term, the UK Government must continue to press for further exchange of information agreements, greater monitoring of the use of transfer pricing and the use of complex structures and greater transparency."

Debate has opened. I'm pleased that dialogue is now on the agenda.