

Hansard on country-by-country reporting

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The [following extract](#) comes from Caroline Flint MP's speech on the need for public country-by-country reporting in the House of Commons last night which resulted in the [successful passing of her amendment](#) that will permit the Treasury to create regulation to deliver this:

I have no illusions about having a perfect tax system. Keeping one step ahead is a never-ending task for modern tax authorities. I welcome the Government's introduction at HMRC of country-by-country tax reporting, which is now up and running, and I agree with the Minister's summer announcement that those who advise individuals and companies on their tax affairs will be subject to greater accountability for their actions when wrongdoing is exposed.

However, public transparency can make a real difference in ensuring fair taxation and fair play. That is why, with the support of PAC colleagues and cross-party support from across the House, I introduced my ten-minute rule Bill in March to legislate for public country-by-country reporting. The backing I received spurred me on to try to amend the Finance Bill in June, gaining the support of eight parliamentary parties: Labour—I thank Front-Bench spokespeople past and present, including my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton South West (Rob Marris), for their support—the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the Social Democratic and Labour party, the Ulster Unionist party, the United Kingdom Independence party, the Green party, the independent hon. Member for North Down (Lady Hermon), and a number of Conservative MPs, too. Oxfam, Christian Aid, Save the Children, ActionAid, the ONE campaign and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development joined our efforts, adding an important and necessary dimension to the argument for public country-by-country reporting.

[Meg Hillier](#)

I, too, congratulate my right hon. Friend on her sterling work in raising this issue up the agenda. Does she agree that if the Government were to adopt this amendment, they would be setting a tone for other parts of the world? We have had a lot of interest from around Europe and elsewhere about the work being done in Parliament and by our

Government, and adopting this would really set the example.

Caroline Flint

I agree with my hon. Friend on that. I commend her work as the Chair of our Committee and the work she has done with other public accounts committees in other countries, because there is an appetite for doing more in this area and we are leading the way. We can do that from our House of Commons Committees, but we hope today that we can give some added muscle to the Government to lead the way in this important area, too.

I talked about the charities and organisations working in the development sphere, because I am seeking tax justice not only here, but for those developing countries that lose out too. I have said it before but it is worth saying again: if developing countries got their fair share of tax, it would vastly outstrip what is currently available through aid. The lack of tax transparency is one of the major stumbling blocks to their self-sufficiency. My thanks also go to the Tax Justice Network, Global Witness and the business-led Fair Tax Mark, as well as to tax experts Richard Murphy and Jolyon Maugham, QC, who have helped me to make the case and to get the wording right to amend legislation. This proposal demonstrates the widespread view that bolder measures to hold multinationals to account are necessary.

I think the wide support Caroline mentioned shows how great the awareness of this issue now is.

My thanks to her for pulling it all together.