

24/06/2014

Federal MPs Join Advocates in Shining the Light on Global Tax Dodging

Parliamentarians have met face to face with over two hundred grassroots anti-poverty advocates from across the country this week to discuss Australia's opportunity to lead action against corporate tax dodging which is draining vital revenue from developing nations.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, Steve Ciobo MP, and Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Dr Andrew Leigh MP, addressed the group on Australia's response to multinational tax dodging at a special event in Parliament House this morning.

Mr Ciobo told participants that Australia is passionate about achieving outcomes on base erosion and profit shifting at the upcoming G20 Summit in November. While acknowledging that the process might not be straight forward, he said he was confident of a global desire for reform and believes there is the political will necessary for action.

Acknowledging this as an important issue for both Australia and people suffering in developing nations, Mr Leigh also indicated Labor's support for global and domestic policy change on multinational tax dodging.

Both MPs thanked supporters of the Micah Challenge campaign for coming to Canberra to raise the issue with political leaders and assured them their voices are being heard.

As part of the 'Voices for Justice' event, these grassroots advocates, ranging from high school students to retirees, have conducted over 100 private meetings with MPs and Senators while in Canberra.

With Australia perfectly positioned to lead action against financial secrecy and tax dodging at the G20 summit in Brisbane later this year, Micah Challenge advocates have been seeking to ensure that the decisions made by the world's most economically powerful leaders will directly benefit citizens of poor nations.

"Most people don't realise that the vast majority of money flowing out of developing countries is not stolen by corrupt politicians and dictators, but is rather pulled out by large multinational corporations who exploit loopholes in the global tax system to shift their profits away from the countries they operate within," said John Beckett, National Director for Micah Challenge Australia.

According to Mr Beckett, while multinational tax dodging and corruption impacts all nations, including Australia, developing countries suffer the worst.

"Highly conservative estimates show that poor nations lose more than \$160 billion each year through corporate tax dodging, which is more money than they receive annually in foreign aid," said Mr Beckett.

“This is money which rightfully belongs to the citizens of these countries and should be being used to provide essential services like healthcare, education, infrastructure and water,” he said.

“The impact on developing countries is devastating, denying them the money they need to be self-sufficient and making them dependent on aid and debt. It truly is a case of the rich getting richer while the poor miss out.”

“As host of the G20 summit this year, we are looking to our political leaders to take concrete action against tax dodging and help drive a major breakthrough in the fight against extreme poverty. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.”

Voices for Justice brings together school students and retirees, teachers and tradesmen, aid workers and church leaders from across the country. In partnership with the global EXPOSED campaign, these Australians join with thousands of others around the world who are similarly calling on world leaders to address tax dodging and corruption and enact justice for the world’s poor.

-ENDS-

In 2014, the Micah Challenge Australia coalition is partnering with the global EXPOSED campaign to promote transparency and integrity in the global financial system for the benefit of the world’s poorest people. Both campaigns are coalitions of individuals, organisations and churches who are committed to speaking out on issues of injustice and global poverty. See www.shinethelight.com.au or www.micahchallenge.org.au for more details.

Photos of advocates and politicians demonstrating their support for tackling multinational tax dodging available here:

<https://onedrive.live.com/?cid=935d2835fd900117&id=935D2835FD900117%213068&Bsrc=Share&Bpub=SDX.SkyDrive&authkey=!Amf-OgdThq29TKE>

Available for Interviews:

- **John Beckett:** National Director for Micah Challenge Australia
- **The Rev Dr Joel Edwards:** the International Director of Micah Challenge and advisor to the Tony Blair Foundation.
- **Dereje Alemayehu:** Chair of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, Chair of the Tax Justice Network Africa and Coordinator of Christian Aid in East Africa.
- **Voices for Justice participants** from across the country

Media Enquiries:

Angela Owen – Media and Communications Coordinator, Micah Challenge
M: 0422 985 288 | E: angela.owen@micahchallenge.org.au