



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

September 16, 2010

U.N. Secretary Ban Ki-moon
U.N. Headquarters
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,

Government budgets and the ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are inextricably linked. Governments plan for what activities they will invest in and how they will generate the required resources in the budget. Therefore, full transparency of government budget information must be a precondition for any serious discussions on development.

Governments worldwide have committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015. To know what still needs to be done, we need to know what *is already being done*. In “Keeping the Promise,” you state that the MDGs cannot be achieved without accountability and transparency. This requires detailed, comprehensive budget information showing what governments are planning to spend or have spent on programs and policies to achieve the goals. In addition, it requires donors to provide full disclosure of aid flows.

But what happens when citizens actually ask for this information? In January 2010 civil society organizations in 84 countries began to request information from their governments on development resources and spending. The more than 500 initial requests now total over 1,800 letters, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings — *but have produced few answers*. Over half of these requests (54 percent) resulted in no information, and only 28 percent elicited complete information. Without this information it is impossible to evaluate whether spending is adequate or appropriate.

The International Budget Partnership and the organizations listed below are unified in their call on the U.N. to take the following decisive steps to address this problem.

To achieve the Goals, the MDG Summit must:

- declare government budget transparency essential for meeting the MDGs;
- require the U.N. to develop a process and format for governments to report complete budget information on their efforts to realize the goals, on a yearly basis, from 2011 to 2015, and encourage all governments to participate in this reporting process; and
- require donor countries and agencies to publish comprehensive, timely, and comparable information on all their MDG-related funding, in ways that are aligned with the budgets of the countries to whom they provide aid and in formats that include information reported by the recipient countries to the donor.

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A Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

All of the reported information must be made available to the public (in useful and accessible formats) in each participating country and through relevant U.N. websites.

Sincerely,

Warren Krafchik
Director, International Budget Partnership

ORGANIZATIONS CALLING FOR GREATER BUDGET TRANSPARENCY TO ACHIEVE THE MDGS

Access Info Europe
The Centre for Law and Democracy
Family Care International
White Ribbon Alliance
The Averting Maternal Death and Disability Program at Columbia University
International Institute for Sustainable Development
Greenpeace
Friends of the Earth-France
Oxfam
Oxfam Novib
Publish What You Fund
International Human Rights Internship Program
ONE Campaign
Revenue Watch Institute
Women Deliver
Maternal Health Task Force at Engender Health
Association SHERPA
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)
Secours Catholique/Caritas France