

PRESS RELEASE

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Leading NGOs warn against withholding aid from high-risk countries

Two leading NGOs are calling for the aid and development community to manage corruption risks, not avoid countries where aid is needed most, as a parliamentary committee warns against DFID's decision to focus aid on high-risk countries.

Mango and Transparency International UK have responded to a report released by the Public Accounts Committee, which has suggested that DFID's decision to focus humanitarian aid on high-risk countries will result in more money being lost through corruption.

Chandrashekhar Krishnan, Executive Director of Transparency International UK, said "The poorest of the poor already suffer disproportionately from the bribery and corruption which is often entrenched in the high-risk countries identified by DFID. To withhold aid altogether would only inflict a double taxation on those who already suffer most from corruption."

NGOs are often operating in the highest-risk countries for corruption. The work being undertaken by NGOs to prevent bribery has been given increased emphasis with the commencement of the UK Bribery Act, which acted as a spur to a group of leading NGOs developing and publishing Anti-bribery Principles and Guidance for NGOs. The group was led by Mango and Transparency International UK under the auspices of Bond, the UK membership body for NGOs working in international development.

Tim Boyes-Watson, Director of Mango, said "Field experience suggests that it is possible to operate even in high-risk areas without paying bribes, but it requires good local understanding, project design that takes account of bribery risk, training and support for staff – and above all, a clear tone from the top of NGOs that they will not be complicit in corruption. We are calling on the development community to manage the corruption risks well and ensure that aid reaches those who desperately need it."

For more information please contact Tim Boyes-Watson at Mango on 07976 406682 or Rachel Davies at Transparency International UK on 07411 347754. Chandrashekhar Krishnan and Tim Boyes-Watson are available for comment.

Notes

Mango's mission is to strengthen the financial management and accountability of development and humanitarian NGOs and their partners.

www.mango.org.uk

Transparency International UK is the UK Chapter of the global movement against corruption www.transparency.org.uk

The publication, 'Anti-Bribery Principles and Guidance for NGOs', was developed by the Bond Anti-Bribery NGO Working Group. Participating NGOs were Mango and Transparency International UK (co-chairs), Bond, CAFOD, Christian Aid, CFDG, Global Witness, Muslim Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund, Water Aid and WWF. It can be downloaded from <http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/anti-bribery-principles-and-guidelines-for-ngos.html>.