



# Press Release

10<sup>th</sup> October 2005, London

For immediate use

## Blair must sign convention on corruption - Twigg

At a major conference in London today, members of the diplomatic community, the African Diaspora, NGOs and international donors sent a strong message on corruption and developing best practice to the Prime Minister and the International Development Secretary ahead of the meeting of EU Development Ministers in Leeds on 24/25 October.

STEPHEN TWIGG, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, said:

“The UK must send a strong message to corrupt governments by signing the UN convention on corruption immediately. The Prime Minister must use Britain’s Presidency of the EU to encourage other member states to do likewise. Corruption and poor governance siphons off aid from the people that need it most.

“It is one of the main causes of the ‘brain drain’ of key workers such as teachers, doctors and nurses from Africa. It is one thing to double aid, but when much of that money is being creamed off into bank accounts in London and Switzerland, action needs to be taken immediately.”

MALCOLM BRUCE MP, Chair of the International Development Committee said:

“Corruption, it seems to me, explains why 40% of private wealth is held outside Africa compared to 3% for South Asia. Corruption is estimated to add 25% to the cost of procurement. It explains why in one of the most damning sentences in the Africa Commission report the poorest families “dare not risk ambition”.

“So here is a challenge to the UK during its current Presidencies. Isn’t it time we ratified the UN Convention against Corruption?”

“We must ensure that British companies do not collude with the maintenance of bribery and corruption. We should prosecute British companies and individuals who engage in it. We should work with partners in Africa to expose and control it there. If necessary we should name and shame organisations that are tainted. We must not accept it as engrained and unchallengeable.”

STEPHEN TWIGG said:

“Managing change in Africa is not just about money, it is also about ideas, people and excellence. Developing best practice will come from establishing African centres of excellence and supporting those that already exist. These can be universities, hospitals, schools, businesses or other centres of learning and development. New ideas will not just come from the top down – we must support Africa’s own potential to enact permanent change.”

**ENDS**

# The Foreign Policy Centre

*The European Think Tank with a Global Outlook*



## **Editor's Notes**

*'Looking Beyond the Commission for Africa: Re-prioritising EU Development Assistance'*, is a conference organised by the Foreign Policy Centre in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Royal Institute for International Relations (Brussels). It is a one day event (10.00 to 17.00) on Monday 10 October 2005 at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5HX. More details can be found at <http://www.fpc.org.uk>