

# Micah Challenge Highlights Corruption as Roadblock to Ending Poverty

A Micah Challenge paper being released today reveals a critical need for Christians to further engage with international advocacy efforts to tackle corruption as a key tool to eradicate poverty.

*Open for Service: A Case for Good Governance*, being launched on International Anti-Corruption Day, refers to evidence of corruption negatively impacting the poor in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe. The paper urgently appeals for transparency in government, business and the global Christian church.

The document follows discussion between development practitioners, politicians, economists and academics reflecting the views of those living in extreme poverty and proposing solutions to corruption crimes, which could prevent governments achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Joel Edwards, international director of Micah Challenge said: "Corruption is a like a tower block on a runway. It accounts for over a trillion dollars going missing, and is a massive barricade to the well-being of the poorest people in the world. It's difficult to define, complex in its treatment and entrenched in business and political systems.

No wonder it has gone on underground for so long. Simply, corruption kills people.”

The Rt. Rev. Dr

Benjamin Kwashi, Archbishop of Jos in Central Nigeria, spoke on

corruption as a global problem at Africa’s Transformation conference this year:

“Compared to

corruption in the West, Africa is an apprentice.”

The call for good

governance comes alongside firsthand evidence on the effects of corruption on

poverty released by multiple international stakeholders earlier this year.

Research in the World

Bank’s *Africa Development Indicators 2010*

report highlights the severe effects of “quiet corruption” such as bribery,

weak regulation and poor service delivery in the health, education and

agriculture sectors of Africa. In one instance more than 50 percent of drugs

sold in Nigerian drugstores in the 1990s were found to be counterfeit. The

study also mentions that there are as many as 91 children per primary school

teacher in the Central African Republic, compared with 22 children per teacher

in Mauritius, due to absenteeism.

Case studies from

Peru, Cambodia and Zambia in a Tearfund report called *Corruption and Its Discontents* similarly establishes that corruption

and a culture of bribery form one of the biggest barriers to

poverty  
eradication.

A female interviewee from Moyobamba, Peru, said: "I took my daughter-in-law to the hospital. She was really sick with appendicitis. She was initially taken to one hospital but then she was referred elsewhere because they needed to operate on her. When we arrived at the second hospital, the nurse who was supposed to be supervising her said to me: 'It is the end of my day and I am very busy. I cannot see to her.' I pleaded with her to take care of her, and to give her the injections that she needed. I had to take her a gift to persuade her to take proper care of her."

*Open for Service* highlights the role that churches can play in advocating for good governance in overcoming poverty. Former Director of the U.N. Millennium Campaign Salil Shetty said in the foreword: "The people in the frontend of the evangelical churches know that if public resources are managed in a transparent and accountable manner, there is nothing stopping the world from achieving the MDGs by 2015."

President of Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and Eminent Person of the Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa Goodwill Shana said: "The document captures the central role that governance plays in the broad agenda of poverty reduction and eradication."

This paper launch follows Micah's campaign where 60 million Christians in over 70 nations prayed for an end to extreme poverty.

This global event formed part of a growing movement mobilizing the church to play a greater part in alleviating poverty.