



Global Movement for Budget Transparency,
Accountability and Participation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global movement launches international campaign to demand open and inclusive budgets

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Tunis, March 25, 2013 – Today the **Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation (BTAP)** launched the Make Budgets Public Now! Campaign at the World Social Forum. The Campaign seeks to increase budget transparency, accountability and participation in countries that currently have the least transparent budget processes, which dramatically reduces citizens' ability to engage in decision-making processes that have a direct impact on their lives.

For this reason, the campaign will focus on ensuring that at a minimum all governments:

1. Publish the budget proposal that is discussed and enacted by the legislature, which allows citizens to know how their government plans to spend the public's money.
2. Publish an independent audit report, a document that evaluates a government's performance.
3. Conduct public hearings during the budget debate in the legislature where citizens can provide input on their needs and preferences on how to spend their resources.
4. Publish a citizens budget, a document which provides key budget information in easily understandable language and accessible formats so that every citizen can understand the government's plans for spending public money.

These key documents and opportunities to participate are essential for citizens and civil society seeking to understand and engage in the national budget process, as the information provided in these reports strengthens oversight mechanisms. Therefore, they offer the opportunity to influence budget allocations before these are actually approved and the information needed to monitor actual spending for public services on the ground.

Despite substantial improvements in budget openness during the last decade, progress has been unequal among countries. According to the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Index 2012, an independent and comparative measure of budget transparency in 100 countries, 77 countries — home to half the world's population — fail to meet basic standards of budget transparency. Transparent and inclusive budgets are essential tools for combating corruption, reducing inefficiencies in public spending and improving aid allocation.

BTAP is convinced that participation in the decisions related to public budgets is a fundamental right and responsibility of all citizens. In addition, citizen participation is useful to improve the decision-making process and management of public assets.

The campaign will be conducted at three levels (national, regional and international) and will demand that governments respect citizens' right to information and participation in budget process. National campaigns will be launched in Vietnam, Kyrgyz Republic, Fiji Islands, El Salvador and Tunisia, as they are among the countries scoring lowest on the 2012 Open Budget Index. As an example, with a score of 6 out of 100, Fiji got a lower score than China's 11, and came in well below the score of his New Zealand neighbor's 93.

Through the implementation of a multi-layered set of activities and advocacy demands concerning the publication of budget key documents and the opportunity of citizens to express their interests and views through public hearings, the campaign seeks to make sure that these countries meet the most basic standards for open budgeting and citizen participation is allowed.



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