

# **Immediate Release 26/04/07**

## **MPs BACK RIGHT OF CHARITIES, LARGE OR SMALL, TO CAMPAIGN; & WANT REGULATIONS THAT SUPPORT THIS**

**Over 4 in 5 (82%\*) MPs polled agree that “all charities should be free to influence change, and to campaign, irrespective of their size” – according to research out today. Moreover, the majority (55%\*\*\*) of MPs agree that “the regulatory environment for the voluntary sector should try and create a level playing field for all charities, large or small”.**

\* Party breakdown - 95% Lib Dem; 85% Labour; 75% Tory.

\*\* Party breakdown - 60% Lib Dem; 60% Labour; 44% Tory.

Conducted by leading not for profit sector think tank and research consultancy, nfpSynergy - for student world poverty and environment charity, People & Planet - the study asked a representative cross-section of over 150 MPs their views on charities and the third sector.

This follows research by nfpSynergy earlier this year (Jan 2007) indicating that 86% of MPs polled back the right of charities to campaign to change laws and government policies relevant to their work; and 1 in 4 (27%) MPs disagree with existing guidelines which limit such activity. Moreover, nfpSynergy research last year (May 2006) highlighted the confusion about regulations governing campaigning amongst charities themselves: the mean estimate given by charities as to what they think is meant by “incidental” or “ancillary” in guidelines (re campaigning thresholds allowed within charitable status) is between ¼ and ⅓ (27.9%) of their work - with wide variation, ranging from 35% to just 1%.

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC is currently chairing a Review Group of leading third sector organisations and legal experts who are reviewing the legal and regulatory framework which governs campaigning by charities.

### **Ian Leggett, Director of People & Planet which commissioned the survey, said:**

“In line with earlier research, MPs overwhelmingly back the right of charities of *all* sizes to campaign, with over half of them supporting a regulatory environment that would nurture this. Yet current regulations create confusion and uncertainty which limit the amount of resources that small charities feel that they can devote to campaigning – especially if that campaigning is designed to influence the law or government policy. If a charity believes that the best way it can advance the interests of its beneficiaries is by addressing the root cause of a problem, regulations which limit its freedom of action need to be removed.”

nfpSynergy’s twice-yearly Charity Parliamentary Monitor of MPs and Peers is just one of a whole raft of syndicated, cost-effective monitors, delivering subscribers with regular insights into key stakeholders including politicians, business leaders, health professionals, journalists, young people and the wider public – including the Scots!

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**MEDIA INTERVIEWS: To interview nfpSynergy’s Driver of Ideas, Joe Saxton or People & Planet Director, Ian Leggett about the findings, please contact:**

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# **Notes to editors:**

## **• nfpSynergy**

nfpSynergy ([www.nfpsynergy.net](http://www.nfpsynergy.net)) is the UK’s *only* think-tank and research consultancy dedicated to the charity sector and not for profit issues. It provides ideas, insights and information to help voluntary and community organisations thrive in an ever-changing world. Regularly harvesting the social and charity-related views of public and parliament, media and business - not to mention not for profit organisations themselves - nfpSynergy has a vast and ever-growing knowledge pool from which to extract and deliver insights.

- **People & Planet**

People & Planet ([www.peopleandplanet.org](http://www.peopleandplanet.org)) is the largest, student network in Britain campaigning to alleviate world poverty, defend human rights and protect the environment. The network consists of University and College Groups, Sixth Form Groups, Individual Campaigners and the Support Office itself.