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PRESS RELEASE

**Brazil: Access to Information Bill
Could be Approved by the End of 2009**

Following the launch of ARTICLE 19’s review of the new Brazilian Access to Information Bill (see below), Brazilian politicians welcomed ARTICLE 19’s concerns and recommendations on the draft legislation. The Bill, which will implement the constitutional right to access public information, is currently pending before Congress, whilst a Special Commission is formed to analyse the draft.

The Bill is running under the “priority regime” in Congress, and will be reviewed by the Special Commission. The Commission’s aim is to promote a better and more open discussion of the draft text, and to speed up the review process. After being analyzed and discussed by Commission members, the Bill will be voted in plenary by all members of Congress.

On August 5th 2009, ARTICLE 19 met with eight parliamentarians, all members of the Commission, in Brasilia. Six posts remain open and await the appointment of representatives by party leaders. ARTICLE 19’s analysis of the Access to Information Bill was welcomed by party leaders and existing members of the Commission. After meeting with ARTICLE 19’s Brazil Coordinator, Paula Martins, MP Reginaldo Lopes - a leading parliamentary campaigner in the field - formally petitioned the Lower House President requesting that immediate steps are taken to hasten the installation of the Commission. Already appointed member, MP José Genoïno, stated that the Access to Information Bill “should be a priority in Congress during 2009.” Following ARTICLE 19’s visit, two parties pledged to appoint their members to fill the outstanding posts in the forthcoming week.

ARTICLE 19 calls on party leaders to urgently complete the line-up of appointments to the Special Commission, and to ensure that all sectors of Brazilian society have a voice in discussions over the final document enshrining the new law. During interviews with ARTICLE 19, MPs have already committed to calling for a public hearing on the draft legislation once the Special Commission becomes operational.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information please contact: Paula Martins, Brazil Coordinator, paula@article19.org, +55 11 3057 0042
- Access the full analysis at <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/brazil-article-19-launches-analysis-on-draft-access-to-information-bill.pdf>

- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.