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PRESS RELEASE

Ghana: ARTICLE 19 Recommends Changes to Proposed Access to Information Law

ARTICLE 19 today releases its analysis of a Draft Law on Access to Information in Ghana, and recommends several amendments to bring the Law in line with international standards. This analysis goes public in advance of the African Regional Conference on the Right of Access to Information, taking place from 7-9 February in Accra, Ghana.

ARTICLE 19 commends the Government of Ghana for recognising the importance of the right to access information. The Draft Law, which has been tabled for adoption in Parliament, contains several positive features, including granting the right to access information to every person, without requiring a reason for information requests, and the crucial recognition of the public interest override. The Draft Law, however, suffers from long time-limits, unclear and broad exception clauses, and a lack of independent control over its implementation. In contradiction to international standards, private bodies are also not subject to this Law.

ARTICLE 19 believes the weaknesses of the Draft Access to Information Law could be easily remedied and provides a number of recommendations to strengthen the legal guarantees of the right to information.

“Ghana urgently needs access to information laws to ensure good governance, transparency and fight corruption,” comments Amadou Kanoute, ARTICLE 19 Programme Coordinator for West Africa. *“We urge the Ghanaian Parliament to consider our recommendations and adopt a Law that is line with international standard for freedom of information.”*

The African Regional Conference on the Right of Access to Information is organised by the Carter Center, in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, the Commissioner of the African Commission of Human and People’s Rights, and the Media Foundation for West Africa. Under the leadership of former United States President Jimmy Carter, the conference will explore the state of the right of access to information in Africa and identify additional steps necessary to promote, entrench and sustain this right.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information please contact: Amadou Kanoute, ARTICLE 19 Senegal & West Africa, amadou@article19.org, tel: +221 77 529 6662 or Boyko Boev, ARTICLE 19 Legal Officer, boyko@article19.org, tel: +44 20 7324 2500.
- The analysis of the Draft Law on Access to Information of Ghana is available in English at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/comment-on-the-right-to-information-bill-of-the-republic-of-ghana.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.