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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Transparency and Free Flow of Information Vital to MDGs**

Ahead of the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ARTICLE 19 launches the [London Declaration for Transparency, the Free Flow of Information and Development](#), marking a new consensus on the role of transparency and the free flow of information in achieving the MDGs.

The London Declaration was developed following a recent international conference organised by ARTICLE 19 in London, which brought together over 70 human rights and development representatives from inter-governmental organisations and civil society from 13 countries. The London Declaration outlines concrete steps that governments and other actors should implement in order to ensure that the MDGs are achievable in the next five years.

It has been repeatedly acknowledged that progress on the MDGs is off track, not because the Goals are unreachable or because time is short, but rather because of unmet commitments, inadequate resources, and lack of focus and accountability. Development efforts are hampered by corruption, mismanagement, improper allocation of resources and their inefficient and ineffective use.

*“We are at a critical juncture. Censorship and secrecy seeds corruption, breeds bad governance and feeds the cycle of poverty,”* said Agnes Callamard ARTICLE 19 Executive Director

In under two weeks’ time the international community will gather in New York to review and renew its commitment to alleviate poverty and its promise to meet the targets set by the MDGs. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling for the adoption of a global action agenda to accelerate progress towards the Goals. However, in its current draft, the proposed outcome document barely recognises the importance of the free flow of information and transparency in assuring the Goals’ achievement.

The London Declaration states that efforts towards achieving the MDGs by 2015 must be considerably and urgently stepped up and should encompass the following interconnected principles:

- *First*, the free flow of information, transparency and civic engagement are fundamental to the achievement of the MDGs, and the global fight against poverty;

- *Second*, the free flow of information includes protecting and strengthening the right of all to seek, receive and impart information and ideas related to the MDGs and development, and the existence of a free, diverse and professional media;
- *Third*, transparency requires collecting, producing, and disclosing accessible, credible and disaggregated data on MDG indicators and targets, as well as on budgets, aid assistance and revenues from natural and other resources;
- *Fourth*, civic engagement requires establishing and protecting an enabling environment for civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media, and active participation by all, in particular people living in poverty and those discriminated against, or marginalised.

Participants in the conference insisted that, without a new focus on these concerns, corruption will proliferate, accountability will remain a sidelined issue, and the MDGs will not be achieved in the next five years. They appeal to governments, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations and other development partners to implement the London Declaration recommendations.

A new website, with ongoing analysis of transparency, free flow of information and MDG issues, alongside a summary of conference contributions, has been launched at [www.right2info-MDGs.org](http://www.right2info-MDGs.org).

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- The Declaration is available at: <http://www.right2info-mdgs.org/declaration/>
- For more information please contact: Oliver Spencer, [oliver@article19.org](mailto:oliver@article19.org), +44 20 7324 2507
- 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.