



For immediate release – 8 March, 2010

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Uganda: ARTICLE 19 Lauds Whistleblowers Bill**

**ARTICLE 19 welcomes the recent bold move by the Uganda Parliament to pass the Whistleblowers Bill, a critical milestone in the country's efforts to stem corruption and embrace transparency and accountability.**

The Bill, approved by Parliament on 3 March 2010 in Kampala aims to create an enabling environment for citizens to freely disclose information on corrupt or improper conduct, both in the public and private sectors. In enacting the law, Uganda is the third country in Africa to adopt such a comprehensive law.

It aims to protect individuals who disclose evidence of law-breaking, maladministration or corruption in government and private bodies. It sets up procedures for disclosures internally and to external government bodies, although those who reveal issues to the press or the public directly are not protected. It prohibits retribution against those who make the disclosures in good faith, and waives criminal and civil penalties for disclosing secret information. Criminal penalties can be imposed on those who harass whistleblowers.

*“The adoption of this law is a significant positive step in promoting transparency and accountability in the country. Uganda should be lauded for again taking a lead in the region in adopting legislation to promote transparency,”* says Dr Agnès Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director.

ARTICLE 19 calls on the Ugandan authorities and private bodies to vigorously implement the law to ensure that individuals are protected. At the same time, ARTICLE 19 urges the Uganda Government to fully implement the 2005 Access to Information Act (ATIA) with the same commitment it has shown the Whistleblowers Bill. The ATIA has not been effectively implemented since its adoption.

*“It is crucial for the Government to put into operation both this Bill and the Access to Information Act to ensure that transparency is fully recognised. They are both necessary to ensure the development of the nation,”* adds Callamard.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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- 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.