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PRESS RELEASE

**Nigeria: Freedom of Information Act - A Ray of Hope for Democracy**

**Abuja 06.06.11: ARTICLE 19 welcomes the adoption of the Freedom of Information Act in Nigeria in May 2011. After a decade of consistent and fearless advocacy by civil society and media practitioners, the newly elected President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, has acceded to the legitimate demands and aspirations of the majority of Nigerians by signing off the long-awaited right to information law.**

By making the Freedom of Information Act a reality in the first days of his presidency, the Nigerian president has sent an unequivocal message that he means business in the fight against corruption and bad governance.

*“The new Freedom of Information Act will consolidate the existing legal arsenal established over the years to curb corruption and create an accountable government. It will contribute to empowering Nigerian citizens to exert some degree of control over the actions of their leaders and monitor the use of public resources,”* said Fatou Jagne-Senghore, ARTICLE 19 West Africa.

The law provides a framework for tackling inequality and injustice in Nigeria and combating abuse of power.

*“Citizens and civil society organisations in Nigeria should take ownership of the law, and work to ensure that this important piece of legislation is implemented effectively so that it brings real benefits to people’s daily lives,”* continued Jagne-Senghore.

Nigeria is the second country in the region, along with Liberia, to adopt a comprehensive right to information law, while a number of other countries - including Ghana, Sierra Leone and Senegal - are currently considering legislation. In 2011, Niger adopted comprehensive regulation on access to information.

ENDS

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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<http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/nigeria-senate-must-strengthen-and-adopt-right-to-information-bill.pdf>

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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.

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