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PRESS RELEASE

Senegal: Parliament Commits to Passing Information Law

Dakar 16.06.11: The Committee on Access to Information in Senegal welcomes the decision of the Senegalese parliament to support the adoption of an access to information law. This decision was announced by members of the Senate and National Assembly, following a seminar organised on the 8th of June 2011 by ARTICLE 19 and the Forum Civil, in partnership with the Ministry of Communication and Panos Institute for West Africa (PIWA).

“We are encouraged by the commitment of the Senegalese Minister of Communication and the parliament to support the adoption of an access to information law. The adoption of a progressive law will be a major milestone for Senegalese democracy,” said Fatou Jagne Senghore, ARTICLE 19 West Africa.

The seminar was part of a series of nationwide consultations aimed at sensitising stakeholders on the importance of access to information and its advantages for democratic governance in Senegal. It was attended by nearly a dozen parliamentarians, the Minister of Communication, the spokesperson of the Senegalese government, members of the Committee on Access to Information, representatives of international organisations and representatives of human rights and journalist’s organisations.

“The national assembly is committed to swiftly adopting an access to information law, which constitutes a great tool to promote and strengthen fundamental human rights,” said Doudou Wade, Majority Leader of the National Assembly and President of the Network of Parliamentarians against Corruption (APNA).

“We have advocated in 2001 for the inclusion in the Senegalese constitution of a provision on access to information by key public servants and elected officials. A comprehensive access to information law will complement the existing framework and will give real meaning to Article 8 of the Senegalese constitution,” said Mohamadou M’bodji, co-ordinator of the Forum Civil.

Participants in the seminar agreed on the need to prioritise the adoption of an access to information law, and urge the government and other stakeholders to sensitise and train public servants to enable them to fully implement the access to information law and support the realisation of a transparent system of government.

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- About the coalition : <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/senegal-article-19-welcomes-the-formation-of-national-committee-for-the-adop.pdf>
- Read the full report and action plan from the seminar in French: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/rapport-de-la-journ-e-d-tude-sur-les-enjeux-de-l-access-l-information-au-s-n-.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.
- Forum civil is the Senegalese branch of Transparency International that works to promote transparency, good governance & fight against corruption.
- PIWA is a regional non-governmental organization, which contributes to democratizing communication, and consolidating public space for open African societies, where citizens' opinions are illuminated, and their voices amplified and heard.