



For immediate release – 24 February 2011

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Rwanda: Article 19 Welcomes Revised Right to Info Bill**

**Kigali 24.02.11: ARTICLE 19 welcomes the revised draft Access to Information Bill pending before the Rwandan Cabinet and urges the Cabinet to adopt the bill and pass onto Parliament for approval.**

The bill sets out progressive standards on access to information including a strong public interest test, short time frames for government bodies to respond to requests for information and extensive oversight powers by the Ombudsman. The revised bill now includes stronger protection for whistleblowers and requires government bodies to respond to requests for information within 5 working days.

*“The bill sets a benchmark for other African nations to strive for,”* said Henry Maina, ARTICLE 19 East Africa Director. *“The Cabinet and Parliament should immediately approve this and put it into law,”* continued Maina.

The most recent analysis of the bill by ARTICLE 19 recommends some changes to clarify its application to the private sector, a limit of 20 years for application of exemptions and a firm date for it to go into force. The bill was drafted by the Media High Council (MHC). A previous draft of the bill was reviewed by ARTICLE 19 in 2009.

ENDS

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For more information please contact: David Banisar, Senior Legal Counsel, ARTICLE 19, banisar@article19.org, +44 207 324 2500 or Henry Maina, Director, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, henry@article19.org Tel: +254 (20) 3862230/2

For a copy of ARTICLE 19 review of the draft, see

[www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/rwanda-note-on-draft-law-on-access-to-information.pdf](http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/rwanda-note-on-draft-law-on-access-to-information.pdf)

For a copy of ARTICLE 19 previous analysis from 2009, see

<http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/rwanda-comments-on-draft-rwandan-law-on-access-to-information.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.