



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

NGO in Special consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

B-117, First Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi – 110 017

Tel: 91-11-2686 4678, 2 685 0523 Fax: 91-11-2686 4688

E-mail: chriall@nda.vsnl.net.in

Website: www.humanrightsinitiative.org

Executive Committee
B.G. Verghese
*Chairperson &
Treasurer*

Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba
Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Freedom of Information Bill
National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone
P. M. B. 144, Garki
Abuja, Nigeria.

18 September 2006

Maja Daruwala
Director

Dear Senator

Re: Completion of work on the *Freedom of Information Bill 2004*

Members

R. V Pillai

Anu Aga

K. S Dhillon

B. K Chandrashekar

Mool Chand Sharma

Harivansh

Bhagwan Das

Poonam Muttreja

Sanjoy Hazarika

Nitin Desai

I am writing from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the practical realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth.

I last wrote to Senator Wada in March 2005, providing the Senate Committee with comments on the draft *Freedom of Information Bill 2004* (FOI Bill), since which I have been following its progress, waiting for the Ad Hoc Committee to conclude its work so the Bill can be passed through the Senate.

28 September 2006 is the fourth annual international Right to Know Day, as declared by the International Freedom of Information Advocates Network (FOIA Network). I would like to take this opportunity to urge you to use this milestone as the impetus to conclude your work on the Bill and return it to the Senate so that it may be passed. I have also read recently that Nigeria will go to elections next April, yet another reason I would like to encourage you to allow the Bill to progress through the Senate before Parliament expires and the Bill lapses.

Freedom of information is not only a fundamental human right, but it is integral to economic, political and social stability, and most importantly – to a functioning democracy (see Annex 1 for more arguments in support of the Bill). I urge you not to underestimate the role it can play in Nigeria's future and complete your work in the Committee so it can become law as soon as possible

Kind regards,

Maja Daruwala, Director

CC:

- Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Republic of Nigeria, Office of the President, Aso Rock Villa, Asokoro District, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Senator Udoma Udo Udoma National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone, P. M. B. 144, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Senator Adeleke O. Mamora National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone, P. M. B. 144, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Senator Nuhu Aliyu National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone, P. M. B. 144, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Senator Jibril Aminu National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone, P. M. B. 144, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Senator Timothy A. Adudu National Assembly Complex, Three-arms Zone, P. M. B. 144, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Edetaen Ojo, Media Rights Agenda, Executive Director, 10, Agboola Aina Street, Off Amore Street, Off Toyin Street, Ikeja, P.O. Box 521 13, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.