

**Kampala Declaration**  
**on**  
**The Implementation of *The Access to Information Act, 2005***

**WE, the participants of the Round Table on *The Access to Information Act (ATI Act) 2005* having assembled at the Sheraton Kampala in Kampala on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006, representing various sectors of government, civil society and the media, express our unequivocal support for the full operationalisation of the ATI Act. WE recognise that Article 41 of our Constitution guarantees access to information as a fundamental right to every citizen and that it is not a favour given to the people. The ATI Act was passed by Parliament to enable people to seek and receive information held by public bodies. WE also recognise that the ATI Act when fully implemented will play a seminal role in developing a synergic spiral of prosperity crucial for the eradication of poverty, and the elimination of corruption fostering open government.**

**WE believe that a proper implementation of the ATI Act requires collaboration between Government on the one hand and civil society and the media on the other. WE believe, the following areas require urgent attention if the people's right of access to information is to be truly realised:**

- 1) the Regulations that will lay down the detailed procedure and guidelines for seeking and giving information under the ATI Act should be drafted and implemented immediately. The Government should involve representatives of civil society organisations and the media in this process;
- 2) public bodies that have a duty to provide information under the law should be identified at all levels of Government and Information Officers should be designated in all such bodies immediately. Contact details of all Information Officers should be published in public directories and on the Internet immediately;
- 3) every public body should immediately initiate the process of preparing proactive disclosure manuals required under Section 7 and 8 of the ATI Act and make them available to the people within the deadline stipulated in the law;
- 4) the Government should immediately constitute a high level committee of legal experts drawn from the public service, the civil society sector, the media and academia to harmonise the secrecy provisions in other laws such as the Official Secrets Act with the provisions of the ATI Act in order to avoid contradiction and confusion;
- 5) The Government should issue guidelines for the interpretation and the application of the exemptions to disclosure vis a vis the public interest as mentioned in Part III of the ATI Act and also review the operation of the Act from time to time in order to facilitate greater access to information;
- 6) The Rules Committee should make rules of procedure for the courts to regulate the procedure in respect of applications made under Sections 35 and 40 of the ATI Act within the deadline stipulated in the law;

- 7) holders of information, to which citizens have a rightful claim under the law, should be properly sensitised through professionally designed training programmes so that they are fully aware that they are accountable to the people;
- 8) the people in general and representatives of civil society and the media in particular should be sensitised about the provisions of the ATI Act and trained in the art of making information requests. Representatives of civil society and the media should be involved in all such exercises;
- 9) public education resources such as simple language versions of the ATI Act and User Guides in local languages should be developed and disseminated as widely as possible particularly targeting the disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community. Representatives of civil society and the media should be involved in all such exercises;
- 10) the Government should allocate adequate resources for implementing the ATI Act and awareness raising programmes.
- 11) the Government should clarify the appeals system and procedure internal to the public body as required by the ATI Act.

**WE** recognise the need for bringing private bodies that receive public funds or those which perform public functions within the purview of the ATI Act. **WE** have further resolved to work together in a spirit of collaboration for securing full and proper implementation of the ATI Act.

Declaration Adopted Unanimously

Kampala

19<sup>th</sup> September 2006