

28 September 2014

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon  
 Secretary General of the United Nations  
 United Nations Headquarters  
 New York, NY 10017

CC: Amina J. Mohammed, Assistant Secretary General

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

We write to you as a coalition of civil society organisations committed to sustainable development, to urge you to highlight the importance of the right to information, free media, and the protection of civil society organisations' ability to organise and engage in your upcoming stocktaking report on the Sustainable Development Goals to the General Assembly.

We welcome your recent announcement on the creation of an *Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development*. However, as experts and practitioners in the field, we feel strongly that the data revolution cannot succeed without substantial improvement in the openness of governments to their people and an improved and enabling environment for civic space that allow individuals, civil society and communities to know, speak, engage and operate freely. To achieve this, the rights to freedom of information, free media, freedom of association, and freedom of peaceful assembly must be fully recognised and enabled.

The importance of these rights has been recognised in the Millennium Declaration, the Rio+ 20 declaration and numerous UN papers. These rights are also highlighted in the report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons and in the recommendations of the Open Working Group, both of which recommended that access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms be included as targets. However, even with the crucial role these rights play in development, they are largely unincorporated in currently agreed development mechanisms and were conspicuous by their absence in the Millennium Development Goals.

As you acknowledged in your "Freedom Lecture" speech last year at the University of Leiden, civil society is under increasing pressure: journalists and human rights defenders are imprisoned; internet and media outlets are shut down; and peaceful protests are banned. These issues need to be addressed as part of the SDGs or they will continue to hinder development progress and the data revolution will be restricted to the status quo of limited and unreliable information by the few, for the few, instead of access to information by everyone, for everyone, and the ability to act upon it.

Mr. Secretary General, today is globally recognised as "Right to Know Day". Governments and civil society organisations around the world will celebrate the progress made so far to ensure everyone is empowered to have greater control over their lives by better knowing how governments operate. Please take the time today to ensure these rights are not forgotten in the SDGs.

Thank you for your consideration. If your office wishes to discuss this further, please contact us.

Yours sincerely,

ARTICLE 19  
 Access Info Europe  
 Accun pour la Culture Numérique  
 Action 2015 National team-Sri Lanka  
 Active Remedy Ltd  
 Adevarul (The Truth)  
 Africa Freedom of Information Centre  
 Albanian Media Institute  
 Amnesty International  
 Arlan  
 Asociación Gestión Salud Población  
 Association Al Bawsala  
 Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression  
 Association I Watch - Tunisia  
 Association Nigérienne des Femmes Diplômées

Association of Caribbean Media Workers  
 Association of Private Nature Reserves of Minas Gerais State  
 Association TANSA  
 Association Tunisienne de Soutien Aux Minorités  
 Association Tunisienne des Contrôleurs Publics  
 Association Vigilance pour la Démocratie et l'Etat Civique  
 Associazione Museo Energia  
 Bahrain Center for Human Rights  
 BBC Media Action  
 Belarusian Association of Journalists  
 CAFSO-WRAG for Development  
 Cambodian Center for Human Rights  
 Campaign2015+ International

Canadian Journalists for Free Expression  
 Caribbean Policy Development Centre  
 CEEweb for Biodiversity  
 Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility  
 Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change  
 Research  
 Centre for Independent Journalism - Malaysia  
 Centre for Law and Democracy  
 Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in  
 Africa  
 Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala -  
 CERIGUA  
 CF Sange Research Center  
 CIDAC  
 Civil Society Partnership for Development  
 Effectiveness  
 COLLECTIF 24  
 Comité por la Libre Expresión - C-Libre  
 Comité Sénégalais des Droits de l'Homme  
 Corruption Watch UK  
 EDW ENERGIA  
 Federation of SUNFO Global Youth Forum  
 FEMNET - The African Women's Development and  
 Communication Network  
 Finnish NGDO platform to the EU  
 Finnish NGO Platform KEPA  
 Fondation Mohamed Belmufti Pour La Justice et Les  
 Libertés  
 Foro de Periodismo Argentino  
 Foundation for Press Freedom - FLIP  
 Freedom Forum  
 Freedom House  
 Fundamedios - Andean Foundation for Media  
 Observation and Study  
 GCAP Sri Lanka  
 Groupe AGORA pour les Droits de l'enfant et la paix  
 (GRA-REDP)  
 Hong Kong Journalists Association  
 IMove 2015 Campaign Sri Lanka  
 Initiative for Freedom of Expression - Turkey  
 Institut panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les  
 Consommateurs et le Développement  
 Institute for Economic Research on Innovation  
 Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information  
 Instituto de Estudos de Direito e Cidadania  
 Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente  
 Instituto o Direito por um Planeta Verde  
 Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela  
 International Federation of Journalists, Asia Pacific  
 International Federation of Library Associations and  
 Institutions  
 International Publishers Association  
 Interregional Union of Life Help for Mentally  
 Handicapped Persons "Sail of Hope"  
 Journaliste en danger  
 Kikandwa Environmental Association  
 La Ligue Tunisienne des droits de l'Homme  
 Laboratório de Educação e Política Ambiental - OCA  
 USP  
 Le Labo Démocratique  
 Ligue Africaine des blogueurs et activistes pour la  
 démocratie  
 Ligue Sénégalaise des Droits de l'Homme  
 Maharat Foundation  
 Media Institute of Southern Africa  
 Media Watch  
 Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance  
 MediaLink  
 Metamorphosis, Foundation for Internet and Society  
 Mujer y Sociedad  
 Mujeres Mundi  
 National Union of Somali Journalists  
 NGO Federation of Nepal  
 Observatoire Tunisien de l'Indépendance de la  
 Magistrature  
 Organisation nationale des droits l'homme  
 Pacific Islands News Association  
 Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum  
 Pakistan Press Foundation  
 Palestinian Center for Development and Media  
 freedoms (MADA)  
 PEN American Center  
 PraveenLata Sansthan  
 PRESSAFRIK  
 Pro Media  
 Public Association "Journalists"  
 Publish What You Fund  
 Ramfa "Rehomfa" Welfare Org  
 Rede Latinoamericana do Ministério Público Ambiental  
 Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de  
 l'Homme (RADDHO)  
 Reporters Without Borders  
 Request Initiative  
 Réseau des Organisations Féminines d'Afrique  
 Francophone  
 Restless Development  
 Right to Information Coalition Ghana  
 RightsWay International  
 Second Chance foundation  
 Section Sénégalaise de la Société Internationale pour  
 les Droits Humains  
 Southeast Asian Press Alliance  
 Southern Minas Gerais Institute for Nature Studies and  
 Conservation  
 Southwest Freedom of Information Act Network  
 Sri Lanka United Nations Friendship Organization  
 Stichting Bakens Verzet (NGO Another Way)  
 Sunlight Foundation  
 Terra-1530  
 The Climate Reality Project Canada  
 Tobacco Free Association of Zambia  
 Tunisian Association for the Advancement of Science,  
 Technology and Innovation  
 Union des Radios Associatives et Communautaires,  
 Senegal  
 Union des Tunisiens Indépendants pour la Liberté  
 Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de  
 Acción Social-UNITAS  
 Voice  
 West African Journalists Association  
 Whistleblower-Network Germany  
 World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters -  
 AMARC  
 Zambia Heart and Stroke Foundation  
 Zo Indigenous Forum

