



1 June 2011: For immediate release

## International Mandates Call for Greater Internet Freedom

Today, the 11th annual Joint Declaration by the four specialised mandates of the UN, OAS, OSCE and African Commission tasked with promoting and protecting freedom of expression was launched in Budapest. The strongly worded Declaration, prepared with the assistance of the Centre for Law and Democracy and ARTICLE 19, notes that many States actively seek to control the Internet and that too often even good faith attempts to regulate it undermine freedom of expression. The main body of the Declaration sets out detailed standards regarding freedom of expression and the Internet.

*"The focus on freedom of the Internet in the Joint Declaration this year is very timely,"* said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD. *"It sets out precise and positive standards that should help to guide legislators, judges and civil society groups grappling with the difficult question of how to preserve freedom of expression on the Internet."*

CLD particularly welcomes the call in the Joint Declaration for:

- Any restrictions on Internet freedom to take into account its unique character and ability to provide previously unimaginable opportunities for voice.
- Full protection for all intermediaries against liability for third party content.
- No State imposed blocking or filtering systems.
- Jurisdictional rules that would prevent opportunistic choices regarding where to lodge legal cases (so-called libel tourism).
- Respect for network neutrality and non-discrimination in the treatment of Internet traffic.

CLD also very much welcomes the recognition in the Joint Declaration of a right to access the Internet and a corresponding obligation on States to take concrete measures to promote universal access to the Internet.

The Joint Declaration is available at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/11.06.Joint-Declaration.Internet.pdf>.

***For further information, please contact:***

Toby Mendel  
Executive Director  
Centre for Law and Democracy  
email: [toby@law-democracy.org](mailto:toby@law-democracy.org)  
tel: +1 902 431-3688  
[www.law-democracy.org](http://www.law-democracy.org)