



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Wednesday March 27, 2019**

**Press Release**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO PARLIAMENT ON THE PASSAGE OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION BILL**

The Coalition on the Right to Information (RTI) Ghana, the Media Coalition on RTI and OccupyGhana (all together as the “Coalition”) have followed yesterday’s proceedings in Parliament with keen interest just as we have done in the past one year, and we are happy to note that the House has finally read the Bill the third time and passed it.

We congratulate this 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament for completing the long awaited passage of this piece of legislation after 17 years of waiting. Particularly, we recognize the effort of the Chairman of Joint Committee of Communication and Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the members of the Committees for their efforts during the legislative process. We acknowledge how this Parliament, has in less than one year, worked very hard to take the Bill through the various stages of the lawmaking process. However, considering that Parliament is a House of Records, we wish to use this platform to correct a wrong information communicated to the House yesterday by the Chairman of the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Hon. Ben Abdallah Banda. The Chairman informed the House that he agreed with the Coalition to allow the Bill to go through the Third Reading without our final proposed amendments. At best, we can describe this information as false and call on the Chairman to do the honorable thing by requesting through the Rt. Hon. Speaker to have this expunged from the records of the House.

We also wish to acknowledge the important contribution of many civil society organizations, citizen activists, media practitioners and citizens across the country for claiming their constitutionally guaranteed right to information.

Now that the Bill has been passed, we expect that President Akufo-Addo will assent to it swiftly just as he promised in his last address to Parliament on the State of the Nation. We are hopeful that government will put in place all needed processes to ensure that

the new law commences operation at the start of the next financial year, which is January 2020.

Although we are disappointed that the House did not consider a few final amendments we proposed which goes to the heart of the Bill, especially the 'timeframe for putting in place the necessary structure for effective implementation', we call on all and sundry to support the smooth implementation of the law. We hope that some of these concerns will be addressed in the Regulations which will come later to operationalize the law.

We the people of Ghana have shown true unity of purpose in the advocacy for the passage of this law, and we thank all Ghanaians for the unflinching support throughout the process. We wish to assure the nation that the work of the Coalition and its partners has only just begun with the passage of the Bill, as we are putting in place appropriate measures to advocate consistently for the effective and efficient implementation of the law.

**AYEKOO TO EVERYONE AND LONG LIVE GHANA!!!**

***Contact the Coalition's Secretariat (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Africa Office) on 0266862395, 0302 971170***