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Brazil: Presentation of Study on Protection of Children

The Centre for Law and Democracy launched a detailed comparative Study on the regulation of broadcasting to protect children at a workshop organised by UNESCO and the Brazilian Ministry of Justice yesterday. The Study analyses international standards in this area and compares the practice of six democracies with the system in place in Brazil. It concludes that the Brazilian system is largely in line with international standards. Two problem areas are the regulatory role played by the Ministry of Justice, a government body, and the undue complexity of the system.

“We welcome the debate in Brazil about this important regulatory issue,” said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of the Centre for Law and Democracy. *“Our assessment is that the local system for protection of children could, with a few relatively minor adjustments, be brought fully into line with international standards in this area.”*

The background to the Study is a constitutional challenge launched by the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), with the support of some commercial broadcasters, against the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, which establishes the regulatory framework for protection of children. A key feature of the system is a set of four watersheds (creating five different viewing periods), before which material which is not deemed to be suitable for children of different ages may not be broadcast. All six of the democracies surveyed in the Study use a watershed approach to protecting children. Five of the six, however, only use one watershed, while France uses three.

The workshop was opened by the Minister of Justice and was attended by representatives of the Federal Prosecution Service and the National Secretary on Children’s Rights, as well as civil society, other officials, the media and academics.

CLD calls on the Government of Brazil to consider making the necessary amendments to the system to bring it into full compliance with international standards. We would be happy to offer assistance to the Government to achieve this end.

The Study is available at: **<http://www.law-democracy.org/?p=1769>**

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