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Intergovernmental Organisations and the Right to Information

The Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) has prepared a Submission on the applicability of the right to information to intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in response to a call for input from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. The Submission argues that IGOs are bound to respect human rights, including RTI. Currently, relatively few IGOs outside of the international financial institutions have adopted policies on RTI, but they are coming under increasing pressure to do so.

“IGOs are created and usually funded by States collectively, so they are bound to respect the right to information in the same way as bodies created and funded by individual States”, said Michael Karanicolas, Senior Legal Officer, CLD. *“Furthermore, a strong right to information system also brings important benefits to these institutions, such as combating corruption and enhancing public trust.”*

In addition to claims that IGOs are bound by RTI, the Submission provides an overview of some of the policies that have been implemented by international financial institutions and UN agencies. Based on existing practice and broadly recognised principles governing RTI, the Submission makes a number of recommendations for IGO policies, including:

- To establish clear and simple procedures for making and responding to requests.
- To define clear and specific exceptions to the right of access.
- To create effective oversight mechanisms, including independent appeals bodies.
- To put in place appropriate promotional measures, including a commitment to review the policy regularly.

The Submission is available at: www.law-democracy.org/live/intergovernmental-organisations-and-the-right-to-information/.

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