

#### REPUBLIC OF KENYA



#### THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT- THIRD SESSION - 2015

THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

REPORT ON THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL, 2015

DIRECTORATE OF COMMITTEE SERVICES
CLERK'S CHAMBERS
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
NAIROBI

18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015

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#### 1.0 PREFACE

Hon Speaker,

On behalf of the Departmental Committee on Energy, Communication and Information and pursuant to provisions of Standing Order 199 (6), it is my pleasant privilege and honour to present to this House the Report of the Committee on its consideration of The Access to Information Bill, 2015. The Bill was committed to the Committee on 19th August, 2015 and it is on the basis of this that the Committee makes this report pursuant to Standing Order 127.

#### 1.1 Mandate of the Committee

The Departmental Committee on Energy, information & Communication is one of the twelve Departmental committees of the National Assembly established under Standing Order 216 whose mandates are as follows pursuant to the Standing Order 216 (5) which outlines functions of the Committee as among others, to:-

- a) investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned ministries and departments;
- b) study the programme and policy objectives of ministries and departments and the effectiveness of their implementation;
- c) study and review all the legislation referred to it;
- d) study, access and analyse the relative success of the ministries and departments measured by the results obtained as compared with their stated objective;
- e) investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned ministries and departments as may be deemed necessary, and as may be referred to it by the House or a Cabinet Secretary;
- vet and report on all appointments where the Constitution or any law requires the National Assembly to approve, except those under Standing Order No.204 (Committee on appointments); and
- g) make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible, including recommendations of proposed legislation.

In accordance with the Second Schedule of the Standing Orders, the Committee is mandated to consider:-

Fossil fuels exploration, Development of energy, Production of energy, Maintenance and regulation of energy, Communication, Information, Broadcasting and Information Communications Technology (ICT) development and management

#### 1.2 Committee Membership

The Committee on Energy, Communication and Information was constituted by the House in May, 2013 comprising of the following Members:

- 1. The Hon. Jamleck Kamau, EGH, MP.....Chairperson
- 2. The Hon. Jackson Kiptanui, MP ......Vice -Chairperson
- 3. The Hon. Mohammed Elmi, EGH, MP
- 4. The Hon. Edick Anyanga, MP
- 5. The Hon. (Eng.) James Rege, MP
- 6. The Hon. Mithika Linturi, MP
- 7. The Hon. Zebedeo Opore, MP
- 8. The Hon. Mary Mbugua, HSC, MP
- 9. The Hon. Aburi Mpuru, MP
- 10. The Hon. Aramat Lemanken, MP
- 11. The Hon. Arthur Odera, MP
- 12. The Hon. Banticha Abdullahi, MP
- 13. The Hon. Dan Kazungu, MP
- 14. The Hon. Esther Gathogo, MP
- 15. The Hon. Fathia Mahbub, MP
- 16. The Hon. James Lomenen, MP
- 17. The Hon. Joe Mutambu, MP
- 18. The Hon. John Munuve, MP
- 19. The Hon. Junet Sheikh, MP
- 20. The Hon. Cecily Mbarire, MP
- 21. The Hon. Nicholas Ngikor, MP
- 22. The Hon. Onesmus Njuki, MP
- 23. The Hon. Rachael Amolo, MP
- 24. The Hon. Roba Duba, MP
- 25. The Hon. Ndung'u Gethenji, MP
- 26. The Hon. (Eng.) Vincent Musau, MP
- 27. The Hon. William Kisang', MP
- 28. The Hon. Richard Tongi, MP
- 29. The Hon. Moses Kuria, MP

#### 1.3 Consideration of the Bill

The Access to Information Bill, 2015 was published and read for the first time on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 and thereafter committed to the Departmental Committee on Energy, Communication and Information for consideration pursuant to Standing Order 127.

In processing the Bill, the Committee invited comments from the public by placing advertisements in the dailies namely, Nation and Standard newspapers on  $25^{th}$  August, 2015 pursuant to Article 118 of the Constitution.

The Committee met with the officers from the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Kenya Private Sector Alliance, International Commission of Jurist (ICJ) and the Media Council of Kenya, the Committee also received written memoranda from the Kenya Private Sector Alliance, Media Council of Kenya and Safaricom Limited and the views are captured and contained in the body of the Report.

The Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Mr. Joseph Tiampati Ole Musuni wrote to the Committee and mainly addressed the position of Government on the Bill.

The Committee having held meetings with the various stakeholders, analyzed submissions from the public and observed that the Bill is critical in the access of information by the Kenyan public mainly from the Government and public institutions but also falls short in certain areas to which the Committee will be proposing amendments during the Committee Stage of the Bill.

#### 1.4 Adoption of the Report

We the Members of the Departmental Committee on Energy, Communication and Information have pursuant to Standing Order 199 adopted this Report on The Access to Information Bill, 2015 and affix our signatures to affirm our approval and confirm its accuracy, validity and authenticity today Tuesday, 17th November, 2015

	2013	
NAME		SIGNATURE
1.	HON. JAMLECK KAMAU, EGH, MP (CHAIRPERSON)	daniel
2.	HON JACKSON KIPTANUI, MP (VICE CHAIR)	Sando
3.	HON. (ENG.) JAMES REGE, MP	famile.
4.	HON. EDICK ANYANGA, MP	
5.	HON. CECILY MBARIRE, MP	n (Messie
6.	HON. FATHIA MAHBUB, MP	Cette
7.	HON. ARTHUR ODERA, MP	
8.	HON. BANTICHA ABDULLAHI, MP	Afra.
9.	HON. JAMES LOMENEN, MP	
10.	HON. ARAMAT LEMANKEN, MP	Axmilled
	HON. JOE MUTAMBU, MP	Allmin
12.	HON. JUNET SHEIKH, MP	
13.	HON. ESTHER GATHOGO,MP	
14.	HON. MARY N. MBUGUA, HSC, MP	2006
15.	HON. JOHN MUNUVE, MP	- Jan -
16.	HON. ZEBEDEO OPORE, MP	
17.	HON. MITHIKA LINTURI, MP	
18.	HON. MOHAMMED ELMI, EGH, MP	
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19. HON. NICHOLAS NGIKOR, MP	
20. HON. ONESMUS NJUKI, MP	TAIN 1 0 CC
21. HON. RACHEAL AMOLO, MP	Rechard &
22. HON. ROBA DUBA, MP	•
23. HON. (ENG.)VINCENT MUSAU, MP	
24. HON. WILLIAM KISANG', MP	Santag.
25. HON. DAN KAZUNGU, MP	Dandonude
26. HON.ABURI MPURI, MP	
27. HON. NDUNGU GETHENJI, MP	
28. HON. RICHARD TONGI, MP	1
29. HON.MOSES KURIA, MP	

#### 1.5 Acknowledgment

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

The Committee is grateful to the Offices of the Speaker and the Clerk of the National Assembly for the logistical and technical support accorded to it during its sittings. The Committee wishes to thank all the stakeholders for their participation in scrutinizing the Bill.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Honorable Members of the Committee who sacrificed their time to participate in the activities of the Committee and preparation of this report.

It is my pleasant duty and privilege, on behalf of the Departmental Committee on Energy, Communication and Information to present the report on the Access to Information Bill, 2015 in the House pursuant to Standing Order 127.

Signed

HON. JAMLECK KAMAU, EGH, MP

CHAIRPERSON

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

The principal object of this Bill is to give effect to Article 35 of the Constitution and thereby facilitate access to information held by Government Ministries and other public authorities. The Bill recognises access to information as a right bestowed on the Kenyan people, and seeks to promote proactive publication, dissemination and access to information by the Kenyan public in the furtherance of this right. It also spells out the mechanisms of ensuring public access to information held by the Government, public and private institutions is crucial for the promotion of democracy and good governance.

# 3.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSIONS ON THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL, 2015

### 3.1 The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA)

Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) submitted as follows:

SECTION	PROVISIONS UNDER THE BILL	PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
3 (b) and (d)	The object and purpose of this Act is to(b) require public entities and private bodies to proactively disclose information that they hold and to provide information on request in line with the constitutional principles;(d) promote routine and systematic information disclosure by public service and private service on constitutional principles relating to accountability, transparency and public participation and access to information	The object and purpose of this Act is to(b) require public entities to proactively disclose information that they hold in line with constitutional principles; (c) require public entities and private bodies to provide information on request in line with the constitutional principles(d)(d) promote routine and systematic information disclosure by public service on constitutional principles relating to accountability, transparency and public
4(1)(a)	Subject to this Act and any other law, every citizen has the right of access to information held by —  (a) the State; and	participation and access to information "State" has the same meaning assigned to i by Article 260 of the Constitution.
6(1)(h)	Notwithstanding sections 4(1) and 5, exempt information may be withheld by a public entity or private body where it is satisfied that the disclosure of such information is likely to	Notwithstanding sections 4(1) and 5, exempt information may be withheld by a public entity or private body where it is satisfied that the disclosure of such information is likely to:
6(1)(h)	(1) Despite sections 4(1) and 5, exempt information, may be withheld by a public entity or private body where it is satisfied that	<ul><li>(h) infringe professional privilege</li><li>(1) Despite sections 4(1) and 5, exempt information, may be withheld by a public entity or private body where it is satisfied</li></ul>

SECTION	PROVISIONS UNDER THE BILL	PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
	disclosure of such information is likely to—	that disclosure of such information is likely
	(a)	to—
	(h) Infringe legal professional privilege.	(a)
	(1)	(h)infringe professional confidentiality as
		recognised in law or a registered
		professions' association rules
6(4)	Despite anything contained in subsections (1)	Delete 6 (4)
0(1)	and (2), a public entity or private body may be	
	required to disclose information where the	
	public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm	
	to protected interests.	
16(8) (b)	In any proceedings for an offence for	In any proceedings for an offence for
( . )	contraventionit shall be a defence to show	contraventionit shall be a defence to
	that – where the offence is alleged to have been	show that – where the offence is alleged to
	committed by a public officer or Government	have been committed by a public officer or
	contractor"	State_contractor"
<u>~1)</u>	Where an application to access information has	Where an application to access information
W"	been made to a public entity under section 7	has been made to a public entity under
	and the applicant would have been entitled	section 7-8and the applicant would have
	* 7 * 2 * 2	been entitled
13(1)	Correction of information	(3). Provided that this section shall not
,	(1) At the request of the applicant, a public	apply to temporary copies of information
	entity or private body shall within reasonable	produced within the context of technical
	time, at its own expense, correct, update or annotate any personal information held by it	activities for transmission and access to a
	relating to the applicant, which is out of date,	alonal risk
	inaccurate or incomplete.	intermediate of temperary states
		and for the sole purpose of offering other
	(2) A request under this section shall be made in	beneficiaries of the service the best possible
	writing to the public entity responsible for the	access to the information so transmitted
	maintenance of the record system containing	
	the out of date, inaccurate or incomplete information and shall-	
	(a) state that it is a request to amend certain	
	personal information relating to the applicant;	
	(b) specify the personal information that is to be	
	amended indicating how such information is	
	out of date, inaccurate or incomplete; and	
	(c) Specify the remedy sought by the applicant.	

# 3.2 The International Commission of Jurist (ICJ)

Clause	Comment/ Rationale	Recommendation	Rationale
Long title of the Bill.  Clause 2		We recommend that the long title of the Bill be expanded to;  AN Act of Parliament to give effect to Article 35 of the Constitution; to make public records and information more freely available; to provide for public access to public records and information; to protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy; to protect serving public officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes; to confer on the Commission on Administrative Justice the oversight and enforcement functions and powers, and for connected purposes  The definition should also cover private entities and individuals and this information may as well be held by an individual or a private entity.  "public interest" means the welfare of the general public in which the whole	This would be more inclusive to access to information, maintaining records, maintain personal privacy inter alia. This approach has been adopted in countries like Nigeria Access to Information law and South Africa.  Article 35 of the Constitution expands the right to information from private bodies where information is required for the exercise or protection of another fundamental right.  This is necessary as the right to information may be limited where disclosure may harm public interest.

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		society has a stake and which warrants recognition, promotion, and protection by the government and its agencies;	
Clause 3	Provides for objects and purpose of the law. Sub- clause (c) provides for the purpose as to create a framework for access to information held by private bodies.	This should also include public entities.	The right to information extends to information from private entities and public entities (See Article 35 (1) and (2).
Clause 4	Sub-clause 2 provides for factors that should not affect a person's right to access information. These include the public entity's belief as to the reasons for accessing the information.	The clause should also cover private entities.	The reason is that private bodies have been given an obligation under Article 35(2) to provide information if such information is required for the exercise of a human right.
Clause 5(4)	Subsection (1)(a) shall come into operation twelve months after the commencement of this Act.	Clause 5(1a) should come into force immediately. Since the Act will commence after the Cabinet Secretary gazettes the date of implementation, it will take time before the clause is implemented as currently drafted, The one year delay is unjustified long and unnecessary.	This clause is critical in nurturing a culture of disclosure and should therefore commence immediately. The one year waiting period is not justified.
Clause 6(2)	Provides for the meaning of national security for purposes of determining exempt information. The provisions are quite ambiguous and may limit the right of access to information e.g information relating to national security	to ensure effective interpretation and avoid	

Clause 7	include military strategy, doctrine, capability, capacity or deployment.		national security is likely to limit the right unreasonably even where disclosure of information poses no threat to public interest.
Clause 7	Provides for the designation of the information access officer. This shall be the CEO of the public entity. There is need to cover private entities as well.	Private entities should be included to provide clarity on who is responsible to give information when a request is made.	This brings consistency in providing responsibility in promoting the right to information in public and private entities
Clause 14	Provides for review of decisions by the Commission and specifically provides for public entities.	This provision should also include review of decisions by private bodies.	The Act should be consistent in ensuring compliance by private entities too.
	16. (1) A person shall not be penalized in relation to any employment, profession, voluntary work, contract, membership of an organization, the holding of an office or in any other way, as a result of having made or proposed to make a disclosure of information which the person obtained in confidence in the course of that activity, if the disclosure is of public interest.  Provides for the conferment on the Commission on Administrative Justice of oversight and enforcement functions and powers over this Bill. Clause 2021 lays down the functions of the Commission	The wording of this clause indicates that only the listed grounds can qualify under the provision. This may limit the protection accorded only to the specified information.  There should be an omnibus provision to cover any other information not specified yet its disclosure may be made in the public interest.  This clause should in addition state that it shall be an offence to disclose exempt information.  We propose that we expand the Bill on the mandate of the CAJ to state, "provides that the powers and functions of the Commission are in addition to the powers and	Provides for protection of persons making disclosures. Sub-clause 5 outlines information which may form part of disclosure  In the absence of a whistle blower protection Act, the Access to Information should protect persons who disclose information in good faith.

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	functions conferred on the	
	Commission by the	
	Commission on	
	Administrative Justice Act,	
	2011.	
	We propose that we	
	expand the Bill on the	
	mandate of the CAJ to	
	state," provides that the	
	powers and functions of	
	the Commission are in	
	addition to the powers and	
	functions conferred on the	
	Commission by the	
	Commission on	
	Administrative Justice Act,	
	2011.	
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# 3.3 The Media Council of Kenya

J.J The Media Council	•	
Clause	Comment/ Rationale	Recommendation
Section 2	The definition of 'exempt information' and 'information' refers to a public entity.	The definition should also cover private entities and individuals since Article 35 of the Constitution guarantees the right where information is required for the exercise or protection of another fundamental right and this information may as well be held by an individual or a private entity.
Section 3	Provides for objects and purpose of the law. Subsection (c) provides for the purpose as to create a framework for access to information held by private bodies	
Section 4	Provides for the right to information. Sub-clause 2 provides for factors that should	This clause should also cover private entities

	not affect a person's right to access information. These include the public entity's belief as to the reasons for accessing the information	
Section 5(4)	Requires that clause 5(1) be implemented one year after the coming into force of the Act. This clause 5(1) provides for proactive disclosure of information.	implementation, it will take time before the clause is implemented. This clause is critical in nurturing a culture
Section 6(2)	Provides for the meaning of national security for purposes of determining exempt information. The provisions are quite ambiguous and may limit the right of access to information e.g. information relating to national security include military strategy, doctrine, capability, capacity or deployment.	These should be provided for in ordinary terms so as to ensure effective interpretation and avoid ambiguity.
Section 7	Provides for the designation of the information access officer. This shall be the CEO of the public entity. There is need to cover private entities as well.	Private entities should be included to provide clarity on who is responsible to give information when a request is made.
Section 14	Provides for review of decisions by the Commission and specifically provides for public entities.	This provision should also include review of decisions by private bodies
Section 16	Provides for protection of persons making disclosures. Subclause 5 outlines information which may form part of disclosure.	The wording of this clause indicates that only the listed grounds can qualify under the provision. This may limit the protection accorded only to the specified information. There should be an omnibus provision to cover any other information not specified yet its disclosure may be made in the public interest.

Safaricom Limited submitted a written memorandum to the Committee as follows:

Salai	SAFARICOM MEMORANDUM ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL				
ISSUE		SECTION	CONCERN	PROPOSED  AMENDMENTS	
Objects of the Act	3 (b) and (d)	The object and purpose of this Act is to(b) require public entities and private bodies to proactively disclose information that they hold and to provide information on request in line with the constitutional principles;(d) promote routine and systematic information disclosure by public service and private service on constitutional principles relating to accountability, transparency and public participation and access to information	Constitution where disclosure by a private body only applies with respect to the exercise or protection of a right or fundamental freedom. Proactive disclosure ought to apply to public entities only.	of this Act is to(b) require public entities to proactively disclose information that they hold in line with constitutional principles; (c) require public entities and private bodies to provide	
Restrict on to Right to Privacy Nation I Security etc	o o a	Despite anything contained in subsections (1) and (2), a public entity or private body may be required to disclose information where the public interest in disclosure outweighthe harm to protected	Constitutional provisions including the Rights to Privacy etc. This section is also repetitive and introduces confusion into the Bill. The Bill already provides under	the Section	

ISSUE			m on access to informa	
and the second		SECTION	CONCERN	PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Interme	13(1)	interests.  Correction of	information will be released where there is significant public interest.  Additionally section 6(5) defines what will be considered when referring to public interest.	
16   Pa		information  (1) At the request of the applicant, a public entity or private body shall within reasonable time, at its own expense, correct, update or annotate any personal information held by it relating to the applicant, which is out of date, inaccurate or incomplete.  (2) A request under this section shall be made in writing to the public entity responsible for the maintenance of the record system containing the out of date, inaccurate or incomplete information and shall-  (a) state that it is a request to amend certain personal information relating to the applicant; (b) specify the personal information that is to be amended indicating how such information is out of date, inaccurate or incomplete; and  (c) specify the remodes	into account information held by intermediaries who are not creators of the	following provisory:  (3). Provided that missection shall not apply

SAFARICOM MEMORANDUM ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL						
ISSUE	100 (100 (100 (100 (100 (100 (100 (100	SECTION .	CONCERN	PROPOSED  AMENDMENTS		
			Throughout the world, including in the African Union, the general principle that intermediaries should not be liable for their user's content, and that therefore they should not have any general legal obligation to monitor user content or be responsible for its accuracy, its maintenance and it's annotating, has been recognised. This principle has its strongest foundations in freedom of expression and individual privacy, which are rights guaranteed both by the Constitution of Kenya as well as regional and international law.  It is necessary, therefore, for the Bill to make a distinction between information/content producers and information intermediaries			
Clarity	20(1)	Where an application to access information has been made to a public entity under Section 7 and the applicant would have been entitled	This section which addresses offences in alteration and erasure of records, should in our reading, needs to make reference to Section 8 which deals with applications for access and not Section 7 which describes the Information Officer.	Where an application to access information has been made to a public entity under section 8 and the applicant would have been entitled		

## 3.5 Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology

The Ministry of Information Communication and Technology did not present any comment on the Bill or comments on any proposals by the stakeholder; however they presented a written submission to the Committee of the position of Government on the said bill as follows; That:-

- 1. The Government has formulated the Access to Information and Data Protection Bills and the Access to Information and Data Protection Policies and that these Bills and Policies have been subjected to immense public participation.
- These Bills and Policies were been submitted to Cabinet and are awaiting Cabinet approval. Deliberations are at an advanced stage and cabinet approval is anticipated shortly.
- 3. In the premises, without Cabinet approval of the Bills and Policies, the Ministry is unable to engage in debate on the (Private Member) Access to Information, 2015.
- 4. The Bills awaiting Cabinet approval are complementary as they satisfy Constitutional requirements by harmonizing Articles 31 (Privacy) and 35 (Access to Information).
- 5. The Ministry notes that the Private Member Access to Information Bill, 2015 is not accompanied with a Policy on Access to Information.
- 6. The Ministry is of the strong view that the ideal position in the legislative process is that policy precedes the formulation of a Bill or any other legislative instrument. The importance of developing a policy framework first is intended to amongst other salient features allow the executors (Government and its agencies in this instance) determine a clear road map, conduct an assessment of the problem and probable solutions, and define the opportunity to be embraced and the modalities or approaches to realize the benefit prior to proposing the necessary legal framework.
- 7. It follows therefore that passage of the Private Members Bill will not be comprehensive without a supporting policy framework and an accompanying Data Protection Bill and Policy.
- 8. In light of the foregoing, the Ministry recommends that it would be ideal for Private Members Bill to be withdrawn in favour of the Government Bills once approved

### 4.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

The Committee observed that some proposals for amendment of the Bill from the stakeholders were important as they sought to improve the current version of the Bill. However, it was worth noting that proposed amendments from the stakeholders were varied as the proposals sought to cater for individual divergent interests. The Committee will therefore at a later stage introduce amendments to the Bill for consideration during the Committee Stage.

# 5.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above proposals from the stakeholders the Committee is preparing amendments to the Bill that will be tabled before the House in due course upon enlisting further clarification and consultation with the stakeholders and the state department.

